

June / July / August
2010

Number 40

NLPJC Newsletter

North London Progressive Jewish Community



NLPJC events....

• Ella Tober Collins ~ Bat Mitzvah

Ella Tober Collins is having her Bat Mitzvah on 19th June. Haggid and Paul would like to invite everyone to the celebration kiddush and music after the service –see back page

• So you want to be Jewish?

Sunday 13th June 2010, 3 - 6pm

A workshop for anyone thinking about becoming Jewish by choice. Led by Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu, this stand alone workshop is for anyone who has ever thought about converting to Judaism. Partners are also very welcome. See pg 2 for details
Cost: £20 / £10 Concessions

• New Adult Learning

A new 6 week course begins on 15th June with our Talmud Class and a Conversion course (and Beginner's Hebrew if there is enough interest). See pg 2 for more details

• From Seville to Salonika...

Book now for our wonderful evening of music and story telling on **Sunday 4th July** – see insert (page 3) for details

• Yeshaya Lomotey ~ Bar Mitzvah

Yeshaya will be Bar Mitzvah at the service on Saturday 17th July – everyone is welcome! See back page

Our 100 club winners were.....

- ❖ Daniel Pollock & Grace Baynes (March)
- ❖ Davina Good (April)
- ❖ Daniel Pollock & Grace Baynes (May)

The winning total each month was £45 – it's not too late to join!

See our website at www.nlpjc.org.uk

All Change?

My last newsletter article was all about change, so it seems a bit strange to begin with this theme again. Yet many of us will be thinking about coping with changes.

Our country is adjusting to a brand new government. We will be weighing up the impacts and thinking about the challenges ahead. It will be interesting to see how we react to any difficulties we might face. I can imagine two possible scenarios; and I will call them 'turning outwards' or 'closing in'. Closing in is likely to happen when any of us becomes preoccupied with our own troubles. Financial struggles or worry about jobs, concerns about our health or stress in a family can all be quite isolating. It is easy to think that everything else can wait till the problems are solved. Worlds get smaller, as we bring our attention to a much more narrow focus, the challenge of just getting through life. This is a strategy used by

individuals, or sometimes by families, and even, at times by entire communities. I worry that some of us might be at risk of this kind of isolation, because I don't think it helps us much.

Taking up a much stricter focus on working and earning might feel like the only answer to a tough economic situation. But we need to allow space for surprising things to happen, for laughter, for friendship, even the possibility of lifting someone else out of their gloomy preoccupations!

So what's the alternative?

Decide to be different! Resist isolation. Talking about our troubles can sometimes create an opportunity for others to share theirs. But don't stop there. Decide that more than ever we need to laugh. To invite each other into our homes. To broaden our circles and deepen our friendships. To see that if

we are struggling we are even more equal.

I am aware, writing this, that NLPJC members are as a rule incredibly involved in their local communities, and a large number of you are working for a better, fairer community, for equality and for justice. So much of this may seem superfluous. But I think that these times can invite us to think about the things that really matter to us.

Beyond our practical realities it is time to ask, am I living the life I should be living? Am I merely sleepwalking? How can my life, our lives, have more value and meaning?

The economic crisis is in reality a kind of ethical crisis, since it involves such a massive loss of trust. If we build this trust, more strongly in each other, perhaps in some way we can carry each other through.

Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu

WELCOMING CEREMONY

On Saturday 15th May a special service was held to welcome our new children at NLPJC. To quote our warden, Joanna Ryam, "It was an amazing, wonderful and beautiful children's naming service, and I thought summed up the very best of everything in our community."

We welcomed:

Maya, daughter of Anna & Damian
Naomi, daughter of Rachel

Lina, daughter of Rebekka, Shulamit & Gil
Matteo, Francesca & Antonio, children of Kitty & Pedro

Tamar & Eve, daughters of Nogah & Clifford, Jocelyn & Asher, children of Cath & Sam

Nina, daughter of Rachel & Matthew and Abigail, daughter of Rebecca & Alex



liberal **judaism**

NLPJC is a constituent congregation of Liberal Judaism

Ki Thissa ~ A Word on the Welcome

I have throughout my life always looked forward to the time when I would deliver a dvar Torah and I said to myself, I will research and prepare a full on, hand clapping, fist pounding dvar Torah to inspire and move. As good as if James Brown or Mary Robinson had been a Rabbi here with nodding heads aplenty and maybe a tear of joy.

But if there is one thing I have learnt in the welcome by this community it is not what it said about how to live our lives or interpret Torah but the simple fact of companionship that makes it special.

What I find welcoming about NLPJC is that everyone is clear about their beliefs and that – and here's the best bit - accepting of others', even though there may be a difference of opinion. And do we have differences?

In the parashah, the Eternal one reveals himself to Moses in a cloud and proclaims his attributes.

However we individually perceive Moses' experience on the mount, I often think of the attributes of God and wonder at their meaning.

But first Moses has to make his own tablets to replace the ones he smashed during the incident of the golden calf.

In smashing the first tablets that contained the ten commandments (Charlton Heston moment) is there a bit of act consequentialism at play here? Was Moses

morally right to behave in that way to benefit others?

Moses then is asked to make his own tablets. Hew stones like unto...

Like free riding, how much of an effect will Moses' single action have? Compare to say climate change, will my own single actions push the planet over the edge? The piddling few grams of carbon if I leave that light on.

Maybe there is a message here of how moral or ethical is it to free ride? We need to accept maybe that our actions however small do impact on everything.

The tablets smashed and made again were not something small, their impact has resounded throughout history.

This brings me to think about morals and ethics and the next verses when Moses climbs and God speaks from inside the cloud.

וַיַּעֲבֹר יְהוָה | עַל-פְּנֵי וַיִּקְרָא יְהוָה |
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן אַרְךָ אַפַּיִם
 וְרַב-חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת:

"God passed by before and proclaimed, 'Adonai, Adonai, compassionate, omnipotent, merciful and kind, slow to anger, with tremendous resources of love and truth.'"

According to Maimonides, the 12th century philosopher, these attributes are

not to be taken literally, but understood as attributes of the Eternal which inform us not 'who' God is but how God acts.

And I think this is probably what is meant in the Torah, Genesis 1:27 when it explains that humanity is created in God's image.

God acts in this way, so should we. Compassion and kindness, mercy, justice and truth.

We have the capacity within us to emulate and live these attributes ourselves, which is probably for me a key thing learnt from the Torah. It's about ethics.

As Jews and especially as Liberal Jews we can argue that all of our actions should be guided by what can be called ethics.

Ethics can be defined as a code of morals or more simply, right or wrong behaviour.

Going back to what I said at the beginning, the ethics or codes of behaviour in this community, especially the compassion and kindness, the understanding of each other's differences is what shines and those values should be cherished.

Don't let them go.

6th March 2010

Michael Lomotey's Dvar Torah

NLPJC Adult Learning Programme ~ June to July 2010

So You Want to be Jewish? Sunday 13th June 2010, 3-6pm

A workshop for anyone thinking about becoming Jewish by choice. Led by Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu, this stand alone workshop is for anyone who has ever thought about converting to Judaism. Partners are also very welcome. Cost: £20 / £10 Concessions

Where You Go I Will Follow ~ Jewish by Choice

A Six Week Course, Tuesday evenings 7-8pm 15th June - 20th July 2010

A Beginner's introductory course for anyone considering converting to Judaism. We will:

- ❖ explore the conversion process
- ❖ begin to explore some of the key areas of learning,
- ❖ such as prayer, practise, Jewish history and culture
- ❖ create a supportive and friendly group



The Talmud class A Six Week Course, Tuesday evenings 8 - 9.30pm 15th June - 20th July 2010

The Talmud Class will learn to work its way, page by page, through the Talmud. We will study Tractate *Berachot*. This class is open to people with any level of Hebrew, or none at all, and with any level of experience in textual study. We will work with the original languages of the Talmud together with a translation.

Beginner's Hebrew

If there is enough interest, there will also be a Beginner's Hebrew course on Tuesday evenings, from 8-9pm – please let us know if you would be interested in signing up for this course.

Sessions attended per week	Members of NLPJC	Members Concs	Non-Members	Non-members Concs
1	£60 per term	£30 per term	£90 per term	£45 per term
2	£120 per term	£60 per term	£180 per term	£90 per term

Please let us know if you are interested in any of the above classes by either emailing us at nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org or calling Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu on 0207 403 3779

Venue for all classes: The Community Rooms, St. Mary's Church, Spensley Walk (off Stoke Newington Church St) N16 9ES



North London Progressive Jewish Community Present

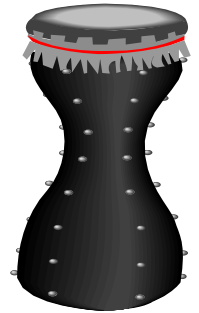
From Seville to Salonika, from Sarajevo to Sfad

An evening of Ladino & other Jewish Songs with storytelling ~ ranging across the Mediterranean world of Andalusia, the Balkans, North Africa, Palestine

with sounds of the gedulka, the shruti, darbuka and guitar



**Presented by
Sef Townsend and Rebekka Wedell
with Ishmael Nacar**



A summer evening fund-raiser for NLPJC
Sunday 4th July 2010

**6pm baklava* & wine reception in rectory garden
7pm concert and storytelling**

* home-made by Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu!

Tickets (include a glass of wine): £15 each / £10 concs

Please send in reply slip below with payment by Monday 21st June

At: The Rectory Gardens & The Community Rooms adjacent to St. Mary's Church, Spensley Walk, off Stoke Newington Church St, London N16 9ES

NLPJC, PO Box 42702, London N19 5WR

nljpc@liberaljudaism.org www.nlpjc.org.uk Registered Charity 1097713

NLPJC is a constituent congregation of Liberal Judaism

To book please send in the reply slip below with payment

NAME(S).....

Address.....

Telephone & E-mail.....

I am waged/unwaged (delete as appropriate) and would liketickets and I enclose a payment of £..... (Please make cheques payable to NLPJC)

***Please return this reply slip to NLPJC, PO Box 42702,
London N19 5WR with payment by Monday 21st June at the latest.
Your tickets will be e-mailed to you***

NLPJC Network

**A friendly network for
NLPJC members and
friends**

**Coming soon! Watch out!
Live from July 2010 onwards**



There is going to be a new NLPJC social network starting in July for NLPJC members and their friends. This will give everyone who wishes to join in the opportunity

to communicate with each other. There will be chances to discuss issues, share videos, pictures or ideas and send messages. Each person will have their own page as well as sharing common spaces. The network will be safe as everyone joining will be approved. It is also a chance for those people who do not usually get involved with on-line networking to dip in and gain confidence within a friendly virtual environment.

There is no compulsion to join but obviously, the greater number of people involved, the more vibrant and interesting the network will become.

Some of the reasons for the network are

- Members can send messages to one another either publically or privately
- Events and outings can be announced and arrangements made to meet and go out with others eg Jewish Book Week, Jewish Film Festival
- Favourite videos and pictures can be shared especially those of a Jewish or related topic
- Members and friends who have moved aboard or elsewhere in the UK can still be part of NLPJC and share news
- Friends who are interested in the community can become part of the network
- It will be an additional service we offer as a community
- It can be a form of promotion for us
- It will be a creative way of working and playing together and keeping in touch

The network is ready, very attractive but we will have to wait until July as there are changes afoot within the organisation that offers the virtual framework housing the network. So as soon as we can go live in July there will be a thread message sent out and everyone will be invited to join the network. All you will then have to do is apply, get approved and explore the site and click away, add content and enjoy being part of this exciting project.

Jackie Richards

Liberal Judaism's Biennial ~ Hope and dancing for the Future

Imagine taking a taxi from Bristol train station. You are driven about 20 minutes and then turn into an amazing forest-like area, starting with gardens and a folly and ending with a beautiful building which looks like a castle. It is, in fact, the Tortworth Court Four Pillars Hotel, and is a grade II Victorian mansion. When you arrive at the desk, the young people smile and are only too happy to help you – they offer, without you asking, to help you take your bag to your room. There is even a swimming pool. Bliss.

I spent a most wonderful weekend at the Liberal Judaism Biennial from 16 - 18 April in this hotel. Of course it wasn't all hearts and flowers. Some of it was hard work – mostly talking and listening, but hard work nonetheless.

Both the Liberals and the Reform Jews have Biennials – strangely enough every two years. Two years ago, the Biennial was held in this same hotel, and I found it so energizing that I had been determined to repeat the experience.

I learn a lot at the Biennials. This year I learned a great deal about the history of the Reform and Liberal Jewish relationships, about social action and the websites that give one a lot of information and how to swing dance – Saturday night after dinner we had a swing session, with music and teachers from the London Swing Dance Society. It is amazing what one learns about fellow Liberal Jews when you see them on the dance floor. Danny Rich even won a prize for his elegant footwork.

The primary speaker on Saturday morning was Anthony Harvey, formerly Canon Theologian and Sub Dean of Westminster. He is Chair of the Churches' Refugee Network, and has written a book entitled "Asylum in Britain: A Question of Conscience." He spoke with clarity and wit and everybody in the room felt the power of his words. I even bought the book.

In another session, Rabbi Shoshana Boyd Gelfand, new leader of Reform Judaism, and Danny Rich had a dialogue which showed me some of the differences / similarities between the two movements. As a relative newcomer to Liberal Judaism I listened open mouthed to some of the historical information. It was also interesting to hear how the two movements felt they could work together in the future.

Another session I went to was on social action, where two young activists taught us how to use the internet to find information and suggested ways of using that information in our Chederim.

There was a special heady atmosphere of learning and enjoyment this year – the sun shone every day, too, which got people smiling. The informality and mix of attendees means that you meet people from all over the country. You can discuss practical, philosophical, historical and spiritual issues with like-minded people.

The many interesting sessions allow

you to choose from a variety of old and new interests.

The food is good, too. And, oh yes, another interesting fact: some of the lovely gardens I could see as I turned into the drive are kept beautiful by the male prisoners from the open prison next door.

I can't wait until 2012.

Laura Miller

NLPJC Members News

**A warm welcome to our
new members:**

- ❖ Iona McCall & Daniel Grant
- ❖ Samantha Goldberg & Jodie Mullish
- ❖ Vicky Millan
- ❖ Simon Bayly ~ husband of our member Lisa Baraitser, and Joel and Saul's dad
- ❖ Damian Zane, Anna Feldman and Maya & Felix

Mazel Tov

- ❖ Nadine Holland & Robin Adamski, on the birth of their baby daughter Ruby Norma Adamski on 23rd April
- ❖ Iona McCall & Daniel Grant on the occasion of their marriage on 2nd May
- ❖ Ruth Whippman & Neil Levine on the occasion of their marriage on 9th May
- ❖ Karen Glass & Toby Reynolds on the occasion of their marriage blessing on 15th May

Condolences

Our thoughts are with the families and friends of our members who sadly passed away recently:

Frances Barker passed away on 25th February aged 74

Sadie Cohen passed away on 7th April aged 85

In the event of the death of an NLPJC member, please contact the Funeral Directors M.M. Broad & Son on 020 8445 2797 and Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu on 020 7403 3779.

CHEDER CORNER

The Cheder group is working (I hope) on their "Family Journeys" which again we are going to put into a book to show what we have done this year.

Yasmin, before she left, told us about her family and their journey from Spain and Turkey to Israel. We are going to look at Spain in more detail at the next session.

The "Family Journeys" should be the product of the family information and the young person's writing. In addition the young people will be asked to draw a picture of some part of their families' history. Also if a family has a photo of anything to do with the family - a person, an heirloom, an escutcheon, whatever - and if you wouldn't mind it being photographed for the booklet, please let me know.

The absolute deadline is the beginning of June - so if the families have been putting it off, this is crunch time, as they say. It needn't be long - a page to a page and a half. We will be putting into the booklet a map with the starting points of all of our families. So I think this has been a fascinating journey, and we will know a lot more about each other when the book comes out.

For our last session in July, as well as a bar mitzvah, we will be asking each family to bring in a photograph or something from the family, and to make an effort to bring in some food that they experienced from their background. (My grandmother was no vegetarian, but she made the most wonderful blintzes I have ever eaten, and I will try to make some on the day.) We would like to have a little exhibition and of course, some wonderful food.

As you probably know, we always start early to plan for next year, and so Shulamit and I have come up with a plan. We are going to work together to look at rituals - where they come from, why people have rituals, what different Jewish rituals are, and some other groups' rituals. We hope to encourage the young people to decide what kinds of rituals they would like themselves, and they will be taking part as well as reading about ritual.

At the same time, we will be looking at social action to go along with the various holidays. At the end we will have a film (on DVD) of the children's discussions and discoveries about rituals. Also, at the end of the year, we will be asking the Cheder to decide on a specific social action which they will

undertake for the following year. Leila Baker and I will be working on social action throughout the year, Leila more with the adults and me with the Cheder, but we will be working closely together.

As always, we would welcome comments / suggestions.

Laura Miller

Kesia & Ebony's Tu b'Shvat poem

Trees are wonderful
Trees give you oxygen
Trees are beautiful
Trees are pretty
Trees can help caterpillars
I like the leaves
Bushes have beautiful leaves
Flowers are colourful
Bumble bees love them
Ladybirds are beautiful
We love animals trees and birds
We never step on them
We love nature.

Kesia & Ebony
Age 6



Westlon Housing Association

Sheltered Accommodation

Westlon is a Jewish Housing Association
founded by members of the
West London Synagogue.

We have vacancies in our friendly, comfortable
warden-assisted sheltered housing for
Jewish people aged 55 and over,
in East Finchley and Hendon.

We provide 24-hour warden support, 7 days a
week, a residents' lounge and kitchen, laundry,
a sunny patio and garden.

For further details and application forms, please
contact Westlon Housing Association on
0208 201 8484 or email
johnsilverman@btconnect.com

Thinking of joining us?

If you've been thinking of joining us for a while...why not do it now? The membership year begins in January but we offer a pro-rata system for anyone joining throughout the year. You can contact our administrator, Julia Chalfen, at nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org for a membership pack or phone Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu on 020 7403 3779 to discuss membership options.

NLPJC 'Who's Who'

All officers and chair can be contacted at nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org or by post to PO Box 42702 London N19 5WR

Rabbi : Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu
Chair : Claire Helman
Hon. Secretary : Liz Reiner
Treasurer : Hannah Forbes
Education Chair : Sue Lukes
Head & Cheder Teacher : Dr Laura Miller
Hebrew Teacher : Yasmin max Sason
Volunteer Creche Worker : Anna Sklair
Parent Representative: Leila Baker
Prayers & Spirituality Co-ordinator: Maria Egan
Senior Warden: Joanna Ryam
Administrator : Julia Chalfen
Fund-raising Coordinator: Joanna Ryam
Membership Secretary : Jackie Richards
Marketing & Promotion: Claire Helman
Social Action Co-ordinator: Dan Ozarow
Befriending Co-ordinator: Sheila Melzak
Vacant Posts:
Youth; Intergenerational

Advertisements contained in the NLPJC Newsletter are the sole responsibility of the persons that post the advertisement. NLPJC does not make any guarantee as to the accuracy, completeness, truthfulness or reliability of such advertisements.

NLPJC Newsletter is edited by Julia Chalfen. The deadline for the Sept/Oct/Nov issue is Monday 16th August. Please send articles for publication to Julia at: nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org

If you are a member of NLPJC and are interested in joining one of the groups, or would like to fill one of the vacant roles, we would be delighted to hear from you.

NLPJC events calendar

June – August 2010

Most events are held at *the Community Rooms adjacent to St. Mary's Church, Spensley Walk, Stoke Newington Church Street, London N16 9ES*, unless otherwise stated

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Venue</u>
Tuesdays in June 15 th , 22 nd , 29 th	7pm, 8pm	Adult Learning: Conversion Course / Talmud Class <i>(see pg 2)</i>	
Saturday 5 th June	10am 10.40am 11am	Torah Breakfast Kol b'yachad service for children Shabbat Service (NO CHEDER OR CRECHE but toys available)	
Sunday 13 th June	3pm	SO YOU WANT TO BE JEWISH? Conversion Workshop <i>(see pg 2)</i>	
Saturday 19 th June	10am / 10am 10.40am / 10.50am 11am	Torah Breakfast / Children's Hebrew Kol b'yachad service for children / cheder & crèche Shabbat Service with ELLA TOBER COLLINS' Bat Mitzvah <i>(see front page)</i>	
Friday 25 th June	7.15pm / 8pm	Erev Shabbat Service / Supper & Event tba	
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Tuesdays in July 6 th , 13 th , 20 th	7pm, 8pm	Adult Learning: Conversion Course / Talmud Class <i>(see pg 2)</i>	
Saturday 3 rd July	10am / 10am 10.40am / 10.50am 11am	Torah Breakfast / Children's Hebrew Kol b'yachad service for children / Cheder & Crèche Shabbat Service	
Sunday 4 th July	6pm	FROM SEVILLE TO SALONIKA...Concert & story telling <i>(see pg 3)</i>	
Saturday 17 th July	10am / 10am 10.40am / 10.50am 11am	Torah Breakfast / Children's Hebrew Kol b'yachad service for children / cheder & creche Shabbat Service with YESHAYA LOMOTEYS' Bar Mitzvah <i>(see front page)</i>	
Friday 23 rd July	7.15pm / 8pm	Erev Shabbat Service / Supper & Event tba	
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Saturday 7 th August	10am 10.40am 11am	Torah Breakfast Kol b'yachad service for children Shabbat Service (NO CHEDER OR CRÈCHE but toys available)	
Saturday 21 st August	10am 10.40am 11am	Torah Breakfast Kol b'yachad service for children Shabbat Service (NO CHEDER OR CRÈCHE but toys available)	

Dates for your diary.....

EREV ROSH HASHANAH Wednesday 8th September
KOL NIDRE Friday 17th September
SUKKOT SERVICE & SUPPER Wednesday 22nd September
SIMCHAT TORAH SERVICE & SUPPER Wednesday 29th September

ROSH HASHANAH Thursday 9th September
YOM KIPPUR Saturday 18th September

Contact us at:

North London Progressive Jewish Community, PO Box 42702, London N19 5WR.

Call Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu on 020 7403 3779

email nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org or visit our website www.nlpjc.org.uk