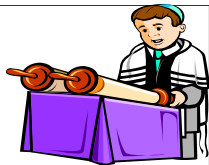




# קליהל קהלה



The weekly newsheet of Clayhall United Synagogue

*Shabbos 15 November 2008/ 17 Mar Cheshvan 5769*

## *Service Times (Ryan Bell's Bar Mitzvah)*

Shacharis	9.00 am
Minchah followed by Seudah	3.35 pm
Shabbos ends	5.02 pm
Shabbos next week	3.49 pm

We wish Mazel Tov to **Ryan Bell** on the wonderful occasion of his Bar Mitzvah today. Lisa and Philip Bell have great pleasure in inviting the community to a Kiddush after the service in celebration of their Simchah.

You are all probably aware by now that **Michelle Mervish** will be leaving her post at Clayhall Shul for a new position at the United Synagogue head office with effect from 1 December 2008. A suitable occasion will be found to honour Michelle's contribution to the community over the last 9 years. The Honorary Officers will be interviewing candidates to replace Michelle over the next few weeks.

## *Torah Reading*

Sedra Synopsis:

Leyning: Vayeira

Hertz p 45, Soncino p 60

Haftorah:

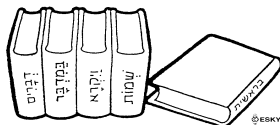
Hertz p 60, Soncino p 82

Inside your action-packed Clayhall Kehilla is information about the AJEX Parade, Chanukah, a Poland trip and the new-look Children's Service

**Ryan Bell**

**Rabbi Nissan Wilson**

**Ryan Bell**



*This week's Clayhall Kehilla is sponsored by Muriel and Julian Silver on the occasion of their grandson Ryan's Bar Mitzvah*

### ***Weekday Services***

Shacharis: Monday to Friday, 7.00 am. Sunday @ 8.15 am.

Shacharis Rosh Chodesh: 6.45 am Monday to Friday.

Shacharis Rosh Chodesh: 8.00 am Sundays.

Minchah: 1.45 pm, Monday to Thursday.

Ma'ariv: 7.30 pm, Tuesday and Wednesday.

Sunday breakfasts: 30 November & 28 December.

### ***Sponsorship***

If you would like to sponsor a Sunday morning breakfast or an edition of the *Clayhall Kehilla*, the cost is £35 and £15 respectively. Please speak to Michelle in the Shul office. This is an ideal way to celebrate a simchah or birthday, commemorate a Yahrzeit, or simply for no reason at all!

### ***Bar/Bas Mitzvah Seminar***

Once again, we are holding a seminar on **Tuesday 18 November** at RJCC at 8.00 pm. Invitations have been sent to families celebrating their simchah over the next 2 years. It is an opportunity for Rabbi Wilson and the Wardens to talk through the process and create a rapport with the families. The evening should last no longer than 75 minutes.

### ***Poland Trip***

Rabbi Wilson is organising a Shul trip to Poland for November 2009. It will probably be a 48-72 hour stay led by the very experienced *Jewish Learning Exchange*. It is hoped to send out further details to members in early 2009. The cost will be in the region of £325 per person although this may of course change.

### ***Fruit of an Old Tree***

*"In the Plains of Mamre"* (Vayeira 18:1). Mamre was Avraham's ally who had encouraged him to carry out the command of circumcision. Therefore, G-d appeared to Avraham in his city. To the Prophets, G-d appeared from within fire, water or wind, or on the ground. But in Avraham's case, He appeared within a tree, as we learn from the words *Elonei Mamre (the Plains of Mamre,* " which can also be read as meaning "the trees of Mamre"). G-d wanted to intimate to Avraham that just as an old tree still bears fruit, so would Avraham have children in his old age.

### ***Guests and Hosts***

*"And they ate"* (18:8). That is, the angels acted as if they were eating. We learn from this that a person should not violate the customs of the place where he is visiting. Normally angels do not eat, yet they pretended that they did.

## *Children's Service Re-launch*

There is a new-look, dynamic Children's Service coming to Clayhall Shul from **Shabbos 22 November 2008**. It will be open to all children from nursery to school year 6 and, initially, the service will run fortnightly. A coloured flyer has been sent out to all members, IJPS pupils and (soon) local shops. It will be organised and run by **Naomi Harris**.

- Times: 10.30am-11.15am
- 10.30-10.50 davening
- 10.50-11.05 games, stories, songs
- 11.05-11.15 Kiddush

In addition, there will be certificates and awards for attendance, star-of-the-month and star-of-the-morning with small prizes. It is hoped that the children will revive the old Clayhall tradition of singing a song in the main service before *Adon Olam*. There are many exciting plans to develop other activities and events with this age group. On Simchas Torah, there were a healthy number of young children and we want to build on this.

Articles are required for the Pesach edition of **Shalom, the Shul magazine**. Please submit these by mid-January 2009.

### *AJEX Parade*

The annual AJEX Parade takes place **tomorrow**. For those marching, the Fall-In is at 1.40 pm in Horse Guards Parade. AJEX encourages the community to show its solidarity and you should make your way to the Cenotaph for 2.00 pm. The Reviewing Officer this year is Admiral The Lord West of Spithead GCB, DSO. The Service will be conducted by the Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks and Rev Malcolm Weisman. For more information, log on to: [www.ajex.org.uk](http://www.ajex.org.uk)

### *Today in Jewish History: 17 Cheshvan*

On this date in 1919, a New York Times headline declared "Einstein Theory Triumphs." Albert Einstein (1879-1955) was a German-born physicist whose theory of relativity revolutionized the scientific approach to time, space, matter, energy and gravity. In 1952 he turned down an offer to become President of the State of Israel. Einstein has been called one of the most influential figures in history, and Time magazine named him "Person of the 20th Century."

### *Chanukah at the Aviv!*

Clayhall is celebrating Chanukah at the **Aviv** restaurant in Edgware (this is, we believe, somewhere over the rainbow in another land) Very shortly, you will receive full details in the Shul mailing. It takes place on **Tuesday 23 December** and everyone is invited. The adult menu is £25 per head and there is a reduced price children's menu. Rabbi Wilson has assured us of a fun-packed evening so book your place(s) on receipt of the form.

## ***Actualising Potential Through Tests by Rabbi Yehudah Appel***

The Russian Czar Nicholas I, in his efforts to destroy Jewish life, demanded that each Jewish community provide soldiers for his forces. These young men, **called "Cantonists,"** were typically drafted at the age of 12 and served in the Russian army for 25 years. They did not serve in the regular army, however, but in separate units under the **most anti-Semitic officers.** The Russian hope was that they would eventually convert to the Russian church. Ultimately, many of these young men did lose their Jewish identity. Others were killed, and many took their own lives rather than be baptized. It so happened during this period, that there was a meeting in St. Petersburg of many of the great rabbis of the time. The meeting took place around the High Holidays and there was some speculation as to which rabbi should be given the **honor of leading the Rosh Hashana services.** Right before the services were to begin, a group of Cantonists walked into the shul and announced that one of them would lead the prayers. Seeing the quizzical looks on the faces of the rabbis, one of the Cantonists lifted his shirt, exposing his back. The flesh was a mass of scarred tissue, testifying to the many beatings he'd endured to maintain his Jewish faith. With no further discussion, the Cantonist was given the honor of leading the services.

Sacrifice and a willingness to undergo hardships for the right cause has long been a hallmark of Jewish greatness. Loyalty to a just cause is a great source of meaning and fulfillment. As the Sages say: **"According to the difficulty, is the (divine) reward."** Nowhere is the importance of sacrifice more evident than in this week's Sedra. Avraham is commanded to offer his only son Yitzchak on an altar. In perhaps the most moving of all Torah passages, Avraham is told to bring **"your son, your only one, the one you love"** and bind him on an altar at Mount Moriah. The Midrash describes how Avraham's life was a series of spiritual tests. At a young age, he risked his life to fight against idolatry. Later on, hearkening to G-d's call, he left everything behind, following G-d's dictates to go to a strange, new land. Now he was being asked to make the greatest of all sacrifices: to offer up his son. This was the son for whom Avraham and his wife Sara - previously childless - had spent decades praying for! **All his dreams, all his teachings,** the legacy he had hoped to pass down to mankind had been riding on this son. And now he was to slaughter him. It was the cruelest of ironies that Avraham, who had spent decades preaching against idolatry and human sacrifice, was now being asked to perform this pagan practice. Avraham though, **with no sign of hesitation,** took Yitzchak for the 3-day trip to Mount Moriah, then bound him on the altar. Avraham was about to slaughter his son... when an angel intervened - stopping the sacrifice. The obvious question is: Why did the Al-mighty put Avraham through this test **in the first place?** In the view of many commentaries, the purpose of this test was to help Avraham reach a greater level of loyalty to the Al-mighty. While it is true that Avraham must have had this potential all along, having the potential to do something is not the same as doing it. Through this trial, Avraham **actualized his potential and grew tremendously.**

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