

ALONIM

Magazine of the Bristol & West
Progressive Jewish Congregation

Kislev, Tevet, Sh'vat, Adar 5775
December 2014, January, February 2015



to the 13 Mitzvot Group

Dear Friends,

Thank you very much for the Rosh HaShana gift which Clare brought to me.

It was a beautiful surprise. I am very glad that you put your names on the so that I could think of you all as I enjoyed my New Year feast.

Thank you again for your generosity and loving-kindness.

With my love and every good wish for the year ahead,
from Sylvia



Winter Issue

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The children baked challot for Rosh Hashanah. A thank you letter from Sylvia Murray.

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ALONIM Contributions & Editorial Policy.

The editorial policy is to encourage contributions from all Synagogue members and  **ALONIM** readers, concerning any aspects of communal and Jewish life, including cultural and communal reviews, information concerning synagogue activities, letters and feedback, and articles of Jewish cultural and religious interest. Please send in your contributions by email wherever possible.

The editor will NOT print anonymous or unattributed articles. Contributors are asked to be aware of the need to protect the copyright of others. Opinions expressed in  **ALONIM** do not necessarily reflect those of the synagogue Council or the Editors.

Contributions and communications can be sent directly to the **Editor** at alonim@bwpjc.org. For postal contributions please contact the editor on **07989 974133**. If you are intending to send in unsolicited material please let the editor know ahead of the deadline..

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Editorial

Sheila Brill, Editor



write about what they've done or read. It's a constant delight for me, Mother Hen that I am!

Usual story – never quite sure if there will be enough content to fill the magazine – why do I worry? We're all busy people one way or another but still people find time to

The next issue of Alonim will be a little different from the usual, so watch out in March. But keep sending in your musings.

Happy holidays!

Membership News

**Sheila Wilson,
Membership Secretary**



Just to let you know I've got a new system for membership notices. Please email me at sheilapotash@gmail.com if there is anything you would like me to include in my membership report. I've got a new folder just waiting for your notices.

I'm looking forward to the Chanukkah party on the 21st December from 3.30 to 7.00 pm. Thinking about the latkes already!

Mazeltov

Oona Goldsworthy on her MSc in Leadership and Management from Warwick University and Liam Dwek for a 1st in medical neuroscience from Sussex University.

The Levy family on the marriage of Ros' daughter Susannah to Bradley Meers and in September, and on the marriage of Ros's daughter Cheryl to John Crudgington in July.

Joe Joseph on the marriage of his son, Oliver to Flora Boyd. And mazal tov as well to Joe on his engagement to his long-time partner, Rachel Thompson.

Lauren Schewitz-Bowers, her husband Geraint, and their son, Michael, on the new addition to their family, Joseph Adam Bowers, born Friday, 21 November.

Sheila Yeger on her graduation from UWE with a Masters of Arts in Fine Art.

Condolences

David Memel on the loss of his wife Deborah and his mother Bobby" Henny Memel.

Jonathan Bamber and his family, on the death of his mother Helen Bamber. Helen dedicated her life to support those who suffered extreme human cruelty because of human rights violations. I heard her speak when she came to the shul a few years ago, and she was truly a remarkable woman.

Sheila Brill and Frieda Pass on the death of a member of their family, Harvey Benjamin, who died after a long illness.

Sharon Buckley on the death of her mother, Doris, who passed away recently.

Brenda White, whose brother David Ayton, passed away recently.

Joan Solomon on the death of her husband, Professor Louis Solomon.

Melly Facey, whose sister, Rivka Nettel, died after a long illness.

Ruth Squire and Steve Harris on the death of their stepmother, Doreen Harris.

We wish them all long life.

Letter from the Chair

Ben Weinberger

As usual, we've spent the past few Council meetings working on a variety of issues; our more significant discussions recently have been about finance (getting a proper handle on the budget and ensuring fiscal responsibility), further improving communication, and participation. Our issues are no different than other synagogues' issues and, if anything, we seem to have a better grasp on most of them than many other communities do.



By the time this is published, you should have heard more details about the budget. As regards communication: I have heard plenty of positive feedback on the Wednesday email updates (big thanks to Miranda for those, by the way); we've also received positive feedback on the website (thanks to Ruth for that tireless effort); and, we've hosted and participated in various discussions (at the synagogue and elsewhere, in conjunction with other organisations). Still, we are constantly experimenting with other ways of improving communication and engagement and are happy to hear feedback to that end.

As regards participation, I've written previously about the need for everyone to be involved. Interestingly enough, as I received what must have been the third gentle reminder from Sheila to complete my column in time for publication (she's always very polite about it - really - though she must get frustrated chasing me - I would!) and I exchanged email with several other folks regarding things they're working on for the shul, I realised that many people are involved in different ways. That being said, there's always more to do, sometimes little things such as stuffing envelopes (which perhaps our youth can help with) or making phone calls or helping organise events; sometimes, it's bigger things like helping to deliver items to or visit those who are more immobile. If you (or your kids) can spare a little time and aren't sure what may be needed, please check-in with me.

One big item that has come up but which we have not yet progressed (because of various conflicts) is another DIY day for the synagogue. Last year we had a very successful DIY day and many of you gave-up your Sunday to accomplish a significant amount of improvement work. As you'd expect, there's always more to do. You may have noticed the various spots around the building which are in need of some plastering work or new paint. Additionally, there are other bits and pieces that would benefit from a more concerted effort. As such, we will now be scheduling another such day. Keep your eyes open for the next one!

Next up is our AGM, which is scheduled for Thursday, 15th January. We have several significant items to discuss, so, I hope to see all of you there.

Dancing to the Beat of a Jewish Heart

Rabbi Monique Mayer



Amidst the consumer frenzy of the December holiday season enters one of Judaism's most misunderstood Festivals: *Chanukkah*. We've all heard the story: a small band of heroic Jewish fighters, the Maccabees, stormed and recaptured the Temple from the Greeks, who had desecrated the sanctuary and let pigs run free within its sacred walls. After searching the building, the Maccabees found only one sealed cruse of oil to rekindle the *menorah* in the Temple, enough oil to last for a day. Yet, a "great miracle happened there" (*nes gadol haya sham*) and the oil burned for 8 days, long enough to prepare new oil to continually light the *menorah*. This story is recounted in the Talmud (*Bavli Shabbat 21*), because the Sages sought to minimise the celebration of a military victory and emphasise God's gift of miracles to the Jewish people.

In our multicultural society, *Chanukkah* is often seen as the Jewish answer to Christmas. Pressed with the question, "Don't you feel like you (or your children)

are missing out on Santa Claus, presents, etc?", we can get competitive: "Well, you have Christmas, but we Jews have *Chanukkah*; you only get presents for 1 night, we get them for 8!" Or, we try to show our festivals are the same: "You put lights on the tree and we light a special candelabra called a *chanukkiyah* – they are both festivals of light." Or, we can get defensively derisive: "Why on earth would I feel I'm missing out on such a materialistic, commercialised holiday?" In reality, comparing our holiday to the Christian holy day both denigrates the spiritual aspect of Christmas and devalues the true meaning of *Chanukkah*. Students from my *Judaism from Scratch* class will tell you that one response to the question, "Don't you feel like you're missing out?" could be: "Our Jewish calendar is filled with wonderful holidays throughout the year. At *Tu B'Shevat* we sit down to a special service of wine, foods, and mystical interpretations, celebrating the birthday of the trees and all the gifts we get from them. At *Purim*, we dress in costume, tell the story of how Queen Esther saved her people, and give *mishloach manot* (gifts of food treats sent by messenger) and *matanot ha'evyonim* (gifts to the poor). At *Pesach* we gather the whole

family round the table for a feast of stories and symbols, celebrating our people's (and our own) journey from slavery to freedom. At *Shavuot* we celebrate receiving the *Torah* at Sinai and eat cheesecake and study together. At *Rosh Hashanah* we celebrate the Jewish New Year, eat apples and honey, and hear the amazing call of the *shofar*. Why would I feel like I'm missing out on this one day that is – despite frequent claims to the contrary – a *Christian* holy day?" Once we make it clear to others (and ourselves) that Judaism is to be celebrated (and has every right to be), we still haven't addressed the real meaning of *Chanukkah*, which is technically a minor festival on the Jewish calendar. Strip away the modern commercialism that has seeped into this little Jewish festival, dig a little deeper, and *Chanukkah* provides us with more than the miracle of the oil lasting 8 days. Here are eight life-changing ways that lighting *Chanukkah* candles can transform your world. ¹

Lighting *Chanukkah* candles brings light into the darkness.

This year, *Chanukkah* comes at 16:02 in Bristol, followed by 16 hours and 3 minutes of darkness. As we celebrate the 8 days of *Chanukkah*, our candles shine light into the darkest days of the year.

Lighting *Chanukkah* candles helps us connect with Judaism

Chanukkah is about rededication to core values and purposes.

The Maccabees defeated the Greeks and reclaimed the holy Temple. They cleaned, purified and rededicated the Temple as God's holy sanctuary. We can renew our connection with Judaism through the simple act of lighting the *Chanukkah* candles for 8 successive nights.

Lighting *Chanukkah* candles brings families together

With our hectic, modern lifestyles, getting families together for quality time can prove quite a challenge. When else in this day and age do we come together to share and create sacred moments for 8 consecutive days?

Lighting *Chanukkah* candles can be shared with everyone.

In fact, you don't have to be Jewish to enjoy the light of *Chanukkah*. In the Talmud it is written that a *chanukkiyah* was originally meant to be affixed outside one's door for all to see.

Wherever there is a public *chanukkiyah* lighting or display, anyone can come along and enjoy it.

This article is continued on page 32.

THANKS



The teachers and children of Cheder would like to wish Laurel Miller and her entire family the best of luck as they begin a new chapter in their lives. Thank you for all you've contributed by teaching Aleph class. You will be missed.



YOU'RE INVITED!

Gloucester and BWPJC are joining together for a Tu'Bishvat walk on Sunday, 8th February, 2015

Woodchester Park, Nympsfield Road, Nympsfield, Stroud, GL10 3TS

10am to 12.30pm followed by lunch

Families, children & dogs are welcome

Please RSVP to Ruth@ruthweinberger.com by 20th January 2015

Shaking the lulav and etrog –

A Sukkoth reflection

Valerie Russell-Emmott



This year was the first time I was in shul on the Shabbat of Sukkot. Every other year in recent memory, my younger son Alfred and I have spent that morning with other cheder families at the home of a family in the community who had offered their back garden for the building of the sukkah and their home for a sumptuous kiddush.

So every other year, we have all helped decorate the sukkah with paper chains, hanging fruits, and branches trimmed from our own gardens. Adults, in between sipping cups of tea and chatting sociably with one another, encouraged the younger ones to do colouring pages of the *arba minim* (four species of the lulav and etrog). Once or twice in recent years, I rolled out a colourful carpet in the sukkah and enjoyed telling the children some seasonal stories in there. And every year, we would wait hungrily for the rest of the congregation to arrive

from shul so that we could make kiddush and eat lunch together!

This year was such a different experience, thanks to the builders of our own shul-based sukkah, Kalev Amit Israel, Peter Brill and Jack Paulson. This year, the community's sukkah was located right next to the synagogue, in the small plot behind the building behind the wooden gate. Thanks also go to our Council for acquiring the additional square metres of real estate that made this possible.

So for the first time that I can remember, I was able to attend the Shabbat morning service linked to the festival, experience the additional part of the service for praise and thanksgiving called *Hallel*, and witness and participate in the collective ceremony which is at the core of the festival. Apart from building a sukkah, the main obligation of Sukkot is to shake the four species, the *arba minim*, in a prescribed fashion.

The etrog, a large relation of the lemon with an exquisite smell, must be placed the correct way up. The myrtle branch, palm frond, and willow branch are joined

together in a bundle and must be held in the right hand, while the etrog is pressed against them by the left hand. And following the blessing '*al netilat lulav*,' we learned from Rabbi Monique the mnemonic for remembering which cardinal directions to start shaking from: "Eli says" for East then South... then West, North, Up and Down.

And shake it we did, going across the congregation, row by row, two at a time, shaking them in the aisles, shaking them in rows, making a noise and linking ourselves to an ancient chain and a contemporary chain of Jews right across the world doing the same thing, at this season.

We also heard in our Rabbi's Dvar Torah that our ancient ancestors hoped for rain in its season and used this shaking ceremony as a form of 'rain dance.' Indeed, the sound of the lulav being shaken resembles the sound of rain falling. But thereafter, I wondered: "what does shaking this unique combination of plant life on a Saturday morning in October 2014 in Bristol mean to us?" What is its relevance to our lives now, in a place where rain is abundant, often taken for granted,

or indeed grumbled about when it does fall?

To help answer these questions, I turned, as I do most years, to the wonderful guide to the Jewish holidays by Michael Strassfeld and five contemporary commentators. Marking the time of the harvest, of the final ingathering of produce before the oncoming winter, Sukkot (third of the pilgrim festivals) is also called '*hag - ha- asif*' - the festival of ingathering. And I was reminded by Rabbi Strassfeld that the third mitzvah associated with the holiday is to rejoice. Another of Sukkot's names *zeman simchateinu*, season of our rejoicing.

So what can we rejoice about as a community as we share this festival in our synagogue for the first time in many a year? To me, the key to this question is held in the lulav and etrog themselves. For us city dwellers, they are a kind of shorthand for all the harvested plants: four unique and exquisite growing things that we use to praise God for the bounty provided to us. And they also serve as reminders of our dependence for survival on all the legions of fellow human beings who sow, nurture, and finally

harvest (then transport, stack and sell) the edible plants on which we all rely.

But my favourite interpretation of the festival links these four species to the human body. The lulav, or palm frond, stands for a person's spine, the oval dark-green scented leaves of the myrtle (*hadasim*) represents the eyes, the willow (*aravim*) the mouth, and the etrog corresponds to the heart. So through uniting these four species, we express our desire to remain upright, to see and speak God's truth and ensure that our worship and work (both forms of *avodah*) always remain heart-centred. Another interpretation of the four species describes four types of Jews we might find here at

BWPJC. Like the lulav, we are all bound together, interdependent in our diversity, to make of ourselves a holy community, a *kehillah kedoshah*.

Shaking them in six directions, first forward then drawing them back toward ourselves, it is as if we are drawing ourselves into God's presence or bringing some of that festival joy into ourselves. This time of early autumn and marked change of the season suggests that we gather in our resources before the coming winter. Stocking up on extra measures of joy, extending hospitality to all our actual and symbolic guests (the *ushpizin*), Sukkot is indeed a time for rejoicing. Chag sameach!



In the Sukkah,
2014

Remember, Remember

Joe Joseph



The month of November seems to be a time of remembrance for so many reasons: 4th Nov - assassination of Yitzhak Rabin in 1995 (and also my father's Yahrzeit in 1977) , 5th Nov - the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, 9th Nov - Kristallnacht 1938, 11th Nov - WWI Armistice Day 1918.....and so many more significant dates, as the month of November marches on and the nights draw in.

So I felt very honoured to have been asked by Rabbi Monique to represent BWPJC at the Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance at Colston Hall in Bristol, this November. Rachel and I had received our formal invitations to the pre-concert reception and we were suitably 'suited and booted' for the occasion. Which turned out to be just as well, as on arrival, the Revd Prebendary Harold Clark informed me that I would be taking part in the service, on stage, alongside him and representatives of the Catholic, Muslim and Sikh communities. A rapid perusal of

the programme flushed out the Torah passage that I would be reading and I have to admit to nipping away into a quiet corner to 'rehearse my lines' before going on to the reception. Fortunately, the whole event was planned with military precision and I reassured myself with the old RAF mantra "what could possibly go wrong?".

At the appointed time, Harold led our little posse down to the dungeons of Colston Hall, where we 'waited in the wings' for what seemed like an eternity. Eventually, the call came and we were led on stage. I will admit that I was bursting with pride to be representing BWPJC at such an auspicious event and I was very relieved not to have fluffed my lines. At the end of the service, the fall of thousands upon thousands of poppy petals, was unbelievably poignant and moving. It's something I have witnessed many times but it seemed so much more significant on this occasion, with individual petals brushing my face as they fell.....each representing a life lost, a dream shattered, a future cut short.

As I returned to my seat in the audience, to watch the finale of the show, Rachel whispered a few

reassuring words in my ear. And then, smirking, announced that the big screens, which fortunately faced away from the stage, had announced me as 'Rabbi Monique Mayer'. It took a little bit of explaining to a couple of the military folk, who joined us at the post-concert reception!

If you haven't been to the Festival of Remembrance before, I do encourage you to go along at least once. It is a wonderful event, with so many people contributing so much time, skill and effort, not just for the sake of those being remembered but also, or perhaps even more so, for those they left behind.

And finally.....one extra remembrance thought. in this centenary year of the start of

World War I, we, in BWPJC, should perhaps remember the 25th Nov 1890 - the birth date of a Bristol born Jew, who numbers amongst the great war poets, Isaac Rosenberg, who was killed in action in France in April 1918.

Red fangs have torn His face,
God's blood is shed,
He mourns from His lone place
His children dead.

O! ancient crimson curse!
Corrode, consume,
Give back this universe
It's pristine bloom.

(extract from 'On Receiving News of The War' by Isaac Rosenberg).

My Creative Life

By David Jewell



I started playing the violin at the age of 8, and later was encouraged by my teacher to take

up the viola. I have been playing the viola on and off, but mostly on, ever since.

I play a viola made by an English maker in 1992, based on a design of perhaps 200 years earlier, with a bow made by a fine English archetier who happens to work in Bristol, with a workshop on Christmas Steps (and who I bump

into every so often at the rowing club). I get a thrill every time I take them out of the case. The excitement comes partly from their beauty; partly from the sense of wonder that these things, made with superb craftsmanship from natural materials – wood, horsehair and animal gut (though not now, of course. The variety of string manufacture is a mysterious subject all of its own) can produce such sublime sounds; but partly too from the childish glee that they have never been played by anyone else.

This last is a bit odd. Katy and I once went to a recital by a cellist playing an Amati cello. We accompanied him back to his lodgings and teased him that we were more concerned about the safety of his cello than his own. To which he replied ‘Well, it’s been giving people pleasure since long before I was born and will continue to do so long after I have died.’

At home I play standard pieces: Kreutzer studies, Bach cello suites, Schubert’s Arpeggione sonata, Bruch’s fantasy on Kol Nidrei, Brahms viola sonatas.

However I have to be honest. I’m not a very good viola player: if you were to listen to me practising at

home there is not the slightest danger that you would mistake this for anything remotely ‘creative’.



So how, I hear you ask, do I have the chutzpah to be writing a column with the title ‘My Creative Life’? It’s this. I play in an orchestra. Over a matter of weeks, and with the guidance of a conductor (a real musician) I work with fellow amateurs to produce a performance that we feel is worth inviting an audience to share. Indeed when shul members have come they have been delighted to tell me how much they have enjoyed the concert, while not quite concealing the surprise in their voice. The sense of being among a group of people trying to produce something that, we hope, gets to the emotional heart of what the composer wrote is both hugely

uplifting and genuinely creative. Sometimes I feel very lucky to be welcomed to play with others, mostly much better players than me, and sometimes I marvel at the privilege of being able to recreate some of the masterpieces of western culture. But mostly it's the simple joy of being engaged in a collective activity with others, with a single purpose of making wonderful music.

Do come to one of our concerts. Bristol Metropolitan Orchestra is performing at St George's, Brandon Hill:
7th March. Borodin Polovstian Dances; Prokofiev Violin Concerto No 1; Borodin In the Steppes of Central Asia; Tchaikovsky Symphony No 4.
20th June. Berlioz Symphonie Fantastique; Bizet L'Arlésienne Suite; Ravel Piano Concerto in G.
See: <http://www.bristolmetropolitanorchestra.com/pages/home>

What does Kadimah mean to you?

Kadimah is the youth event organised by LJY Netzer (Liberal Jewish Youth). Many of the young people in our congregation have attended and so we asked them this question. The following are some responses.

What Kadimah means to us

Daisy and Sylvie Horne

In the past two years we have been lucky enough to be able to attend LJY Machaneh Kadimah. Both of us have thoroughly enjoyed ourselves each time, this is because of the fun-packed two weeks, each year



being filled with hundreds of different sessions.

Daisy:

My favourite kind of sessions are KEF sessions, which translates to fun from Hebrew. During these sessions we participated in activities such as: friendship bracelet making, swimming, Chavarah and things like the Shikvah movie nights, day trips out and the whole camp surprise.

Also, Kadimah has enabled me to make lifelong friends and I'm truly grateful for this. LJY has become a second family to me and I am always excitedly awaiting the event each year. This therefore means it is automatically the topic of every one of my conversations and it's all I can talk about afterwards with so many memories and stories to share and look back on.

I really appreciate going to Kadimah because every voice has a say and I love being to discuss subjects that affect or interest me to others with the same or contrasting opinions. This means that I can learn and talk about other people's situations and what people think about ongoing current affairs like the situation in Israel. Moreover, Kadimah has an amazing ethic and I believe in many of the things that LJY stand for like Tukkun atz'me.

Sylvie:

I have also been on Kadimah for two years and to me it's like a second family too. This is because there is no judging and no conflict. All you will find is fun!

The participants, the Madrichim, the Rashim, and everybody else enjoy and love Kadimah. The

thing is there's never a boring day because every day is exciting!

Also, my favourite sessions were the Marmads; this was because the music is really nice to listen to especially the guitars. And I really enjoyed being able to go swimming with my friends in the whole camp sessions.

Hopefully we can carry on going yearly for as long until they tell us we're too old

Mischa Marrett :

Kadimah is so amazing. It is a good way to make lots of friends. At Kadimah no one judges you and you learn so much about Judaism. So for people getting ready for their batmitzvah, you can get a head start learning all about Judaism. I like the sessions Jewish values like Tikkun Olum – mending the earth. Kadimah is very fun and we lots of silly activities like extreme den building. You never get bored or lonely.

Saskia Marrett :

My experiences at Kadimah I will always remember. I have made friends at Kadimah that I think will be friends for life. I have been invited to and attended several batmitzvahs in London because of Kadimah. I

have learned so much about Judaism and the songs that you learn are really great. When you are singing songs around the bonfire, holding hands, you start to cry because you will have to leave your Kadimah family for a year. LJY Netzer has become my second family.

Asher Brill

Personally, I had a very good time at Kadimah. I was in the Yamim age group (14-15s). Most of the time, fun was the main aim of Kedimah, but sometimes (maybe too often?) education came first. The fun times were amazing though! These included stealing a painting, a water fight and a surprise day. Oh yeah and an indoor swimming pool which I used at pretty much every opportunity. Meeting new people and making friends is almost too

easy, as you have two weeks and activities that will require some form of friendship – you’ll see what I mean when you go children.

Going on Kedimah shows that there is more to life than your local congregation. Other Jewish people your age are also waiting for an exciting change of scenery. Services are fun when you’re belting songs at each other (yes, I said fun...) and free time allows you to relax and chat and stuff – I’m 14 I can say stuff. I do think that two weeks is quite long if you don’t enjoy Kadimah, but if you do it’s not long enough! One piece of advice, **BRING SWEETS!** Don’t make the same mistake I did.

Jacob Freshwater’s Barmitzva



Biblical Archaeology: Histories and Archaeologies



Nadine Ford



On Wednesday
December 3rd,
Dr. Tamar Hodos-
Lucas of Bristol
University took
the 'Judaism
From Scratch'
class on a journey

through the ancient history of the Levant as it relates to Biblical events and characters. She discussed the archaeological evidence, and lack thereof, for different periods from the early Bronze Age to the early Iron Age (c.3000 – 1000 BCE).

Tamar led the class through the tangled web of politically infused Levantine archaeology; in particular, its Christian beginnings in the 19th century and the glorification of the Masada story in the modern Israeli narrative.

Next, the scant evidence of anything Biblical during the early Bronze Age and its implications were discussed. The complete lack of any trace of the 600,000 or so who are said to have crossed the desert with Moses certainly raises some questions.

The first artifacts to offer some tangible link to the Biblical narrative originate from the late Bronze Age. However, the link is tenuous at best; while there is evidence supporting the later separate kingdoms of Israel and Judea, there is nothing alluding to a united monarchy.

Inevitably, there are varying theories among scholars as to the chronology and veracity of certain tales. Tamar outlined the two major schools of thought on the early Iron Age, or Israelite period, with some favouring an earlier timeline and others a later one. She also discussed the difficulties in establishing the period artifacts come from, particularly when not found or recorded in situ, and even when clear strata at an excavation site can be discerned, the layers rise and fall and are of uneven depth.

This article is continued on page 25.

Israel Tour

Joseph Colman-Deveney



Well what a month it has been! A month filled with adventure, fun, education and above all Judaism. My Israel tour experience has changed the way I view the country and has brought me closer with both Israel and Judaism its self. As you will all know there is currently conflict going on in the area, but you will be pleased to hear that this had no major impact on our tour other than a few schedule changes and the group not being able to visit Tel Aviv. I will not drag on about the conflict but I would like to say that it is not as black and white as the BBC and other Media sources may be portraying it as and I urge everyone to take a look at both sides and study as many sources as possible before making any critical judgments of either side.

Israel is a beautiful country physically, spiritually and culturally.

Whilst on tour the group went on a lot of hikes. These not only allowed us to experience the diverse and inspiring landscape, whether it be the luscious and green water hikes of the north, or the rugged and dusty mountain climbs in the south. They also created the chance for self-reflection and discussion regarding, Judaism, Israel and other aspects of life. One hike that particularly sticks out in my memory was a desert hike, where each group member was asked to individually find their way across a small stretch of desert and get to a meeting point. This was an excellent exercise that allowed self-reflection to be completely undertaken. I was able to experience the, at first unknown beauty of the desert fully now, because I was free of distraction.

Another notable hike was the climb of Mt Shlomo. Not only was it an extremely challenging hike, it was made harder by the fact that the leaders tied most of the group to a rope, so we really could only walk at the slowest mans pace. This was a good team building exercise, as the group had to manoeuvre themselves in certain ways to allow everyone to move forward. At times it was hard as some of us were moving a lot faster than others behind us, resulting in sudden stalls at very narrow

and jagged cliff faces. However we got through the rope burden in the end and were definitely closer as a group as a result. The group however, was extremely close throughout tour even before the Mt Shlomo hike, and this closeness was felt by all. Whether it was in the form of obsessive hugging or beating every other tour at chant offs. I can safely say that I have made many great friends and I will definitely be seeing them again!

I learnt a great deal whilst out in Israel about the Palestinian – Israeli conflict, which has been ongoing since the state was founded. I was very impressed by the way LJY ensured we got a balanced picture of both sides of the story. We were very lucky to be visited by some excellent speakers, my favorite being an actress who portrayed her self as four types of Israeli citizen. She was first a Haredi Jew, then an extreme right wing Jew, then an extreme left wing Jew and finally an Arab. She was shockingly good at portraying her characters and she gave an excellent insight to the views of those living in Israel, regarding the Israel Palestine conflict. The leaders also organized interesting and engaging sessions regarding the issue and I feel I have come away

with a much better understanding of what is going on in Israel regarding Palestine and I now understand more why both Israeli's and Palestinians have the views they do regarding the matter.

Our trip was not all Hikes and educational sessions though, there were many cultural experiences and fun activity's thrown in as well. We were very lucky to visit a Druze community, who served us a lovely traditional Druze lunch, before giving us a talk about what being a Druze means and how the religion is adhered to today in modern society. I found the experience interesting and enjoyable and the Druze people were very friendly and hospitable. My favorite cultural experience though, was our visit to the Bedouin experience. Here we learnt about Bedouin culture from a very interesting and welcoming Bedouin Man. We then went camel riding, which was great fun and extremely enjoyable, although it does hurt your behind! We then had a traditional Bedouin meal, which was delicious, before sitting around a bonfire under the stars. To round the experience of we were going to be sleeping in a Druze tent, all 42 of us together. It was an experience to say the least

and I thoroughly enjoyed it, although I don't know how much sleep everyone got. What made the experience so special for me, was the fact that it was something so different from what we do at home, I really felt I was experiencing a new and exciting culture.

Israel tour was brilliant and this was partly because of all the fun, interesting, exciting and quirky activity's we participated in whilst on tour. Whether it was kayaking down the Jordan River, Going to the beach, having an eco seminar at Kibbutz Lotan, Snorkeling in the Red Sea or playing, crazy, fun and exciting games, I was always smiling and having a good time on tour. In fact I had such a good time and made so many amazing friends I did not want to leave. Therefore I will be returning as soon as possible and I will most certainly continue to be a member of LJY.

So this amazing month full of so many things has educated me, enlightened me and entertained me. I have experienced and seen things I would never have seen or experienced at home and I have met and made friends with some very special people, both English and Israeli. I can safely say that Israel tour has been the best month of my life so far and this would not have been possible without the amazing people who lead and organized tour and predominantly LJY. I would recommend Israel Tour to all those who have yet to turn 16 as it is one of the most special experiences you will encounter and it is great fun. Israel is the home of all the Jews and all the Jews young or old should have the chance to visit it. So I am grateful to all who made my trip possible and want to thank them for giving me the chance to visit my home in such a special and amazing way.

The Confused Jew



Yana Yevsiyevich

I'm converting to Judaism."

With an almost imperceptible sigh of resigned confusion and bemusement, my sister chuckled.

"Nu, mazel tov! Also, you know you're Jewish, right?"

Through 3,810 miles of telephone wires and a lifetime of miscommunication, I'm

convinced that I could hear the strain of a most impressive eye roll.

In that infinitesimal moment, between her question and my response, I stood silently in the kitchen with my mouth agape and not a word escaping. Shocked and disgusted at my inability to overcome verbal constipation with a witty comeback, I quickly devolved in to a silent interpretive dance performance: both hands flailing towards the sky, one hand clutching the phone, eyes bulging in despair, head shaking, legs stomping. This was my particular rendition of "*I don't even know where to begin responding to that seemingly benign question*" dance.

You've all done one. Admit it.

As I danced like a deranged and possessed muppet, a near anthology of memories coursed through my mind with little hope of being expressed in a cohesive manner. Words and language failed whilst my dignity entirely escaped.

A childhood filled with beautifully delicious meals on high holy day festivals, family and friends sharing bittersweet

stories of Russia between mouthfuls of tender lamb plov, smoked meats, potato olivie, 'herring under a fur coat' salad, and shots of vodka. A childhood filled with dreidel games, 'Guess Who's a Celebrity Jew?' quizzes and competitions to see who can make matzah taste more interesting (anyone for peanut butter and sugar)? A childhood filled with Jewish summer camps (JCC), Jewish youth groups (B'nai B'rith Youth Organisation, BBYO), Bar and Bat Mitzvah parties and occasional visits to the synagogue.

It was also a childhood filled with curiosity and confusion, one defined by unanswered questions and loose links; rituals of prayer and festival customs explained just enough to stifle further questions and ensure full participation. It was moving from an abstract understanding of 'being Jewish' in a secular, public school to a homogeneous Jewish existence in a private Jewish school. It was watching members of my family and the Russian community partake in customs that filled their hearts with pride and mitzvot, but their minds with little context of why such rituals exist. Did this matter?

With my adolescent understanding of fairness being characterised or synonymous with “sameness” (certainly not yet attuned to the nuances of fairness as a concept), I struggled to reconcile the world of reform Jewry with that of the orthodox. The reform synagogue nestled safely in my local suburb, the orthodox shul in downtown, seemed separated by history, ritual, mystery and geography alike. The accepted separation of genders in one shul and the intermingling of genders in the other played havoc with my growing feminist explorations. What does the modern, feminist Jewish voice sound like? Does she have her own domain and authority to sing in Orthodox Judaism (what does she sing of)?

Frustrations and confusion soon shifted towards indifference and teenage arrogance as I retreated from even the slightest suggestion of Judaism or religion; archaic, antiquated and holding no value for my modern ideas, Judaism just didn't fit my image (or at least the one I was attempting to portray with the quiet desperation only a teenager understands). However, the curiosity didn't take long to re-emerge and, this time, with an intellectual ferocity. By my third year of University, I was studying

a triple major in Comparative Literature, Comparative Religion and History in a feverish attempt to find the tools necessary for exploring my identity (I hear my Father's voice with a distinct Russian accent echo, “Is this to ensure you stay broke your entire life? What a shame. You'd make such a good lawyer; you've certainly turned my hair grey with all your arguments as a teenager!”). The questions that plagued my younger years became topics of discussions and dissertations. Intellectually, I flourished.

The loops were closing. Safety in books and research.

I hadn't quite taken the leap from mind to soul, from brain to heart. She breathed softly and I could imagine her hesitant smile, 3,8810 miles away, giving way to furrowed brows as she listened attentively for a response.

“Hello? You still there?”
“I'm here. Yes, I do know. But I also fundamentally don't.”

Yana was born and grew up in Milwaukee, Wisconsin where her sister,, who is seven years older than her, currently lives.

Biblical Archaeology: Histories and Archaeologies



The NLPS Trust
for Progressive Judaism

Continued from page 19

Archaeological findings from the Iron Age correspond better with Biblical history, though there is still plenty of room for interpretation, as there is more evidence of places rather than individuals, due to the record-keeping habits of the time – conquests and trade were the most important concerns of rulers.

Tamar also talked about how modern technology has improved our understanding of history, enabling new discoveries to be made from old artifacts, such as analysis of a previously collected mud sample showing etrog pollen, thus providing evidence of etrog cultivation nearby.

All in all, it was a fascinating insight into a complex subject, packed masterfully into an hour and a half. And the work of finding scientific truth behind our mythology will continue for a long time yet.

You may have noticed this logo on our front cover. We proudly display the logo because the NLPS Trust has made a generous donation to our synagogue for curriculum and materials for Lamdeinu. Amongst the things purchased with the donation were:

- Rosenwasser curriculum which taught all of our children the aleph bet
- the Chai curriculum, which was produced by the Reform movement in the U.S. with whom LJ are affiliated, which focuses on Judaism
- the new 40" TV upstairs which is used for adult lessons and for Lamdeinu. The teachers are able to use the TV as part of their multimedia offering, including teaching the children songs. (The children were able to watch films on the TV during the Sukkot sleep-out.)

**NLPS now has its own
website:**

www.nlpstrust.org.uk

Sukkoth Bake Off



The children baked mini challot and made Rosh Hashanah cards as gifts for members of the community.



Sukkot sleep-out



Kelly's Challah

Kelly Finkel, Rabbi Monique's sister-in-law in Austin, TX

Dissolve 2 packages (2 pkg = 4½ tsp) of powdered yeast in 1. cup warm water

Add 1 cup sugar and (1 cup=8 oz.), 1½ cups unbleached flour

Mix and let sit until you see bubbles form

Add 3 eggs, 1 Tablespoon salt, and ½ cup CANOLA (rapeseed) oil

Mix well

Here's the tricky part. You will add anywhere from 5 - 6½ cups of flour (unbleached flour works best, as it has more gluten). The reason for the difference in amounts of flour has to do with atmospheric conditions.

Add 4½ cups of flour first, turn out onto a counter and begin kneading. Add more flour as necessary. You want the dough to be slightly sticky as you knead. If the dough becomes gooey, add a little more flour until the dough is no longer gooey.

Let rest for 1 hour. Braid, rest for about 30 minutes. Brush with a beaten egg and bake at 350°F (180°C or 160°C with a fan) for about 35 minutes.

Variations:

1. Sprinkle sesame and/or poppy seeds to the top before baking.
2. For Rosh Hashanah add dried apples and cinnamon or chocolate chips (pareve if you are serving a meat meal) to the ingredients. Make a long rope with the dough and coil it into a circle, then add ¼ cup of honey to the egg wash for a sweet glaze.
3. Use the dough for cinnamon rolls. Roll out the dough after its first rise. Brush melted butter onto the dough and sprinkle with cinnamon sugar and raisins if you desire. Roll it up and cut into 1-inch slices. These are great for Shabbat morning.

PS—Kelly would love to hear how your baking goes!

kfinkel@gmail.com

Note that the spoon and cup measurements are US sizes.

Discussing Israel

*Report on the
meeting*

Rebecca Lissak



About a dozen brave members of our congregation met a few weeks ago, after High Holy Days, after the ceasefire, after controversy at synagogue services. Having attended a similar meeting just after the embargo breaking flotillas were in the news here, this meeting was much calmer, respectful and a good opportunity to share thoughts and feelings.

The theme of the meeting was mostly about politics, the politics of the Bristol MPs and Mayor, and synagogue council's response and the politics of the actions of the Israeli government. However, whereas many political discussions can often become adversarial and divisive, the atmosphere of this meeting was more open. The meeting was about politics, what is happening in Israel, but was also a chance to explore how these world events were affecting us personally, and as a community. How do we

manage our relationship with those political issues in our community, our synagogue, our services?

There is a general question that was asked and unanswered, about whether politics has a place in our religious services or not. Some felt that tension would be greatly eased if we agreed not to talk about politics, especially Israel, during a service; that a facilitated meeting such as this one was a better place for discussion, as people could respond and discuss in a way they couldn't during a service. Others felt that services could potentially be very dull without a bit of controversy or challenge, that it would be very strange to come to synagogue when Israel is headlining the news and not discuss it, and that service leaders might start to be more reluctant to take services if they have a lot of limitations placed on what they can and cannot do. I also wondered where the line between social justice and politics might be drawn, one being admissible under this suggestion, the other not. **No conclusion or consensus was reached.**

Although the meeting did not resolve any issues and we can't

solve the situation in the Middle East, we did manage a very civilized and respectful exchange of opinions and talked about what we can do here to decrease

tensions. Everyone in the room had the interests of our Jewish community at heart and felt it was very important just to have the opportunity for dialogue.

My Working Life

Dr. Naomi Moller

*Academic and
Practitioner
Psychologist*



I came into Psychology as a career changer, after a few years in newspaper journalism, and because my first degree was not in Psychology it took me ten years of study to get all the way from undergraduate to doctorate (I did also have three children in those years). In order to get into graduate school I also needed to accrue relevant experience. I did various things including spending six months working in a residential therapeutic school for primary age children, something that was both terrifying and exhilarating – laughing uproariously while puddle jumping in the rain one minute, and trying to reason with a kid who was spitting in my face the next.

My training is as a Counselling Psychologist and because of family circumstance I ended up training in the US, doing doctoral level research, taking an endless series of classes to ensure a broad-based understanding of the discipline and spending many hours working therapeutically with clients. I worked with school children in schools, teenagers in prison, university students and refugees; with individuals, families, couples and groups; with depression, anxiety, eating disorders, addiction, bereavement, psychotic symptoms, trauma and much else. I also did psychological assessments, including memorably one with a bank robber who was serving time.

My last year on my doctoral programme I worked full-time in a juvenile prison in rural Texas; the level of deprivation and trauma in the histories of the kids I worked with was horrifying and I think I got a bit burned out. Perhaps that's why when I started looking for work in the UK I went for an academic job. Most university

lecturers do a blend of teaching, admin and their own research. I have done all of that – teaching everything from first year undergraduate introductory psychology lectures for groups of over 200, to therapy supervision for groups of 3-4 doctoral counselling psychology students. I really enjoy the interaction that comes with teaching and it feels like a privilege to have a job where you can constantly learn new things. When a friend asked me to do a lecture on her ‘Human Sexuality’ class I spent weeks reading up on fetishes – definitions, theories, debates and ‘treatments’; looking for appropriate audio-visual material to enliven the lecture was something I did not do on my work computer! In my last job I also did a management role; over time I was handed increasingly more responsibility, finally being given charge of all the Psychology programmes and academics. Management in academic contexts in an ‘interesting’ proposition (ever read the David Lodge campus trilogy?) and although parts of it I enjoyed hugely I found that it increasingly pushed out everything else – including my time for research. So this summer I took a job at a lower grade as a Lecturer in the

Department of Psychology at the Open University.

These days, I am mostly working in my shed-in-the-garden, which, with its huge picture window, rather feels like I am sitting in the garden. The dog likes to join me and sometimes the cat does too. I am slowly getting used to this new more relaxed pace, and the extraordinary autonomy that comes from by-and-large being able to decide what I do and when I do it. There is work that I do as part of my ‘teaching’ role for the OU – I say ‘teaching’ because being a distance university there are no students, no actual teaching and very little marking... Otherwise the OU expects me to produce research – since starting at the OU I have started new research projects on internet infidelity, fat in the counselling room and embryo donation for family building (happy to monologue at length about any of these to anyone who is interested!). Two of these projects are about to start data collection and I have a little grant application in for the third. I am also trying to finish up some papers and write up a proposal for a new book. The OU also gives me some time to do external work – I am on the editorial board of some academic journals; I am an

external examiner for another programme; I continue to provide research supervision for some students at my last university; and I am hoping soon to start a voluntary role providing counselling one morning a week in a primary care NHS service. I previously did about six months doing some NHS counselling work but it is a while since I worked with clients and I am definitely looking forward to going back into it.

This article is continued on the inside back cover (page 39)

Dancing to the beat of a Jewish heart

continued from page 8

You can also invite your friends to celebrate with you!

Lighting Chanukkah candles can bring joy into the lives of others.

There are many people in our community who either live alone or are unable to participate in our communal *Chanukkah* celebration. One of the greatest *mitzvot* you can do is shine light into the life of someone else. Give the gift of *Chanukkah* to another member of the community by lighting candles with them.

Lighting Chanukkah candles helps us to reflect on our own gifts.

We light the *Chanukkah* candles, then sit back and enjoy them. We are invited to contemplate and to reflect not only on the meaning of *Chanukkah* itself, but on what gifts and blessings God has given us and how we might use them to

bring light into the world.

Lighting Chanukkah candles reminds us to take care of ourselves.

Like the Maccabees, sometimes we can accomplish great things under the most extreme conditions and find ways to extend limited resources, like the singular cruse of oil. *Chanukkah* also reminds us that we must find ways to sustain ourselves without burning out too soon.²

Lighting Chanukkah candles helps us to see light in the darkness.

Chanukkah serves as a reminder that we can always find light if we look hard enough. The darkness does not come from us. Darkness and light are both part of life; our task is that – against the darkness – we seek to kindle the light within others and ourselves.

Entering our Jewish festival of lights, may you rediscover the true meaning of *Chanukkah*, may you shine light into the darkness, and may you rekindle your own inner light. *Kein y'hi ratson* – May it be God's will.

¹ Thanks to my colleague Rabbi Paul Kipnes for the idea!

² <http://www.bethelberkeley.org/jewish-life-amp-worship/what-meaning-Chanukkah>

Board of Deputies

David Jewell, Board of Deputies Representative



it applied to join the Board of Deputies.

One for the record books. This is the meeting we had been anticipating for the last two months. It was all about the application from Yachad to join the Board of Deputies. At this point readers may need a footnote on Yachad. This is a Jewish organisation campaigning for peace in the Middle East specifically by supporting a two state solution and opposing the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. It organises meetings to inform and takes people to Palestine to show them what they see as the consequences of Israel's occupation of the West Bank (for more information go to its website at yachad.org.uk. Some while ago

With an eye to the supposedly controversial nature of Yachad, the relevant committees of the Board decided to take the application to a full plenary meeting, rather than deciding to approve the application in committee as they normally would. Two months ago, when the application first came to the Board, there were fears about the time that the debate would take up, so there was then a successful but in the event highly entertaining motion to defer the decision. Before the November meeting there was a lot of lobbying on both sides; it was pointed out that this took place only by someone leaking the list of deputies' email addresses – probably a breach of the Data Protection Act. I had been contacted by our own Daniel

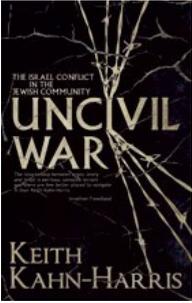
Squire encouraging me to vote for Yachad's inclusion, but addressing me as a complete stranger; I had replied that his email would have carried more weight if he had addressed me personally.

After an initial squabble over points of order - the kind of thing that makes some meeting deeply entertaining, there was a polite, balanced and quite short because guillotined, debate. Yachad's membership was approved on a vote that passed the necessary two thirds majority (though this too was also brought down to the level of farce by an allegation of a deputy casting more than one vote).

What made the debate so fascinating was the complete disjunction of the arguments on either side. The arguments against Yachad's acceptance were about the nature of the organisation, and that it was likely to undermine the security of the State of Israel. All the arguments for Yachad's inclusion were about the nature of the Board of Deputies, the need for it to remain inclusive and to be able to claim that it represents all shades of Jewish opinion in the UK. Some of those arguing for inclusion were open that they disapproved of Yachad's approach, but they still felt the Board should welcome

them. As if on some mystically preordained cue, we even had the spectacle of two charedi Jews appearing shortly after to join in the fun (another footnote: the charedi community has up till now chosen not to participate in Board meetings, which has tended to undermine the claim of representing every shade of Jewish opinion.)

After all that excitement, the visit from Israel's ambassador was a calming influence. He talked about the way that events in the Middle East now weren't always quite so concentrated on Israel's conflict with its neighbours. He said that the conflict wasn't a classic war over land - though to me none of the wars I have ever studied were either wholly or partly conflicts over land. He pointed out that there is currently in Israel a bigger majority than ever to make territorial concessions for peace, but based on the previous withdrawals from Lebanon and Gaza, much scepticism that withdrawal will secure peace. Finally he uttered a plea that we should not let relationships with Israel be dominated by conflict; there are too many other positive things that we should all be focusing on.



Uncivil war: The Israel Conflict in the Jewish Community

By Dr Keith Kahn-
Harris



**Reviewed by
Michael Romain**

We all owe a debt of gratitude to Rabbi Monique for inviting the author

of this fascinating and timely book to speak at our synagogue. He gave a talk on Sunday, 16 November to an attentive audience and was very well received.

To get straight to the point I was intrigued and amazed that the topic that has gripped our community for a number of years is the subject of a very readable book. Kahn-Harris has grappled with the problem of how what is happening in Israel is having the effect of

causing stress within the Jewish community itself. He analyses the problem and suggests various possible solutions.

There is no doubt that he is far better at analysing what the problem is and why it has arisen than giving any solutions. He makes it clear that in years gone by the question of Israel was actually a unifying factor within the Jewish world. Orthodox and Progressive could disagree about many things but could agree in their support of Israel. Now things have changed and the very issue of how to support Israel is actually causing stress within individual communities.

He analyses the different stances people take on the Israel/Palestinian question. This quite rightly shows that members of the Jewish community range from supporting Israel right or wrong to those who would not want the State of Israel to exist in its present form or at all.

Much of his advice is very useful. He is very strong in his

view that personal or “ad hominem” attacks on members of the community are unhelpful and damaging. He encourages that we listen civilly and with respect to the argument of the other person. He is aware that some people would argue that for the benefit of community harmony the question of Israel/Palestinian relations should not be raised in the synagogue. He firmly concludes however that the existence of differences over Israel should be recognised as a permanent feature of Jewish communities and not be hidden.

He argues for a form of “civility and dialogue”. There should be a space within the community where such matters can be discussed but that “firewalls” must be established to ensure that conflict over Israel does not intersect with and reinforce other kinds of conflict.

He argues that if Israel is recognised as a permanent source of division, then inclusive communal bodies can actually get on with working

on areas of genuine consensus. He accepts that some red lines are necessary in excluding some people from communal activity. He includes in that category effectively Jews who wish to destroy the Jewish people by their own actions or whose anti-Zionism explicitly calls for the mass expulsion of all Jews from Israel. I am sure that we have no one in those categories in our synagogue!

He explains in concluding chapters an experiment that he carried out in entertaining a number of people whom he considered significant who had different views on Israel to dine with him and his wife. This was to foster better relations between people who had different views and were participating in the debate. Maybe we have something to learn in our community from this. Perhaps we should try better to understand those who have different views. I certainly will make an effort so to do.

You probably have realised in this review that I am not only trying to review the book in a

short space but also am attempting to make some suggestions as to how we in Bristol could learn from what he is saying. I would argue that the most important conclusions that I would draw that we must be more able to openly discuss Israel in a safe way. I am not advocating any form of politics in sermons or in services generally but there are other opportunities which we should not shy away from.

What is happening in Israel is a part of our Jewishness but only one part of it and we should not let something over which we have little influence damage our thriving progressive community in Bristol.

UNCIVIL WAR: The Israel Conflict in the Jewish Community

Dr Keith Kahn-Harris

Published by David Paul

Price £10

[David Paul Books](#)

What's wrong with women?



This article was previously published in the 'Bristol Post'

Peter Brill

I am not a feminist, any more than I am a Jewishist (I'm guessing that's the equivalent of an Islamist, whatever that actually means), or a terrorist, or a racist. In fact, I'm not really any kind of 'ist', but I like to think I have a sense of perspective on life and can see both sides of an argument.

Which makes it all the more difficult to view the attitude towards women of male-dominated societies around the world and still maintain any sense of objectivity. In conversation with a friend recently, she recounted the outright hostility she has received from within her own community when campaigning for what, to most right-minded people, appears to be the basic rights of women to live as equally as possible in a male society.

I'm sorry, but I just don't get it. Why has it taken until July 2014 for the Anglican Church to allow female bishops? Why has it taken a girl to overcome being shot in the head at the age of 15 to raise the global profile of the rights of Muslim women to an education? Why are women still separated from men in Orthodox Jewish synagogues – apparently so that the men can't 'see' the women and be distracted from prayer and because 'their souls are different'?

Really? Are modern men really so insecure and arrogant that they fear losing grip on reality when women join their activities? Are there really not enough genuine threats in this world for us to have to create false ones? A quick scan over the Forbes list of the world's 100 most powerful women shows incredible diversity. From German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, South Korean President Geun-hye Park and Bangladesh's PM Sheikh Hasina Wajed, to the bosses of General Motors, IBM, Facebook, the State Bank of

India and the World Health Organisation.

While you may question their individual politics or what those particular organisations represent, the world hasn't fallen apart and those nations or organisations have more than survived, they have grown in strength. Strangely, there is a total absence of religious leaders in the list and precious few philanthropists. While all of them may be great role-models for women around the world, there seem to be few allowed to offer spiritual guidance or set the world's moral codes.

Our community has a female Rabbi. Sure, there have been tensions along the way, but it hasn't been because she's a woman. In discussing this issue with my wife, she said: "If you see conflict, you will create conflict. If you live collaboratively, you create partnerships". Time to man-up and accept women as equals.

Information for those interested in studying Psychology or careers in Psychology

Psychology is a hugely popular A-level subject and also a very popular subject to take at university. It is worth knowing a few things if you want to study this subject at university.

1. You typically don't have to have a Psychology A-level to study this subject at university and some universities will require a science (e.g. biology).
2. Most psychology degrees are accredited by the British Psychological Society (www.bps.org.uk) - if you want to do a graduate course in Psychology you need a BPS accredited undergraduate degree. In addition the BPS accreditation provides some external measure of course content/quality.
3. BPS accredited courses are required to cover certain core curricula so there is a lot of overlap in what you might study in different places. However the 'flavour' of your degree may vary a lot depending on the type of department the course is in. There could be a strong focus on neurobiology and statistics or the focus may be on feminist, critical and qualitative psychology. Check out the research interests of staff to get an idea on this.
4. Many, many students enter a Psychology degree planning to be a clinical psychologist or equivalent but only about 10% of all psychology graduates go on to become practitioner psychologists (clinical, counselling, educational, forensic, sports, organizational).
5. Becoming a practitioner psychologist (using psychology to work with others) requires graduate study, often a doctorate, and courses are often expensive and difficult to get into, requiring in some cases years of non-graduate and low-paid work gaining relevant experience.
6. Clinical psychology training is (currently) free (paid for by local NHS trusts) but it is the most difficult training to get into. See: <https://www.leeds.ac.uk/chpccp/index.html>
7. Undergraduate psychology degrees may not be vocational (in the sense that a nursing degree will be) but they provide employment-relevant skills and understanding that are attractive to employers. See: <http://careers.bps.org.uk/area/undergraduate>

