



THE HIGH HOLYDAYS

Judging Oneself

Rabbi Gabriel Botnick
explains the Jewish
approach to prayer

People are often surprised when they ask what my favourite holiday is and I respond 'Yom Kippur'. I understand their confusion as this might seem like an odd response. Yom Kippur is the one day of the year when we don't eat, we don't shower, and we stand in synagogue for hours on end. How could I possibly like this solemn holiday more than Chanukah, Purim or even Passover? I inevitably explain that, for me, Yom Kippur is the most meaningful day of the year.

One of the reasons some people are confused by my answer is that when they hear the word 'prayer', they envisage someone having a conversation with God, asking God to intervene in their lives and hoping for a direct response. With that concept of prayer in mind, it's understandable that people would find it strange that I favour a day focused mainly on

prayer. But the Jewish idea of prayer is rather different.

In Hebrew, the word for 'prayer' is *tefilah* and 'to pray' is *lehitpalel*, which is a reflexive verb meaning 'to judge oneself'. This is why I often describe the siddur as a mirror that we hold up, trying to see our own reflection in the words used to describe God: patient, understanding, loving, etc. When we pray, we are really asking ourselves whether or not we are living in a God-like way: are we embodying the Divine attributes enumerated in the siddur, or are we falling short of our potential?

When I pray, I am not speaking directly with God nor am I attempting to persuade God to answer my requests. Instead, I am meditating on the concepts and values cherished by our tradition: I am searching for ways to live in a more 'Godly' way in the world and better realize my potential as a human. This approach to prayer doesn't require fluency in Hebrew or familiarity with the liturgy. One could simply look at the English translations for inspiration or even just close the book and sit in quiet contemplation. This is why I absolutely love Yom Kippur – and the rest of the High Holydays – as they provide the ideal environment to engage in the deep spiritual work we are all called to do.

As a young man, I was not so different from the average 'Jew in the pew'. I could sound out the Hebrew of the siddur and was familiar with the melodies of the service, but I definitely did not understand the words I was reading.

I would go out on Friday nights and meet up with friends at a cafe on Saturdays. My home was kosher, but I was less stringent when dining out. In other words, I was no different from many other Jews.

But it was through Yom Kippur and the blessings it brought – sitting in quiet contemplation, blocking out the noise of life, refraining from eating, drinking and showering, not worrying about my physical needs or wants and instead focusing on the spiritual aspects of my life – that I was finally able to identify what had been hiding in plain sight for quite a while: my path, my truth. I was able to admit to myself that a future in the rabbinate was probably the right path for me.

So I want to invite you to allow yourself this year to dive deeper than ever into the waters of the High Holydays. If you usually come to synagogue on each day, try staying longer. If you usually come on just one day, try attending another service or two. If you usually just sit there and passively listen to the choir, try praying in your own way.

Prayer can be an intimidating concept, but it doesn't have to be. It's actually very easy to engage in it. Prayer doesn't demand that you follow any strict set of rules or rituals; it simply invites you to have an honest conversation with yourself, with the themes of the liturgy serving as your waypoints.

I look forward to seeing you at Belsize this year for the High Holydays and hope my approach to prayer will help to guide you on your own spiritual journey.

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SYNAGOGUE SNAPSHOT

In a departure from our usual Snapshot format, BBC journalist Liz Saul presents this portrait of her father, who will be a very familiar figure to all who attend our services.

Kelly Saul

Retired car-hire owner and chauffeur



Kelly was born in Kolkata, India in 1946, the fifth of ten children. Kolkata at that time had a thriving Jewish community with several synagogues and Jewish schools. Kelly's school, the Elias Myer Free School, is still going

strong and has a great reputation, but no longer has any Jewish students. Kelly left India for Israel in 1962 to join some of his family who were already there. He served in the medical corps of the IDF for several years and was stationed all over the country including at the Ein Gedi oasis near the Dead Sea, to which he was delighted to return many years later with his wife and grown-up children.

He headed to London in 1967 where his elder sisters were living. He quickly got a job at a Lyons Tea House, where he learned silver service, and then at a Jewish deli. Later he started a luxury car hire business with a friend, went on to run an electrical business and finally became a high-end chauffeur, taking distinguished passengers including pilots and tennis stars to and from the major London airports.

Kelly has been a member of Belsize Square Synagogue for 40 years. Over those years, Kelly has served on the Board, been Head of Security and he was a regular warden at services until recently. He's married to Jennifer, who was BSS's office administrator for more than 20 years. This year, Kelly and Jennifer will celebrate their Ruby Wedding. They are still regulars on Shabbat mornings and Festivals, when shul-goers will always expect to see them sitting on the right side, towards the back.

Family is very important to Kelly. He has four children – Elizabeth, Nicola, Daniella and Jake – and relations all over the world. Kelly retired from active work in his early 70s, but he still entertains friends and family and has travelled to visit family in Denmark, Israel and Germany, among other places. For Kelly there is never a dull moment!



On behalf of her fellow Deputies, Deborah Cohen brings us up to date with important current developments at the Board

'This has been a year of profound challenge, enduring resilience, and purposeful action' writes Board of Deputies President Phil Rosenberg in his Rosh Hashanah message opposite. Indeed, the disturbing events of the last year have impacted on every constituent member organisation of the Board.

It is important to remember that the Board is one of the UK Jewish community's oldest institutions, established in 1760. Deputies are elected by its member organisations and today Progressive, 'otherdox' Judaism (to use the late Rabbi Mariner's term) is a major stakeholder in the Board. It has led the Board to search for boundaries inside which the community can stay together and withstand the forces that are trying to pull us apart.

The Board has long supported a negotiated 'two-state' peace settlement. In what now seems prescient, the Board in February 2022, on the occasion of a visit to the UK by MK Bezalet Smotrich, tweeted in Hebrew that it '*rejects the abominable views and the hate-provoking ideology of Bezalet Smotrich. We call on all members of the British Jewish community to show him the door*'. Smotrich is a key minister in the current Israeli government.

These are the broad parameters within which the Board leads: pro two-state and against Kahanism, of which Smotrich is the heir. The commitment to a two-state solution was reiterated at a special Board meeting on 29 July. The meeting was called because of deep concern about the lack of progress on the return of the remaining hostages and about the human suffering in Gaza. The shocking heckling and removal from the stage of the co-Chief Executive Rabbis of Progressive Judaism at the 10 August March for the Hostages has led to much soul-searching.

The Board continues to carry out vital work representing the Jewish Community with central government, councils and other public bodies, for example to ministers about Glastonbury, the BBC, and the NHS. And plans are now afoot to launch a Jewish Cultural Month next year to which I hope our Synagogue and its musical tradition will contribute. The parameters within which the Board works are broad but fragile. The Board needs the support of all of us to respect this if it is to be able to hold us together, in all our diversity of views, in these difficult times.

**L'shana tova from Belsize Square's Deputies
Dilys Tausz, Peter Strauss and Deborah Cohen**

ROSH HASHANAH MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF DEPUTIES



This has been a year of profound challenge, enduring resilience, and purposeful action.

Our community has continued to face challenges and anxiety.

We have seen a sickening rise in antisemitism after the attacks of 7th October 2023 and it has now been nearly two years that Jews have been subjected to increased levels of hate on our streets, online and in civil society.

Despite these challenges, I have seen extraordinary strength. From Manchester to Glasgow, Cardiff to London, I have spent time with proud and flourishing Jewish communities. We - the Jewish people - have resilience in our DNA.

Since my election as Board of Deputies President last year, we have identified five priorities for building a brighter future for our community and we have significant achievements in each area:

Fighting antisemitism

The Commission on Antisemitism – backed by the Prime Minister – is a review of anti-Jewish discrimination across public and professional life co-chaired by political heavyweights Lord John Mann and Dame Penny Mordaunt. They have produced a powerful report filled with practical recommendations. Our advocacy has led to a change in the law which will push protests away from our synagogues.

Standing up for peace and security in Israel and the Middle East

We have been campaigning tirelessly, for the hostages with weekly vigils in Westminster and Edinburgh, our Adopt a Hostage scheme, and campaigns at Sukkot, Chanukah and Pesach. We are working constantly to ensure our community's hopes for lasting peace and security for Israelis, Palestinians and the wider Middle East are heard by governments in the UK, Israel, the US, Arab states, and beyond.

Defending our religious freedoms

We are constantly working to ensure our religious freedoms are protected. Our revised *Employer's Guide to Judaism* is helping Jews in the workplace and we are working with other faith communities to have Judaism classified by government as an ethnicity as well as a religion, which will help ensure the protection of Jewish rights in all fields.

Making our community more united, inclusive, and outward-looking

Within weeks of my election, I launched with Muslim communities the *Optimistic Alliance* to tackle anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim hatred; challenge extremism; support mainstream voices; and to defend shared religious freedoms.

Celebrating our faith, heritage, and culture as British Jews

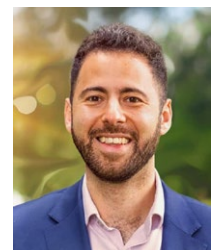
Next year we will have our first British Jewish Culture Month – an uplifting celebration of our history, arts, and contributions to society. It's an opportunity to demonstrate who we are, where we have come from and to share our unique heritage.

In short, we need Less Oy, and More Joy!

May the coming year bring peace to our people and our world.

Wishing you and your families a Shanah Tovah U'Metukah.

Phil Rosenberg
President



Our Hidden Treasure

Continuing his exploration of our Synagogue's library, **Minyanman** introduces two more volumes that will expand your knowledge and your mind.

By the time you read this, you may have just a few more days to work out how to be inscribed in the book of life at Rosh Hashanah – and ten days later hoping that the best possible fate will be sealed for you on Yom Kippur. With all that quasi-predestination how do you create some free will as you wander through the ensuing days of Sukkot? Where to find your inner simcha as the best sukkah protection from inner despair, as we observe first Shemini Atzeret, then finally receive our Sefer, the Torah itself, on Simchat Torah?

A few weeks ago, a blank space appeared on the wall of the upstairs corridor leading from our synagogue's sanctuary to our library. There was once an image there of one of our chairmen, who it seems has gone travelling. Is this a sign? It was just before Tisha B'Av, the commemoration of the destruction of the two Jerusalem temples, the Babylonian exile and other Jewish tragedies, from where our spiritual upheaval begins. I ask other former chairs which of their peers is missing but they all draw a blank. My own sense of literary exile grows, carrying around several books, wondering how to pull together a thread with common meaning.

So, I walk past that blank picture space, turn into our communal library, swivel left and reach for any of the similarly blank-faced books in section F – Jewish history. 'Mediaeval Jews – Harris' at F/H3.2 grabs my attention by its faceless cover and gothic font. I open it and a whole new old world erupts; a map of 'Europe from Charlemagne to the Crusades 800-1100'. The dedication in the book, 'Presented by the family of Rabbi J J Kokotek, March 1991' suggests that BSS's second rabbi has a suggestion rather than an answer to my question, inviting me to explore our past to help map out our upcoming itinerary.

Faded brown on the outside, crisp white on the inside, a hand-cut blank paper bookmark leads the casual browser into a deep read of Chapter X, pages 85-7. Is this Rabbi Kokotek speaking to us? The chapter focuses on the moral philosopher Bachya Ibn Pakudah, who flourished in Saragossa around the year 1040, one of the three Dayanim who decided on Jewish law for the community. His magnum opus, written in Arabic and translated into Hebrew, was *Chovot Halevavot* or Duties of the Heart. Why would the hand of Kokotek take me to the Bachya section? Is there a link to my ongoing big read from the library, 'A History of the Jews in Christian Spain' by Yitzhak Baer – a gift from Mr & Mrs Ludwig Berlin in 1993, at FD/B2I? My interest is sparked by my own Ibn Daud/De Sola family's exodus after 800-plus years in Spain. I find that Harris, page 111, tells us of my ancestor, Abraham Ibn Daud, born in 1110.

The next day Cantor Heller's sermon highlights the Haftarah reading for the first portion of Devarim and the topic 'Words'. We are reminded that the Torah reading focuses on the words of God, and that over the coming weeks we would focus on perhaps our most definitive statement of identity, the Shema Yisrael. We took those words into Ha Eretz and all our lands of exile. In that Haftarah, Isaiah condemns people of Judah and Jerusalem for their poor behaviour and tells them that he wants them to 'Cease to do evil; learn to do good; devote yourselves to justice; aid the wronged; uphold the rights of the orphan; defend the cause of the widow.' It all suddenly feels very modern.

So back to that blank space on the wall. To inscribe ourselves into the book of life in readiness for Rosh Hashanah, we can look back to that Haftarah, and most of our former rabbis are also on hand. Just find those books with their families' dedications in our own library. The ones with no pictures on the cover tend to have the most to say.

As told to James Daud Rossiter



NEW MEMBERS' BREAKFAST

On Shabbat morning 5 July, the Synagogue hosted a pre-service breakfast to welcome recently joined members. Around twenty new and prospective members chatted to members of the Synagogue Board while enjoying a delicious breakfast prepared by Juliette Klein. The relaxed occasion was thoroughly enjoyed by all attending, including Sally Jay, who commented, 'Neither of us in the recent past have belonged to a synagogue, and having joined Belsize Square recently, felt a great community spirit and a lovely sense of belonging and everybody was so warm and kind.'



GREETINGS FROM THE EDITORS

Alex Antscherl and David Horwell wish all readers of Our Congregation l'shana tova and well over the fast.

Please send us your contributions for future issues – news, reviews and interviews on topics that you care about. We would love to hear from more of you in 5786.

NEWS FROM ABERNEIN MANSIONS NW.3.

Dear Fellow Members

We are now coming into what the Americans call Foul and we say Autum, but put an unannounced letter 'n' et the ent of the wort, for know apparent reason. For uns, of cause, it is the most howly time from the year. Roshoshono und Yom Kipper are just a phew weeks away. The repairs for both the Rabbi und Chasan must be in tents. Won riding a magnitude of sermans und the other preserving his vital cords vile deep in rehearsing with the quire und quire muster. I don't envoy them these tusks.

In this time off year Mrs Klopstick's globe-treading is very much curtailed, so she concentrates on her athslaetic eggivities. She has recently added the dabble jump to her range off feeldt sports und the forehundert hoidles on the dreck. She has also taken on a drainer who is putting her threw her pieces. During a recent pole walt prectise session she sought she hat pulled her hemp string, but sankfully it turned out that her draining shorts were just two tight.

There is big excitement hear in Abernein Mansions. Mr und Mrs Krankenhaus will be soon celebrating there seventeafifths wedding anyworserly. A roomer was thirculating that this unpresidented ewent will be attended by Sir Dick Khan, the London Major. Quiet a phew off the inmates are not so keen on Sir Dick und wanted to protext. Finally, it came out that it was only a Mr Maier who was on the Krankenhaus's gast list.

Not so wide in the distance is both Sukkos und Simchas Torah. Several hear are edvocating the bilding of a communal Sukkah in the garden. Although I am more then willing to spent the nights stargazing with my wife, I am not in favour of chairing this with the other inmates. Too much schnarsching und cuffing for my liking. For Simchas Torah I am looking foreword to the unrevelling of the Torah und ploughing the schildren with sweeds und lolly pubs.

With the best of intentions
Fritz Klopstick

ASK FRITZ

I have herd from many members who wood like to woolentear for security duty, but sink that they mite be to olden. In my appinion it is not a question from age. If you are able to stand und walk uneighted und are profishent in marshall arts such as Jewjitzu oder Funk Koo, than I see no reason why you should not be aloud to ware the high wizz jacket.

UNWANTED BIKES?

Clear space in your garage or shed for a good cause!

I repair unwanted adult or children's bikes – in any condition – to be given to refugees and other people in need in North London, via a charity awtf.org. I will collect.

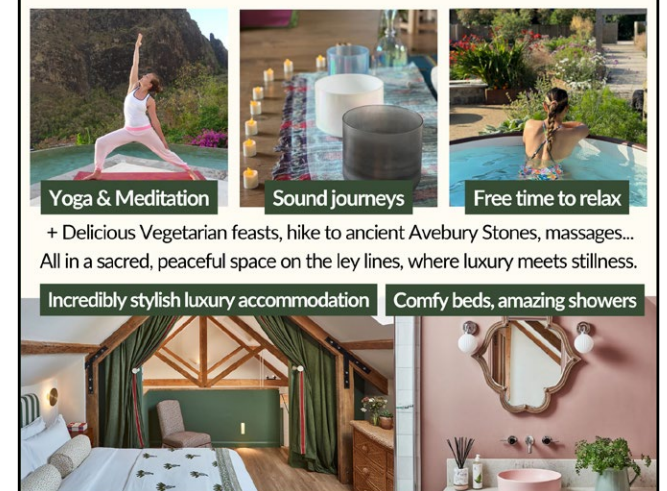
Please email
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Please contact me, Stuart Miller,
on 07821 938944 or stuartmiller88@gmail.com



CST wishes all of our **community** a
Chag Sameach and a better year ahead.

We also want to thank you for the last two years. We want to thank you for the **trust** and the support you have given to CST as we do our utmost to give you safety and **security**.

We want to thank you for being determined to lead the Jewish lives of your choice: because that is why CST does our work. If we have helped to give you strength, then that is our privilege.

Security begins with the partnership between you, your communities and CST. We know that security measures can be annoying, but they need to be there for when times are tough.

The last two years have shown the need for security. There has been far too much anti-Jewish hatred, including the threat of terrorism. Even if Israel somehow finds peace, it will take a very long time for the hatred and the terrorist threat across Britain to meaningfully decline.

Our partnership is with you, every member of our Jewish community. Your reports of antisemitism and suspicious behaviour give us what we need to best organise our security, and to get the support of police and politicians. When you follow our security advice, it not only helps your own safety, it also helps the safety of your family, friends and fellow congregants.

Your resilience and keeping calm, especially in tough times, are vital in projecting the basic strength of our community.

Our community is strong and so is CST. We are not separate to our community, we are part of it. You give us our personnel and we give the training, teamwork and skillset. That is how, in two years, we have more than doubled the number of events we are guarding, working three times the number of hours.

CST's professionalism means we manage £18m of government money that pays for commercial (not CST) security guards to work at our schools, shuls and community centres. Hundreds of those sites have CCTV and radio connection to our 24/7 National Security Control Centre.

We still need more people to help in this vital work. If you are physically capable of joining us please do so and don't leave it up to others.

A deep thank you to all of our volunteer security personnel. Some of you have protected our communities for a very long time and then, after 7 October 2023, you stepped it up to yet another level. Others have joined us after that fateful day, bringing more strength when we really needed it.

Thanks to all of our community for supporting CST. From all of us, we wish you a Happy New Year, and a safe and meaningful fast.

Chag Sameach

Report suspicious activity and antisemitism to CST at cst.org.uk/report

EMERGENCY National Emergency Number (24-hr) **0800 032 3263**

NON-EMERGENCY London **020 8457 9999** | Manchester **0161 792 6666** | Leeds **0113 237 1980**

Community Security Trust is a registered charity in England and Wales (1042391) and Scotland (SC043612)





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BOOK REVIEW

A new book sheds light on Fredy Hirsch

THE TEACHER OF AUSCHWITZ

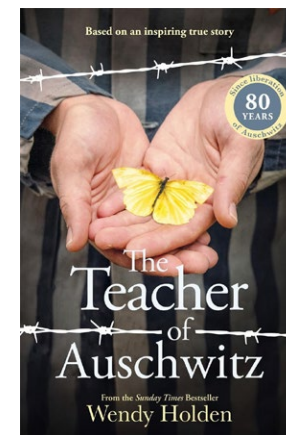
Eve Hersov reviews the book and a talk by its author

When the Association of Jewish Refugees organized a talk by Wendy Holden about her newest book, *The Teacher of Auschwitz*, I was keen to attend. One of her earlier books *Born Survivors*, which detailed the lives of three surviving babies born in the camps at the end of the war, was a captivating and fascinating work. Wendy Holden is a non-Jewish journalist and writer who spent 25 years as a foreign and war correspondent for *The Daily Telegraph*. She has a passion for war stories and was inspired by a father whose mantra was 'be kind'.

Wendy has written over 40 books, five of which focus on the Holocaust. It was in writing another of her books, *One Hundred Miracles*, about pianist Zuzana Ruzickova, that she first came across Fredy Hirsch, 'the teacher of Auschwitz'. Fredy was a Zionist and youth organiser born in Germany, who fled to Czechoslovakia aged 15 and eventually directed Youth Welfare at Terezin before being deported to Auschwitz. There he was given a position of responsibility for a Children's Block for young deportees, which attracted the attention of Mengele and Eichmann who attended some of the musicals that Fredy staged with the children. Fredy's aim was to provide as much normality and decency as possible for the children and he recruited talented artists and teachers to assist in this goal. His focus on their welfare meant that every surviving child whom Wendy Holden was able to trace, or who had left testimony, spoke warmly of a man who clearly was an inspiration. Fredy spoke High German and networked both with officers and guards with chutzpah and dramatic flair, while also connecting with the Resistance.

Because there are no surviving records of the Auschwitz ‘Children’s Block’, Wendy Holden decided to write this book as a biography of Fredy, which she has done with skill, recreating his voice based upon the testimony of survivors, contextual materials and artistic licence as a storyteller. This in no way detracts from a story that captures your attention and details a harrowing bit of history.

I have purchased a copy for the Belsize Square Library. It is a sad reality that Wendy Holden, a non-Jewish author writing about the Holocaust, must have armed security when she does book tours in the USA. It is all the more reason to study the lives of people like Fredy Hirsch whose defiance against a fascist regime defined him.



REMEMBERING

Naomi Stadlen

Belsize member Naomi Stadlen, psychotherapist, acclaimed author and expert on motherhood and parenting, died on 6 June 2025. Her final book, *A Grand Quarrel: Elizabeth Gaskell, Florence Nightingale and Mothers Today*, was published by Montag and Martin just before her death. There are lengthy and highly appreciative obituaries on the *Jewish Chronicle* and *Guardian* websites. Our condolences are sent to Naomi's husband Anthony.



Anna Gordon/Guardian

MAZAL TOV TO OUR CHATAN AND CALLAH

At Simchat Torah our Synagogue will be honouring two people who play an active part in our community with the special aliyot that mark the end and recommencement of the Torah reading cycle.



Our Chatan Torah will be **Mike Schraer**, one of our Wardens. A Shabbat morning regular with his wife Sue, Mike is accomplished at leyning and chanting the Haftarahs. He goes through life never flustered and has a kind word for everyone.



Our Callah Bereshit will be **Dilys Tausz**, who contributes an enormous amount not only to Belsize Square but to the wider Jewish Community as one of our three representatives on the Board of Deputies. A wise voice on our Board for many years, she is also the calm and caring organiser of our family services at the High Holydays.

THE BELSIZE SQUARE SYNAGOGUE PRAYER BOOKS

Edited and translated by
Rabbi Rodney J Mariner

Belsize Square Synagogue is the only Jewish community in this country which has published a collection of prayerbooks for Shabbat, High Holydays and Festivals, specifically designed for worshippers to appreciate all aspects of its religious services.

First published over twenty years ago, the new books have been digitally reformatted to produce clearer texts and an improved layout, as well as updating our prayers.



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CHANUKAH MARKET

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CROSSING BORDERS

Join us as we welcome back
soprano **Shira Karmon**
and the **Wallace Ensemble**

Sunday 26 October, 7pm
at Belsize Square Synagogue

Shira won the hearts of her Belsize Square audience last year with a Viennese showcase. She returns this year to sing pieces by Israeli composer Eyal Bat, a dear friend of hers who passed away earlier this year, as well as work by Ravel, Bernstein and Dvorak

PROGRAMME
Eyal Bat (UK Premiere)
Maurice Ravel
Leonard Bernstein
Selected songs

Interval

Antonin Dvorak
Symphony No.9
From the New World

Email adam@synagogue.org.uk to book.
No charge for admission, opportunity to donate to BSS at the door

The Wallace Ensemble

Soprano:
Shira Karmon

Conductors:
Benjamin Wolf
and **Philip Keller**



Credit: Georg Buchner

COMMUNITY NEWS

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a cordial welcome to:
Shivrup & Oliver Rochman with daughter Rani

BNEI MITZVAH

Mazal tov to Sandra & Roy Kashi on the Bat Mitzvah of their daughter Eviana on Saturday 6 September

Mazal tov to Elaine Bernstein on her Bat Mitzvah on Saturday 20 September

Mazal tov to Katya & Matthew Kirk on the Bat Mitzvah of their daughter Rachel on Saturday 25 October

Mazal tov to Emily Ross & Tom Joannou on the Bat Mitzvah of their daughter Olive on Saturday 1 November

MARRIAGE

Mazal tov to Pamela Duncan & Dan Tapiero, who were married on Thursday 7 August

DEATHS

We regret to announce the passing of
Fred Gluecksmann on 27 July
Joel Finler on 2 August

BSS GOLF DAY

Adam Hurst zigzags the fairways and reports on Belsize's summer sporting event

At 8.15am on a warm Sunday morning in July a cross-generational group of BSS members and guests arrived in Radlett, fully kitted out and ready to engage in the game Winston Churchill described as one 'whose aim is to hit a very small ball into an even smaller hole, with weapons singularly ill-designed for the purpose'.

After a cup of tea, Danish pastries and some pre-emptory kvetching about various aches and ailments (to get those excuses in early), battle commenced. Over four hours and 18 holes later, the intrepid teams gradually arrived back at the clubhouse for lunch, buzzing with stories of birdies, bogeys, great drives, shots that landed right in the middle of the fairway, except on the wrong hole, and chips and putts that would have made Rory McIlroy proud.

Co-organiser Adam Davis completed some detailed calculations and, with anticipation reaching fever pitch, he announced that his own team had won the inaugural BSS golf day. They were presented with prizes and a gleaming trophy, with awards also made for 'nearest the pin' and 'longest drive'.

A great day was had by all. As Arnold Palmer said, 'Golf is deceptively simple and endlessly complicated; it satisfies the soul and frustrates the intellect. It is at the same time rewarding and maddening – and it is without a doubt the greatest game mankind has ever invented.'



Top: L-R Co-organiser Martyn Fisher, with Julian Shaw, Rob Nothman and Jennifer Fisher

Bottom: Co-organisers Adam Davis and Adam Hurst

BELSIZE SQUARE WEDDINGS

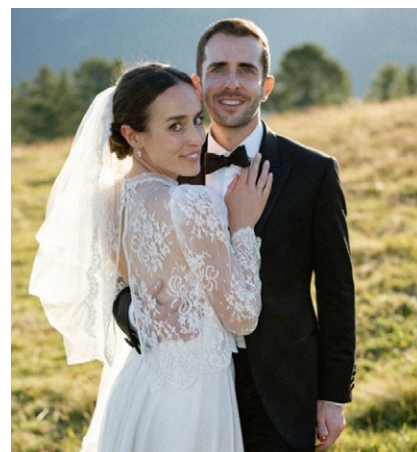
We are delighted to record that there were several weddings of Belsize Square members in 5785. Mazal tov to all the happy couples!



Dylan Lazarus and Suze Miller, 8 June 2025



Rafi Herman and Georgina James, 22 June 2025



Dan Tapiero and Pamela Duncan, 7 August 2025

BSS ISRAEL CHARITY

Yemin Orde Youth Village

An update from Susan Weijel, Deputy Director, and Racheli Yaso, Director of Outreach, on life at Yemin Orde, one of the three Israeli charities supported by Belsize Square Synagogue.

The ongoing war has unavoidably affected life. Approximately 40% of our informal educational staff were called up for reserve duty this year. In late 2024, the return of our Village Director, Boaz Schwartz, after eight months on continuous reserve duty, was a significant moment.

In June 2025 the outbreak of war with Iran forced us to pivot rapidly. Residents with family in Israel were sent home, while 39 students without safe alternatives remained at Yemin Orde. Our summer programmes began online before resuming at the Village. Throughout these challenges, our focus was on supporting our youth. In the words of Boaz Schwartz: *'We cannot wait for later. We must navigate reality with flexibility, wisdom and determination.'*

THERAPEUTIC CARE

At the heart of Yemin Orde's work is our comprehensive therapeutic care programme, delivered by a multidisciplinary team of psychotherapists, social workers, psychologists, art therapists and a psychiatrist. The ongoing war has heightened the complexity and severity of the mental health challenges our youth are facing. For many, including 130 youngsters who arrived from Ukraine in 2022, the trauma of war overlaps with the challenge of adjusting to a new life in Israel, as well as adolescence.

Every young person in the Village benefits from weekly psycho-educational groups, facilitated by their social worker and educator. Many also receive individual therapy. Art therapy provides a vital outlet for those who struggle with verbal expression. In response to growing concerns around substance abuse, we introduced a 12-step group in Russian, in addition to the

existing Hebrew-speaking groups, to help develop healthier coping mechanisms. We hope to expand our therapeutic services to reduce waiting times and support more youngsters.

ECO-FARM

Goat Pen: A therapeutic space with 64 goats. We launched an artisanal goat milk soap-making pilot programme for 12 young people, which we hope to expand.

Heritage Trees Project: Six students participated in an expedition to the Golan Heights, collecting cuttings from centuries-old trees to cultivate a living genetic bank that preserves species native to our Carmel region. Over 500 saplings were planted.

Green Baskets: Our sustainable agriculture programme offers fresh vegetables and herbs to local customers. The youngsters manage everything from planting and harvesting to marketing and delivery, gaining business and life skills.

Apiary Revival: This year we relaunched beekeeping, establishing five healthy colonies. This programme encourages patience, respect for nature and valuable knowledge.

Throughout these challenges, our focus was on supporting our youth

TIKKUN OLAM

Our Tikkun Olam programme nurtures empathy and social responsibility through community service, including hospital visits, delivering food packages to families in need, helping at a soup kitchen, supporting elderly people, and assisting in the rehabilitation of abused dogs.

GRADUATE SUPPORT: LIFELONG COMMITMENT AND SUCCESS

Yemin Orde's Graduate Support Programme helps alumni navigate the complex transitions to military service, higher education and careers. This year, the programme's efforts have been particularly crucial, especially for those graduates who lack a strong support system. Yemin Orde is a vital source of stability and connection on the journey towards independence.

New initiatives include the Yemin Toring programme, pairing eight graduates with mentors from elite IDF units, who support their career development and emotional resilience. One inspiring success story is that of T.P., a 2016 graduate from Ethiopia. After completing combat service in the IDF, T.P. entered the tech sector and, through this mentorship, gained the skills and confidence to secure a promotion. This year, 182 scholarships were awarded, enabling graduates to pursue academic fields ranging from engineering to social work to technology. Despite obstacles posed by the war, our graduates have shown remarkable resilience. The Graduate Support Programme is a pillar for Yemin Orde's alumni as they build their futures in the face of adversity.

Yemin Orde remains deeply committed to our young residents and graduates, providing stability and opportunity amid uncertainty. The war has intensified challenges but has also strengthened our community and resolve. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Belsize Square Synagogue for your unwavering support. Your partnership enables us to nurture resilience, growth and hope for the young people entrusted to our care. Together, we are building not just brighter futures, but a stronger, more inclusive Israel.

SERVICES

Friday evenings at 6.45pm

Saturday mornings at 10.00am

Kikar Kids – Junior Shabbat Service

Saturday 6 September; 4 October; 1 November

11.00am in the crèche for under 5s Service

11.00am in the library for 5-9-year-olds

11.30am Kids Kiddush

Contact Richard on rgpollins@gmail.com for more information

HIGH HOLYDAYS 5786 / 2025

High Holydays and Yomim Tovim Services

ROSH HASHANAH

1st Eve

Monday 22 September

Service at 6.45pm

1st Day

Tuesday 23 September

Service at 9.30am

2nd Eve

Tuesday 23 September

Service at 6.45pm

2nd Day

Wednesday 24 September

Service at 9.30am

SUCCOT

1st Eve

Monday 6 October

Service at 6.45pm

1st Day

Tuesday 7 October

Service at 10.00am

2nd Eve

Tuesday 7 October

Service at 6.45pm

2nd Day

Wednesday 8 October

Service at 10.00am

KOL NIDREI

Wednesday 1 October

Service at 6.45pm

(fast starts 6.23pm)

YOM KIPPUR

Thursday 2 October

Service at 10.00am

(fast ends at 7.18pm)

SHEMINI ATZERET

Eve

Monday 13 October

Service at 6.45pm

Day

Tuesday 14 October

Service at 10.00am

SIMCHAT TORAH

Eve

Tuesday 14 October

Under 5s party at 5.00pm

Service at 6.45pm

Day

Wednesday 15 October

Service at 10.00am

CHEDER AND BEIT MITZVAH

Sunday mornings 9.30am–12.30pm

Enquiries to Head: Caroline Loison

caroline@synagogue.org.uk

Start of Term Sunday 7 September

Half Term Sunday 26 October and 2 November

End of Term Sunday 14 December

ADULT DISCUSSION GROUP

Meetings take place on Sunday mornings in term-time.

Programme will be in the News from the Square emails every Thursday.

For further information, please contact Claire Walford
claire.walford@yahoo.com.

SYNAGOGUE HELP LINES

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London NW3 4HX

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www.synagogue.org.uk

SYNAGOGUE OFFICE HOURS

Mon–Thu: 9.00am–5.30pm

Friday: 9.00am–2.00pm

SYNAGOGUE LIBRARY

Open to members during
office hours

RABBI

Rabbi Gabriel Botnick

rabbi@synagogue.org.uk

To book an in-person,
video or telephone
appointment with Rabbi
Botnick, please email his
PA Claire Austin:
claire@synagogue.org.uk

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hours phone Synagogue

Evenings/weekends phone
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020 8958 2112

OUR CONGREGATION

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Associate Editor:

David Horwell

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Contributions to
alexantscherl@me.com or
the Synagogue office

HIGH HOLYDAYS 5786 / 2025

High Holyday Tickets & Information

Synagogue members should have received a pack in mid-August with all the information required for the High Holyday services, together with their tickets. If you have not received your pack yet, please contact the Synagogue Office as soon as possible. Application for tickets is only required for non-members. Information on non-members' tickets and on prayer books as well as transport requirements/volunteer provision are all included in the pack.

Please contact the Synagogue Office if you would like to discuss any aspect of these arrangements.



Shana Tova

*The Rabbi, Cantor and their families,
Honorary Officers, Members of the
Board and Staff extend their best
wishes to all our members for a
healthy and peaceful New Year.*