



חדשות משדה התעופה

News from...International **SYNAGOGUE**

by Rabbi Bennett M. Rackman

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The annual meeting of the *International* **SYNAGOGUE** was held on Tuesday, June 22, in the TRI-FAITH Chapels Museum. Twenty-four members attended to learn about and discuss the most recent happenings in the **SYNAGOGUE**. Manny Weiss, president, presided and greeted all who made the effort, taking time away from their busy schedules to join us. After the financial report was presented by Eric Goldfarb, accountant, and Manny Weiss, the discussion centered on ways to revitalize our membership and recruit more people who would like to become involved in our activities.

A related topic of discussion concerned how to curtail expenses. Several ideas were suggested which have been implemented. While we have a large number of people on our mailing list, many have not been involved for several years. These people have been removed from the list in order to save money on printing and mailings. With this issue of *News*, we are inaugurating the dissemination of our newsletter by e-mail to as many people as possible. It will also be available on our website (see below). We hope to save money on printing and mailing. We are producing the *News* "in-house." We will also try to curtail the number of hours that chaplain interns work. These measures are all aimed at reducing expenses.

Rabbi Rackman reported that last year all 200 Limited Raffle tickets had been sold. He also reported on plans for a "Family Fun Day at JFK." Sponsored jointly by the Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant chapels, this event would benefit mainly the 30,000 employees at the Airport and their families. We were in the process of negotiating with an entertainment company that would provide rides for children, activities for adults, and food vendors over a two day weekend in late September. Jerry Spampinato, General Manager of JFK Airport, was very supportive of this function. (Unfortunately, the planned event never materialized because the entertainment company reneged on the agreement. We hope to co-sponsor this event in June, 2011.)

Another project raised for discussion concerned the feasibility of having a "funeral chapel" on-site when transporting a deceased to Israel for burial. Preliminary discussions have taken place with Jerry Spampinato about acquiring such a building (on a part-time basis) to accommodate Jewish needs. A committee was selected to further investigate this possibility.



BBYO



BUILDING THE WORLD



ISRAEL SCOUTS



PROJECT INTERCHANGE BUSINESS WOMEN



YOUNG WOMEN ON WAY TO SEMINARY



YOUNG JUDEA



YESHIVA TEHILLAH L'DAVID

The meeting ended with the election of officers:

President: Manny Weiss

Co-President: Dr. Shalom Miller

Honorary President: Fred Rosenberg

Vice Presidents: Melvyn Birnbaum, Allan Gewirtz
Dennis Klainberg, Erica Stempler

Treasurer: Bonnie Aidelman

Financial Secretary: Steve Gelles

And, as usual, breakfast was served.

NEW IMPROVED WEBSITE UP AND RUNNING

Two months ago we engaged Weblines Designs, Inc. to update and improve our website. We have met several times with Neil Levin and Kevin Kesler to refine our site. We strongly recommend that everyone inspect www.jfkshul.com or www.internationalsynagogue.org. We can also be reached at intlsyn@yahoo.com to see the features and improvements that have been made. We will continue to make changes and refinements as needed. Our goal is to serve you: the Jewish traveling public.

VISITORS TO THE SYNAGOGUE

As usual, this past Summer season was the busiest time of the year for those working at *International* **SYNAGOGUE**. Rabbi Rackman sent e-mails to Israeli programs/schools, travel agents, and different organizations to determine when teenagers would be “on-the-move.” The results were remarkable.

The first group (June 17) that visited the **SYNAGOGUE** was a **birthrightisrael** trip called **American Physicians Scholarships** under the leadership of Dr. Allan Menkin. We have hosted similar trips in the past. These second and third year medical students spend ten days in Israel familiarizing themselves with Israeli hospitals. Should there be an outbreak of war, these young doctors are ready to help in “safe” facilities. Dr. Michael Frogel, Chairman of Pediatrics at Nassau University Medical Center, introduced these dedicated physicians several years ago to the chapel at the Airport. They were served light refreshments as they received orientation. During the next few weeks several **BBYO** groups (with a total of almost 400 teenagers) visited the chapel before boarding their plane to Israel. Light refreshments were served as orientation was given by the dedicated counselors. We are grateful to Batya Levinger who coordinated the trips (long distance) from Washington, D.C.

A contingent of about one hundred teenagers left under the banner of **Israel Scout** Several **USY** Summer programs (each with about forty adolescents) leaving for Israel

came first to the Museum where they met with the leaders. Aviva Telles was the coordinator. David Cutler arranged for six different **NCSY** tours serving over 800 travelers during a three week period. Both the youngsters and their parents *davened* in the shul.

Casey Baker was the “point man” for **Young Judea**. Three separate groups, totaling almost three hundred teenagers left for Summer visits in Israel. **SULAM** of Camp Morasha left for Israel on July 12, with fifty-two participants. The following day almost 250 travelers left on EL AL for **Bnei Akiva** - Mach Hach and to serve as counselors in Camp Kobi Mandell. We are thankful to Shula Baskin and Rabbi David Kupinsky for their cooperation. Many, many *minyanim* were the order of the evening.

Another group of forty-five young men under the sponsorship of the **National Council of Young Israel** left on a 2:00 A.M. EL AL flight for a six week tour of Israel. This program is special in that the participants tour the country with the Bible in one hand as they see and experience the holy land from the perspective of the Torah.

We also hosted several **birthrightisrael** groups: Free Spirit - Women and Free Spirit-Women, both consisting of Chasidic teenagers. Another specialized birthright group called **EZRA**, included Russian-speaking teenagers. They enjoyed the attention they received at our shul.

We sometimes encountered small groups of children on a Day Camp “outing.” They were surprised to see a shul in an airport. Two such groups from Brooklyn were from **Yeshivah Tehillah L’David** and **Squarer Boro Park Day Camp**.

By the second week in August, most young travelers were no longer leaving on vacation trips. Rather, young men and women, were preparing to spend a year of study in a yeshiva in Israel. We hosted in the chapel and served light refreshments to travelers going to **Shaalavim Men, Chofetz Chaim, Kerem B’Yavneh, GUSH - Yeshiva Har Etzion, and Bais Yisroel**. Judy Tanenbaum of Plane Talk Travel Agency alerted the **SYNAGOGUE** regarding the travel plans of many of these young adults. Rabbi Marc Volk of KBY in New York was also present to bid farewell.

Several groups of young women left on EL AL during the second week of August. Judy Tanenbaum of Plane Talk and Sora Steiger of Ariel Tours, coordinated these flights of students going to study at **Midreshet Mevaseret Yerushalayim (MMY), Midreshet HaRova, Tiferet** (Barry Rosner was our contact person.), **Shaalavim - Women, Michlalah, Midreshet Moriah, Afikei Torah, Darchei Binah, Bnot Torah, Bnos Sara, Bnos Chava, Midreshet Tehila, Machon Maayan, and Yesod**, as well as young men going to study at **Derech Etz Chaim, Ohr Sameach, Torat Shraga, Orayta, Netiv Aryeh, Shvilei, Meohr, Lev HaTorah, Neveh Zion, Ohr Yerushalayim, and Reishit**.

On the last three days of August, three very large groups of teenagers left for one-year programs in Israel. Almost one hundred teenagers left on the **Young Judea Israel** program. Casey Baker was the coordinator. About one hundred teenagers left for the **NATIV** Program of the USY. Nachum Binder and Elana Kobernick arranged the trip. Elizabeth Zimmer of Jewish Agency, was responsible for the **Naaleh/Elite Academy** high students traveling to Israel. This unique program allows for 10th, 11th, and 12th graders to attend a high school in line with their religious orientation tuition-free. All these groups involved many, many parents and family members saying farewell to the youngsters. The latter contingent flew from another terminal and the logistics of hosting them were complicated.

From June 17 through August 31, *International* SYNAGOGUE greeted and hosted 3,549 teenagers traveling to Israel for a Summer tour or a year of study. This could not have been achieved without the assistance of all the *madrichim* and group leaders. We also are indebted this season to two chaplain assistants, Yisrael Lipshutz and Tsvi Selengut, who aided the rabbi throughout the Summer. **Since the inception of this service of “sending-off” young adults to Israel, the shul has provided support to over 15,000 young travelers.**

CHAPLAIN ASSISTANTS HELP DURING THE SUMMER

Quite frankly, when in the past I would hear Rabbi Rackman (we are both participants in our local Daf Yomi class) speak rather glowingly – as if one were speaking of an accomplished child, for example – my reaction was: so what’s the big deal?!

Flashback to several weeks before last Passover. The rabbi had asked me if I knew any young men who could “fill-in” for him while he would be away in the Holy Land for two weeks. For whatever reason, I heard myself volunteer. Shortly thereafter, Rabbi Rackman walked me through the various aspects of his operation, i.e., primarily how to organize a *minyan*.

Besides being physically demanding, especially since the SYNAGOGUE is located at one end of the Terminal and the EL AL check-in is at the other end, the work itself is totally transforming. By “transforming,” I could feel the true, positive sensation of fulfilling a *mitzvah* - not only for myself but for those who joined in the *minyan*; for those who were glad to make a donation - especially since we offered waivers for parking.

The feedback, the gratitude the appreciation for the existence of the SYNAGOGUE – especially in hosting the many groups that travel for the Summer and/or those going to study for the year - was reward in itself.

But more about that transforming feeling: it is all about doing good, when one’s innate sense of kindness becomes the dominant mind set; when one experiences an unusual feeling of unity with other Jews from so many different backgrounds...

I could go on gushing superlatives. But, in short, I can truly testify that Rabbi Rackman’s work at JFK SYNAGOGUE is a “very big deal.”

Yisrael Lifschutz, Belle Harbor, N.Y.

Summer months at JFK are always busy and rushed. Summer travelers and vacationers can be seen running through Terminal 4 to make it through security before their planes leave. At the far end of the terminal is a small room where Jews can come together to pray and groups come together to meet. The chapel seems immune to the surrounding chaos. The JFK International Synagogue

provides all the needs of Jewish travelers, both individuals and groups. This Summer we had the privilege to assist the various NCSY, USY, and other youth programs traveling to Israel. Food, prayer, and words of encouragement were all easily available for the groups before their trips. Toward the end of the Summer, a number of *yeshivot* and seminary programs that were traveling to Israel for the 2010-2011 academic year gathered by the Synagogue before their trips as well. The whole experience was one of growth both for the groups and the interns assisting them. We look forward to working with the greater Jewish community in Summer 2011.

Tsvi Selengut, Belle Harbor, N.Y.

FROM OUR MAILBAG

Mon, Jul 19, 2010 2:30pm

Dear Rabbi Rackman,

Thank you so much for your kindness when we were at your shul a few weeks ago saying goodbye to our daughter Shayna on her trip to Israel. Thank you especially for your father's book – after looking at his photo a while I realized that I had seen it before at other times as well.

Shayna is having a wonderful time with the Israel Scouts and wants to go back for a longer time. She seems to really love Israel.

I may be back in a week to drop my wife and sister-in-law off for their two weeks in Israel and hopefully I'll see you then. I'll bring my tefillin. Next time is my trip to Israel. Right now I get to stay home and feed the cats.

Sincerely,
Tedd Koren, DC

Fri, Aug. 27, 2010 9:57am

Dear Rabbi Rackman,

Sorry that I haven't responded until now - this is actually the first time I've gotten access to the Internet since I arrived in Israel.

We did, in fact, meet. I had davened beforehand, so I didn't use your shul - but the refreshments were greatly appreciated. Sorry that I couldn't openly introduce myself - but at least I got to meet you, even though you didn't know it was me...

Thank you again for the many vital services you provide, and I hope you continue to read and enjoy "Talmid X."

Sincerely,
Talmid X (ed. – a student correspondent for the Five Towns Jewish Times studying now in Israel.)

GOOD AND WELFARE

Rabbi Alvin Poplack, past Chaplain, and his wife Rosalind, announced the birth of twin great, granddaughters.

Rabbi Joshua Hertzberg, past Assistant Chaplain, and his wife Claire, announce the birth of a great, grandson, Moshe, born to Dr. Chaya and Rabbi Michael "Elimelech" Rosenthal.

Rabbi Shmuel Goldin, member of the Board of Directors, and his wife, Barbara, announce the birth of a granddaughter born to Yehuda and Noa Goldin and the birth of a grandson, born to Rabbi Yossi and Shifra Goldin.

We congratulate our newly elected Financial Secretary, Steve Gelles and his wife, Caron, on the engagement of their son, Joshua to Rona Gershon.

May they all have much nachas.

We extend best wishes to Rabbi Paul Hait, past Interim Chaplain, for a רפואה שלמה, for continued good health.

We record with sorrow the passing of Ephraim Propp who for many years served on the Board of Trustees of the **SYNAGOGUE**. Together with his older brothers, Seymour and Mortimer, they helped establish the *International* **SYNAGOGUE** in 1965.

THE CUSTOM OF ADDING VERSES IN THE "BENTCHING"

Jewish law prescribes that following the eating of a meal in which one has eaten bread, one must recite the Grace after Meals - ברכת המזון. The source for this commandment is derived from the verse in Deuteronomy VIII, 10, where the Torah states: and you shall eat and be satisfied, and bless the Lord thy God - ואכלת ושבעת וברכת.

According to tradition, it was Moses who instituted the first of the four blessings thanking God for the manna in the Wilderness. Joshua who brought the people in the holy land instituted the second blessing thanking God for the food **and** the land. King David and King Solomon instituted the third blessing beseeching God to build Zion and Jerusalem. And it was the men of the great Assembly - אנשי כנסת הגדולה, who added on the fourth blessing after permission was granted to the Jews to bury the Dead of Betar - חורבן ביתר.

There is a custom to recite Psalm 137 (על נהרות בבל) on weekdays prior to the saying of the "bentching," and a more prevalent custom to sing Psalm 126 (שיר המעלות) on the Sabbath and Festivals. A custom arose among the German Jews to recite four verses from the Psalms prior to saying the Grace after Meals. WHY?

תהלת ה' ידבר פי ויברך כל בשר שם קדשו לעולם ועד. ואנחנו נברך קה מעתה ועד עולם הללוקה. הודו לה' כי טוב כי לעולם חסדו. מי ימלל גבורות ה' ישמיע כל תהלתו.

According to Rabbi Binyamin Hamburger, of Bnei Brak in Israel, and a scholar who has researched the customs of German Jewry (מנהגי אשכנז) and published articles and a book on the subject, it provides an opportunity to recite some holy thoughts prior to saying the Grace after Meals. The sages advise that this is a requirement in order that the meal not be considered idolatrous food (זבחי מתים).

If this were so, then why was it not adequate for those who partake of a meal to recite Psalm 137 (על נהרות בבל - By the rivers of Babylon) on weekdays, and sing Psalm 126 (שיר המעלות - A song of Ascents) on the Sabbath and holy days, which is the custom and on the Sabbath and holy days, and is printed in many prayer books? Rather, there must be a reason for the additional verses from the Psalms. What is significant about **these** four verses that we add that it became customary to include them?

Perhaps, the significance can be found in the **number** (four) of verses that are chosen. The first two sentences are taken from Psalms 145:21 and 115:18. They both have a linguistic or language connection to the first two blessings. In the first, we find the words כל בשר - *all flesh*. The words לכל בשר - *for all flesh*, are found in the first blessing. The second sentence has the word נברך - *we will bless*. This word parallels ומברכים אותך - *and we will bless you*, which is found in the second blessing of the Grace after Meals.

The third verse, הודו לה' כי טוב כי לעולם חסדו - *O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good*, is found in many, many places in the Psalms. However, it appears in Psalm 107 several times. That particular Psalm makes reference to the God's redemption of His people. They will return to the Land of Israel from many directions. God will bring them out of darkness and the shadow of death. They will establish a city of habitation. They will sow fields and plant vineyards. "Let them give thanks unto the Lord for His mercy." We have here a conceptual connection to the third blessing in that God redeems the People and they return to rebuild the Land of Israel. This refers to the building of Zion and Jerusalem which is the main theme of the third blessing.

And, the fourth verse that is recited according to the German Jewish custom, also has a thematic connection to the fourth blessing. As cited above, the fourth blessing of the Grace after Meals, was instituted in gratitude for permission to bury the dead in Betar. The Jews recognized God's wondrous works in that there was no decomposition or decay. This amazing miraculous event is referred to by saying the fourth verse found in Psalm 106, 2: מי ימלל גבורות ה' ישמיע כל תהילתו - *Who can express the mighty acts of the Lord or make all His praise be heard?* We see another conceptual link to the "bentching."

Whether it is a linguistic or thematic connection, each of the four verses from the Psalms is related to, indeed, foretells the contents of the Grace after Meals. Such is the wisdom of our Sages!

May God grant us all a good New Year, a life filled with health and happiness. May this year bring fulfillment of all our desires for the good. May we be granted a year of peace and tranquility for us, all Israel, and all humankind.

International SYNAGOGUE

ANNUAL CHANUKAH LIGHTING CEREMONY AND PARTY

Wednesday, December 8, 2010, 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM

AIRLINE LIMITED RAFFLE - LATKES - HAFTR CHOIR - DOUGHNUTS

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