

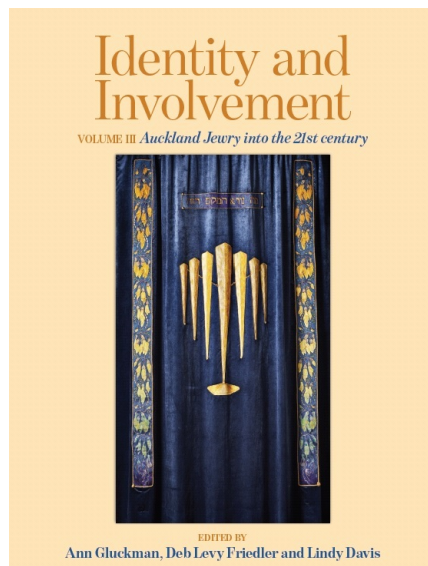
beth shalom
auckland new zealand
בית שלום



November 2020

Cheshvan~Kislev 5781

Teruah



*A strong, vibrant community with a spiritual heart
embracing Jewish life and its diversity.*

(ISSN 1177-2352)

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Affiliated with the Union for Progressive Judaism (UPJ)

Charities Commission Registration Number CC29542

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Service times are Fridays at 6:30pm and Saturdays at 10am.

During COVID-19 Level 1, all services

will be in the Sanctuary and livestreamed on OneRoom.

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Opinions expressed in Teruah do not necessarily represent the views of Beth Shalom Board of Management.

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Coming up in November

- Saturday 7 November – **Bar Mitzvah of Lucas Volodzkis** – please join the Volodzkis family as they celebrate this milestone.
- Monday 9 November at 7.30 pm – please join us for an interfaith event to be hosted at Beth Shalom: Preserving the Environment – Abrahamic faiths in dialogue. Debbie Miller will be representing Judaism. The event will be followed by a light supper.
- Friday 13 November, 6:30pm, Rabbi JoEllen Duckor will be at Beth Shalom leading Kabbalat Shabbat service with her special blend of our traditional service and a few short meditations as well as conducting the induction of the new Board.
- If you have old Siddurim or Machzorim which you wish to dispose of in a respectful way, then bring them to Beth Shalom where there will be collection boxes in the hall between 30 October and 28 November.
- You are invited to donate to our Beth Shalom High Holy Day appeal [here](#).
- Let's continue the tradition of **tzedakah** by donating to a foodbank or supermarket collection box



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From the President ...

My thoughts at the moment can be encapsulated in a proverb and a quote.

The first is a Māori whakatauki (proverb)

He aha te mea nui o te ao. He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata

What is the most important thing in the world? It is people, it is people, it is people.

For me, community is at the heart of how we celebrate our Judaism. And community is people - It's you, the person reading this, and all the other members of the Beth Shalom family.

As I looked out over the considerable crowd that joined together for the community meeting on Sunday (18 October), my heart swelled to see many familiar faces, some 'new' faces (see our 'New Member' section of this Teruah) and a few of our young members. It gives me hope as we move forward that there is continued love for our community and for continuing to live in accordance with the principles underlying Progressive Judaism - inclusiveness, social justice, tikkun olam, adaptability.

As I said at the community meeting, to adapt in ways that we want and that grow our community, we need to have a vision for the future. In the words of the Cheshire Cat, when Alice asks "Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?", he says "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to."

So - where do we want to get to?

As we discussed at the community meeting, we're responding to this question in two ways:

- The one response is existential - We're looking at the WHY? We're taking a long hard look at who and what we are, and who and what we want to be. Why are we here? How do we express our Judaism in ways that are meaningful to us? Who do we serve? With the resources we have, what are the priorities? This translates into The Vision Project discussion. I'm excited about this project. It will allow us to really hear what you and other members of our community want and need - and shape a future together that caters to these needs and wants.
- The other refers to place - WHERE do we want our community to be located physically in the future? This translates into ongoing discussions about the Jewish Community Centre (JCC).

These are both important projects and you'll hear a lot more about these over the coming months, including in separate articles in this Teruah. I urge you to get involved in the community activities and discussions around these projects.

The future starts now and is in our hands.

Olga Bernstein

FROM THE BOARD

.....what is happening within our community and what we have been working on recently.

The Board has had a very busy and productive month.

- We met for a Board Retreat on 11 October. At the retreat, we agreed the following priorities:

Strategic

- Financial viability
- Vision project
- JCC
- Rabbinic search
- Membership experience
- Communication
- Finances
- Hebrew School
- Activities and learning – Connecting to each other and to Judaism
- Welcoming the stranger
- Membership

Operational

- Finances
- Hebrew School

Community

- Activities and learning – Connecting to each other and to Judaism
- Welcoming the stranger
- Membership

We also agreed that, as a Board, we would

- make things happen/get things done
- think and work out “How can this be done better?”

- We had the community meeting on 18 October.
- We met with Rabbi George for our 3rd Vision Project meeting on 21 October, followed by a Board meeting.

The Buzz ...



CATCH UP WITH THE GUTTMAN FAMILY

Jill and Rabbi Brent, Daria, Vered, Tzipora and Lyla Guttman

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

We would like to welcome the following people who have joined the Beth Shalom family in 2019 and this year.

We are delighted that you have chosen Beth Shalom as a place to express your Judaism. We look forward to meeting you in person and seeing you involved in the community.

We urge 'old members' to please reach out to these people and welcome them into our community. (We're including suburbs where people live so that you know who is in your area).

- Tamara Leibman, who has joined with her children, Aurora and Ruby (Mt Eden)
- Arie and Ayelet Rosen and their daughters, Danielle and Yasmine (Glendowie)
- Susanne Murek (Beach Haven)
- Trudi Sawyer (Warkworth)
- Zarina Fiala (St John's)
- Jen Proctor (Titirangi)
- Johny and Selena Volodzkis, and their children, Lucas and Orli (Glendowie)
- Alan and Rachel Besser (Stonefields)
- Kira Bacal and her children Harper, Rowan, Elias and Malachi (Greenhithe)
- Cass Power (Pt Chev)
- Phillip Gordon (Wellsford)
- Mira Taitz and her son, Joel Hurdle (Mt Eden)
- Wendy Cohen (Arkles Bay)
- Asher and Alana Assaraf and Lior (Manurewa)
- Jillian and Gabriella Weiss-Bercovich (Waiheke)
- Suzannah Miller, Asher and Eli Malcolm

A very warm welcome to you all!

(If any information is incorrect, incomplete or omitted, sincere apologies and please let us know).

[CLICK HERE FOR THE NOVEMBER SERVICE ROSTER](#)



Prayers for Healing Group

A group of Beth Shalom members has commenced, to think of and pray for individuals in our community, who are in need of healing.

The idea is that this group is not an organised group or minyan. Simply, caring people who, when made aware of the need, help healing with the power of prayer.

And that families in distress might receive comfort from the knowledge that this is taking place.

Caring for the unwell is part of being a community.

For those interested, I can supply articles: "The Jewish Way in Healing", and some scientific research on the positive power of prayer in healing.

If you wish to be part of this group

Or, if you know of someone who is unwell that would appreciate our prayer

Please contact Leon Goldwater or Christine O'Brien at shul office

Leon: ldgoldwater@gmail.com 020 403 88054

Christine: office@bethshalom.org.nz 524 4139

High Holy Days Appeal

Please consider supporting the [Beth Shalom High Holy Days appeal](#).

This year, we are committing to a programme of social, spiritual and joyful activities to enhance and strengthen the social bonds of our community. In addition we know that the Vision Project will result in us being clearer about things our community wants - this may include more activities, Rabbinic presence and retreats.

We are committed to offering a greater range of ways for all of our community to engage with Beth Shalom if they choose to; irrespective of age, means or location. Delivering on this will require funds over and above regular levies and we would dearly love your support.

If you are able to, please donate at <https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/high-holy-days-appeal>



Ritcom Reports ...

What is the Halachic position on Halloween?

by Chris MIlton

The halachic position on Halloween depends upon two, somewhat related, prohibitions: Jews are forbidden by the Torah to partake in "gentile customs" and Jews are also not allowed to partake in non-Jewish or idolatrous worship.

Torah

In **Vayikra (Leviticus 18:3)** we find a specific prohibition (issur) on the imitating "gentile customs": After the doings of the land of Egypt, which you dwelt in, "After the practices of the land of Egypt, in which you dwelled, you shall not do, and like the practice of the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you, you shall not do, and in their statutes (וּבְחֻקֵּיהֶם) neither shall you follow."

Chukat Ha'Akum is a prohibition in Judaism of imitating Gentile manners in their dressings and practices. The prohibition comes from the Torah commandment Leviticus 20:23 - "And do not walk in the customs (chukat בְּחֻקֵּיהֶם) of the nation that I cast out before you for in all these things they committed I abhorred them" - simply put do not follow Gentile customs - בְּחֻקֵּיהֶם.

The word **Avodah Zarah** literally means "foreign worship", i.e. "idolatry." As a word it is also a Tractate of the Talmud. In the Middle Ages, the entire tractate was expunged from many European editions by Christian censors, and it was considerably difficult to obtain a copy. Apart from that it was also edited by Christian editors. Christians view the polemic of the Tractate as being directed at them, and as painting them as idolaters and immoral people.

Jewish views, as codified in halachic texts, are split between those who see Christianity as outright idolatry and those who see Christianity as shituf. The Rambam takes the former view and says in Mishneh Torah Avodat Kochavim 9:4 "The Christians (Notzrim) are idol worshipers, and Sunday is their festival." As late as the end of the eighteenth century, Eliyahu, the Vilna Gaon, ruled that, since it is forbidden to mention the name of an idol, a Jew may refer to Jesus but never use the name Christ.

In halachah, the idea of the Trinity falls under the catchall term of "shituf" (which means "associating") i.e. worshipping God along with some other being (in this case Jesus and/or the Holy Ghost). Shituf is prohibited for Jews in Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 63b. This means that a Jew would be prohibited to acknowledge the Christian saviour as part of the Godhead, or to participate in Christian worship, even at the cost of his or her life.

Idolatry, of course, is prohibited by the Ten Commandments.

Talmud

The Talmud Tractates Avodah Zarah 11a and Sanhedrin 52b discuss some of the relevant material on idolatry.

Rishonim

Rashi limits the application of Leviticus 18:3. One may not act like Egypt and Canaan because they were particularly bad, but the practices of other nations are not so prohibited. Abraham Ibn Ezra (1029-1167) apparently agrees with Rashi in limiting the application of this law. The specific aspect of non-Jewish practice he feels is prohibited is adopting Canaanite standards of legal practice and evidence.

The Rambam on the other hand understands the prohibition as a sweeping law that prohibits any kind of assimilation to the customs of non-Jews.

The Tosafot understand that two distinctly different types of customs are forbidden by the prohibition of imitating Gentile customs. The Tosafot rule this in Tosafot Avodah Zarah 11a[1]. The Gemara in Avodah Zarah 11a relates how it was customary to burn the beds and artefacts of kings after they had died. Initially this is treated as an idolatrous act but then that it is not but rather a mark of high esteem for the deceased. In Sanhedrin 52 b the Mishnah states that the burning of articles at a king's funeral is in fact derived from the Torah. The tosafot noticed an inconsistency between these two Talmudic texts. The Gemara in Avodah Zarah seems to be indicating that the burning is not considered a custom or chok (כֹּהֵן) prohibited by the laws of Chukat Ha'Akum since it was simply an honorable rite customarily directed at kings (rather than a practice directed at rivals). The Mishna text in Sanhedrin, however, seems to indicate that it is permissible by virtue of the fact that it is prescribed in the Torah, although it might be an act accepted by idolators. The Tosafot resolve this by concluding that there are two separate customs being referred to. The first is Chok l'Avodah Zora which are related to idolatrous religion. The other are customs which are performed for foolish or vain reasons. Whereas the former is always prohibited according to the Tosafot, the second category of practices can be conditionally accepted, that is if they are found in scripture.

Rabbenu Nissim ben Reuben[2], (Ran) and Maharik[3] disagree with the Tosafot and rule that only customs that have a basis in idolatrous practices are prohibited. They hold that foolish - but secular - customs are permissible so long as they have a reasonable explanation (and are not immodest).

Acharonim

According to Rama[4] normative halachah follows the ruling of the Ran and Maharik, i.e. only idolatrous customs are prohibited.

The Rama goes on to say: "Those practices done as a [Gentile] custom or law with no reason one suspects that it is an idolatrous practice or that there is a taint of idolatrous origins; however, those customs which are practiced for a reason, such as the physician who wears a special garment to identify him as a doctor, can be done; the same is true for any custom done out of honor or any other reason is permissible."

Thus, the Rama prohibits observing customs that have pagan origins, or even might have pagan origins.

Contemporary poskim

According to rabbi Alfred S. Cohen^[5] the majority of modern opinion believes that the biblical prohibition is about all non-Jews. Halachah does not consider Islam as idolatry and therefore Muslim customs are not subjected to the prohibition. Regardless of whether Christianity is idolatrous or not, almost all Rabbi's believe that following Christian customs would fall within the biblical prohibitions.

Based on this, in order to justify candy collection on Halloween, one would have to accept the truthfulness of any of the following assertions:

1. Halloween celebrations have a secular origin.
2. The conduct of the individuals "celebrating Halloween" can be rationally explained independent of Halloween.
3. The pagan (and later Roman Catholic) origins of Halloween are so deeply hidden that they have disappeared, and the celebrations can be seen to have some secular reason.
4. The activities memorialized by Halloween are actually consistent with the Jewish tradition.

None of these statements, except today possibly point 3 are true. Much of Halloween is a modern secular invention. For instance, the pumpkin is a vegetable known primarily to North Americans, the Celts did not have it. The native American tribes used the pumpkin as a source of food for years before Europeans even set foot on their soil. The first example of the jack o'lantern appearing in American literature is in an 1837 story by Nathaniel Hawthorne, who wrote *The Scarlet Letter*. The carved lantern did not become associated with Halloween until around the time of the American Civil War i.e. the 1860s.

One Orthodox halachic position is that participation in Halloween celebrations – which is what collecting candy is when one is wearing a costume – is prohibited. Halloween, since it has its origins in a pagan practice and lacks any overt rational reason for its celebration other than its pagan or Catholic origins is governed by the statement of the Rama that such conduct is prohibited as its origins taint it. The overall conclusion then is that children should not go out to trick or treat on Halloween, or otherwise celebrate the holiday.

The question of whether one can give out candy to people who come to the door is a different one, because we want to avoid insulting or making people angry if candy is not given. This reasoning draws on the principles of *darchei shalom* (the ways of peace) and *eva* (the creation of unneeded hatred towards the Jewish people). This is even more so true when the community-Jewish and Gentile-are unaware of the halakhic problems associated with the conduct, and the common practice even within many Jewish communities is to "celebrate" the holiday. Consequently, we may give candy to children who come to one's house to "trick or treat" if one feels that this is necessary.

Modern Orthodox

One Modern Orthodox rabbi, *Rabbi Irving Greenberg*, takes a different opinion – fundamentally feeling that Rabbi Isserles' prohibition because of the root something has is wrong. Rabbi Greenberg argues that: "Halloween is almost entirely a product of American consumer culture, and there's more mockery than true belief to be found in the ever-popular costumes of witches and monsters If a Jewish child wants to go trick-or-treating for social reasons, it's not a big deal".

Progressive Judaism

Conservative

Conservative Rabbi Ron Isaacs gives a mixed but pragmatic response to the question: "Can Jewish kids live without these ghosts, goblins and candy? I certainly think so. Will it do irreparable damage to their Jewish identities if they participate? Probably not. But as parents, we should think about the values, priorities and commitments we want our children to develop".

Reform

The Reform Jewish tradition guides us to make decisions based on "informed choice."

Reform Rabbi *Arthur P. Nemitoff* gives something of a response based on informed choice: "To be completely true to our tradition, the answer is, "No. Jewish children should not go trick-or-treating on Halloween." Inasmuch as this is a Christian/pagan holiday—no matter how secularized it has become—it is inappropriate for Jews to observe it in any manner. However, the matter is more complicated. Are there moments when Jews have taken an essentially foreign idea and co-opted it and changed into an authentic Jewish tradition? Of course! And the most obvious example is the Passover seder. So many of our traditions were lifted directly from Roman influences. In acknowledging those antecedents, would anyone suggest that our practices are somehow inauthentic? Of course not! In this same light, there are few who would connect the carefree, costume-wearing, candy-gorging escapades of our children on October 31 with the religious overtones that the holiday once carried. As such, the holiday has evolved into a secular celebration. Therefore, it would seem to be as innocent an activity as celebrating New Year's Eve or Thanksgiving (both of which once had Christian connotations)".

Reconstructionist

Reconstructionist Judaism is built on the idea of Judaism as an evolving religious civilization. It sees that we have taken customs and ideas from other cultures and religions over the years and made them our own. Like Reforms Judaism it approaches questions by getting to know the traditional Jewish position first then dialoguing it with the Western circumstances.

The founder of Reconstructionism, Rabbi Mordechai Kaplan, taught that we “live in two civilizations” so must answer as both Jews and Westerners. We live in mostly mixed communities where Halloween is an accepted secular norm. Generally Reconstructionist Judaism sees the question of Halloween as a chance to learn and discuss. *Rabbi Fred Scherlinder Dobb* says: “So rather than decree or surrender, we should decide with our children and engage them in discussion of the values at hand. Secular concerns at Halloween have a Jewish angle, too—moderation, safety, neighborliness, ethics of food—making it a “teachable moment.” We can balance values like kavod (respect), tzedakah, kashrut, bryut (health) and oneg (enjoyment). Options abound: Serve treats, but not go door-to-door? Avoid skeleton costumes? Collect candy, then donate it? Between abandon and avoidance lie many possibilities. Let’s choose wisely, together”.

- [1] Tosafot Avodah Zarah 11a, s.v. ve’ei, outlaws practices that smack of idolatry or that are silly. This reading is credible, plausible and even possible but not a necessary reading as it seems that nowhere in the Written or Oral Torah is there a teaching that silliness is forbidden although idolatrous practices are indeed forbidden.
- [2] Nissim ben Reuven (1320 – 1376) of Girona, Catalonia was an influential talmudist and authority on halachah. He was one of the last of the great Spanish medieval talmudic scholars.
- [3] Joseph Colon ben Solomon Trabotto (1420 – 1480), also known as Maharik, was a 15th-century rabbi who is considered Italy's foremost Judaic scholar and Talmudist of his era.
- [4] Rabbi Moshe Isserles, c. 1525-1572, Shulchan Aruch Yoreh De’ah 178:1
- [5] Halacha and Contemporary Society By Alfred S. Cohen, 1984, page 251.

Burying the Genizah...

By *my* JEWISH LEARNING

What should be done with old Torah scrolls and sacred texts?

Question: What is the protocol for burying damaged Jewish prayer books and shawls? Should they be wrapped? Can they be buried in my yard? Are there special prayers to be recited? -Linda, Randolph MA

Answer: It sounds like you're talking about burying the contents of a genizah, Linda. Genizah means "reserved" or "hidden" in Hebrew, and is traditionally a place where Jews store sacred documents when they fall out of use.



The Talmud ([Shabbat 115a](#)) stipulates that all sacred writings (scrolls of [Torah](#), [Prophets](#), and [Writings](#)), should be preserved in a place where they cannot be destroyed. Though this idea was originally closely tied to a prohibition from ever erasing God's name, Maimonides ruled that holy books, such as the Talmud and midrash, should be retired to the genizah as well, even though they do not contain God's name. (Mishneh Torah , Hilhot Yesodei HaTorah 6:8)

For a long time, Jewish communities set aside a room in each synagogue exclusively for this purpose, and called that space the genizah. Anything from a worn-out [siddur](#) to a contract written in Hebrew would be put in the genizah when it was no longer useful, and often ritual objects, such as a [tallit](#) or a [lulav](#), were added as well.

READ: Something Sacred in the Southern Soil – Teaching Jewish Campers About Geniza

Today, most synagogues have a closet or a box where they collect used papers and ritual objects that are considered sacred. The general rule is that anything dealing with sacred subjects should be placed in a genizah, rather than thrown out. An Israeli newspaper, though written in Hebrew, would not need to go in a genizah, but a [megillah](#) that had been damaged would.

Most synagogues clean out their genizot every few years, by burying the contents in a Jewish cemetery as a sign of reverence and respect. Some communities even have cemetery plots that have been donated expressly for the purpose of burying the genizah. It is considered a great sign of respect to bury a Torah scroll or other sacred work near a prestigious Torah scholar. However, you are welcome to bury your household genizah in your backyard, as long as it is done respectfully.

Before burial the items should be put in a shroud (a white pillowcases will do), and any Torah scrolls should be cut off from their wooden spools.

There is no set liturgy for a genizah burial, but many congregations have created their own ceremonies. I particularly like the one from Temple Emanu-El in Dallas, which contains passages from the Torah and Mishnah, as well as the rabbis' Kaddish, and contemporary poetry. You can adapt the liturgy to make it more appropriate or meaningful for your family or community, but it is customary to include the rabbis' Kaddish.

The most famous genizah, by far, is the Cairo genizah, a room attached to the Ben Ezra Synagogue in Old Cairo. The room contained over 200,000 documents and ritual objects from as far back as the 10th century, including commentaries and letters written by [Maimonides](#), and [Rabbi Judah Halevi](#). In the 1890s, [Solomon Schechter](#), a lecturer at Cambridge University, convinced synagogue officials to allow him to ship most of the contents of the Cairo genizah to Cambridge, and since then thousands of documents from the genizah have been restored, translated, and studied.

Today, most of the works from the genizah can be found at the Cambridge University Library, and at the Jewish Theological Seminary, and the entire corpus of manuscripts is being digitized by the Friedberg Genizah Project, so that it can be studied and searched by scholars all over the world.

Before you bury your own genizah, take a look through it. You probably won't find scraps of business contracts from the 13th century, but you might come across some valuable lessons and stories that you hadn't thought about in years. Good luck!

Burial of no longer needed Liturgical Texts

If you have old Siddurim or Machzorim which you wish to dispose of in a respectful way, then bring them to Beth Shalom where there will be collection boxes in the hall between 30 October and 28 November. The Ritual Committee will arrange a respectful burial on the property of Phillip Gordon (thank you Phillip). This applies only to liturgical texts and not to unwanted books in general.

Vision Project update...

At our recent Community Meeting we had the pleasure of spending some more time with Rabbi George Wielechowski who beamed in from glorious San Diego, California. Over the next half hour we got to know a little more about Rabbi George's background and how he plans to lead us through the Vision Project.

Rabbi George lives with his wife, Alison and his two boys Lenon (12) and Gideon (10). Having started his career in the film industry and being involved in a wide range of startup businesses, he went back to study and became a Rabbi. While he has served as pulpit Rabbi of large communities, his passion is for helping small communities find meaningful ways to express their Judaism. He is a Founding Director of the Open D'or Project, with a clear mission: "to ignite and accelerate entrepreneurial Jewish clergy to create and grow independent, welcoming, and sustainable spiritual communities that inspire individuals, couples, and families to actively live vibrant Jewish lives". We have got to know Rabbi George over the last few months and while he could not be with us in person for the High Holy Days he graciously provided wonderful sermons and earlier in the year led a fantastic Seder. We now have the opportunity to learn from him through the Vision Project.

The Vision Project is based on a well-established framework (The Theory of Change) used by many organisations, particularly not-for-profits, over the last 30 years. This model will allow us to articulate a vision for our community that encapsulates the hopes and aspirations of our wider community. From there we work back through a process to understand what things we would like to do that promote this vision and what resources we have to do these things. Ultimately it will allow us to prioritise these things to ensure we are delivering on this promise to our community.

George has led a number of organisations through this process and agreed that it takes bravery and a leap of faith, as communities are asked to dig deep and truly articulate what is important to them and what, if necessary, they might let go of. It's both confronting and liberating but ultimately, communities emerge stronger, united and clearer about a path forward. Our Vision Project will give us a roadmap for future strategies, engagements, activities and spiritual practice.

This project is for the whole Beth Shalom family. For this to be a meaningful activity, we need to hear from our many and varied members: young, senior, new, long standing, occasional visitors and Shabbat stalwarts. All of you have a relationship with Beth Shalom and our goal here is to understand the role that Beth Shalom plays in your life to help provide a meaningful, relevant and inspiring centre, underpinned by Jewish values, to ensure Beth Shalom is the vibrant home of Progressive Judaism in Auckland for many years to come. At the same time it is vital that we hear from non members and those people we wish to serve. Your voices, opinions, views and thoughts are more than welcome, they are critical.

Right now the Board of Management along with Chris Shiller, Jessamie Milton and Rachel Zussman (your project Working Group) are working the last few preparatory sessions to ensure we have a clear understanding of the process and have had our say too! From there we will be setting a range of conversations with the groups I outlined above as well as sending out surveys for a wider view and some one-on-one conversations to add extra depth to our stories. If you would like to be involved, please reach out to the Office to make sure we have your correct details.

This is a pivotal project that we really hope you get involved with at what is a crucial time in our 60+ year history. I look forward to chatting soon

B'Shalom

Ali



Alistair Kirk
Vice President (Acting)

JCC - Here's how I see it...

by Paul Wilton

JCC? Jewish Community Centre

It was heart-warming to see a packed hall at the Beth Shalom meeting of 18 October. This was to be expected. Our congregation has a great record of fronting up when asked. We were there to discuss progress on our two big projects: JCC and visioning. Clearly related, with strong inter-dependencies. Thanks for your vote of confidence allowing us to continue discussions with AHC. Having put up my hand early to help, here are my thoughts on a JCC.

Changing with the times

That AHC should invite us to join them to form a single JCC where we share a site and reside side by side is huge! Many will remember a time not long ago when an Orthodox rabbi would not set foot on our soil.

In recent times there has been a complete turnaround. Joint Board meetings have been held between the two congregations. AHC invited our rabbi and president to meet the current Orthodox rabbi and asked for feedback before he was offered the job. Our rabbi participated in the inauguration service of Rabbi Friedler from the AHC Bimah in the presence of the Chief Rabbi of the UK. R. Friedler has led prayers at Beth Shalom for Yom HaZikaron and R. Gutmann has done the same at AHC for Yom HaShoah.

The relationship between Habo and Bnei has also blossomed in recent times. Friendships have been forged and I loved the story of shlichim driving hours to take Shabbat shalom cards from the summer camp of one youth group to another and then back again with cards from the reciprocating camp.

In brief, we have moved on from the lingering hurt and strife that arose from the 1950s' split (60+ years ago) of a significant proportion of AHC to form Beth Shalom - a split that literally tore families apart at the time. Yes, there are some who are still looking back with memories that are hard to swallow, but the time has never been better for us to look forward to the future of our shrinking congregations.

A compulsion to act

The writing is on the wall. Now is the time to explore and evaluate every possible option to reverse current trends and strengthen the community. Failure to do so would be a dereliction of our duty as a congregation.

What trends? Just about every indicator of the health of our congregation is moving in the wrong direction. Membership; Hebrew School attendance, parental engagement and support (the traditional pool from which our leadership has been drawn); service attendance; volunteers; pot luck attendance; annual income; community get-togethers...and so it goes on. We are an aging congregation that is failing to engage the youth. Our Hebrew School used to have over 70 students. Now, we are struggling with fewer than 30.

Let's not kid ourselves. These trends have prevailed with and without a rabbi. Similar trends are seen in congregations of all religions and denominations across the globe and many congregations are disappearing. Those that are tackling the challenge head on are, however, able to stem the tide. Rabbi George, who is working with us, shared some examples at our October meeting.

A silver bullet?

We are not so naïve as to think that relocating will suddenly sort everything out. Our Board has its hands full, addressing issues and forging a vision.

Nonetheless, our situation is grave and the invitation from AHC to build the community together offers tremendous potential to benefit us all, if we can make it work.

What does this mean? It can only work if our needs are met, it is financially sustainable and our interests are fully protected and legally enforceable. The relationship must be based on goodwill, trust and a common vision.

Our Response

We have formed a small, dedicated team of volunteers, including representation from our Board and Trustees. This working group is in talks with the AHC leadership as approved at our meeting of August last year. We are there out of love for the community, a strong commitment and burning desire to build a vibrant Jewish future for our children and grandchildren.

One can say that the common goal underpinning our discussions with AHC is building a vibrant Auckland Jewish community for the future.

The progress has been frustratingly slow. If one stops to think about it, though, this is not surprising. It is a huge project and all volunteers are busy people with other commitments. The timeline has not been helped by the loss of our president who was leading our group, the delayed AGM and the inability to hold physical meetings during lockdown.

Since our meeting of August last year, we have:

- established a good working relationship with the AHC leadership;
- conducted focus group sessions with Beth Shalom members who do not generally attend community meetings. This included young adults, Habo leadership and a disappointing attendance from Hebrew School parents. Habo was particularly enthusiastic about a potential move;
- held several meetings with AHC that have covered areas including: understanding the site and its potential; the needs of AHC, Beth Shalom and the school; what AHC is thinking in terms of its offer to us; our respective bottom-lines; limitation of costs and risks if we are to go ahead; thoughts on site governance, structure and so on. Nothing is set in concrete, but we are steadily working towards a point when the congregations will be able to come together to engage in discussion.

We are still in the early stages. St Kentigern still occupies the site and AHC is talking about mid-2022 as the earliest time for the site to be ready for any potential move. We have gained a much better understanding of what may be feasible, but there are still many unanswered questions. Time is moving on and we need to ramp up our efforts.

Risk and cost

To date, our involvement has incurred no cost to Beth Shalom. We see no risk in our continued exploration of the options other than to the sanity and retention of team members who are trying to deal with the rumour mill, inaccurate assumptions and accusations that are not helping anyone. No move will take place without your say so.

Next step

Our next meeting will allow us to hear from the AHC leadership. Thereafter, we intend to bring the two congregations together in one room to voice concerns, discuss ideas, share aspirations, and clarify issues.

We believe, however, that we need to be well-prepared before we do so. The more answers we have in advance, the smoother the meeting is likely to be.

What we need from you

In brief:

- Trust us.
- Have patience.
- Do not rely on the rumour mill.
- If you hear something of interest or concern let us know and if you have questions, ask.
- If you have something to contribute, get involved. If you don't have the time, at least share your thoughts, constructive or not. We absolutely need to know what you are thinking.
- Rest assured. You will be involved. The team and Board share your concerns about transparency and will let you know when we have something to report.

One last comment that can help us move forward together: It is not helpful for us to be saying, "they will or they won't..." or for AHC members to be saying that about us. Let them speak for themselves and Beth Shalom will speak for ourselves.

We are going into this with our eyes wide open, but we intend to act in good faith and AHC has clearly demonstrated a similar commitment in discussions to date. Once more let me assure you that no move will take place without the approval of BOTH communities and lawyers will help to make all agreements watertight.

And the Dream?

The above is all true, but by no means what drives me or gives me hope.

The hope stems from the potential that is staring us in the face. A dream that can be realised at an extraordinary site that has so much to offer for people of all ages.

Think of it! School, pre-school, deli, pool, basketball, volleyball, tag, tennis, games, clubs, music, fun, play groups, youth groups, parties, friends, company, gym, yoga, dance, fundraisers, markets, learning, discussions, Limmud, prayer, Talmud, simchas, festivals, indoor, outdoor, you name it, a cup of tea with a view of the harbour...

Carpe diem! If we want a great future, let's make it happen and let's make it happen together.

Paul Wilton

Community Meeting feedback...

On Sunday October 18th, a community Meeting was held at Beth Shalom. A portion of the meeting was devoted to updating members on the status of the discussions with AHC regarding a potential move to their new Remuera campus. Following the update, attendees were given the opportunity to express their views and ask questions.

The working group, comprised of Paul Wilton, John Pezaro, Ted Ries and Judith Marks, also reminded members about the procedural steps which must be taken, including the fact that any decision to relocate, or to sell assets of Beth Shalom, would require the approval of 75% of the voting members at a general meeting. Likewise, the working group recounted the necessary preconditions which arose from our community meeting in August 2019: that the nature of Beth Shalom's tenure, whether freehold or leasehold, be perpetual; that Beth Shalom have total autonomy over its own practices within its property; that the financial consequences of the move in terms of capital and ongoing operating costs be transparent and manageable; and that Beth Shalom have genuine say in the cost structures and operating arrangements relating to common areas of the broader campus.

A number of concerns were raised by attendees. Generally speaking, these fell into (but were not limited to) a few broad categories:

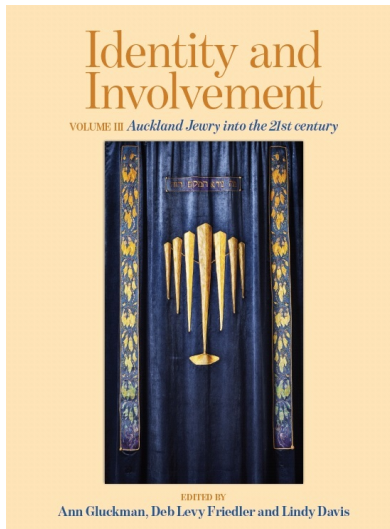
- The implications of leasehold arrangements, and the potentially skewed power structure which might arise from a lessor/lessee relationship with AHC
- The extent of potential opposition to our joint occupation of the campus within the AHC community
- The nature of the financial arrangements underlying AHC's purchase and occupancy of the site, including the terms of the loan used to fund a portion of the purchase price
- AHC's ability as an orthodox community to accommodate Beth Shalom's progressive practices (e.g. differences over halachah, kashrut, recognition of Beth Shalom members not born Jewish, acceptance of LGBTQ relationships, etc)
- Implications of the definition of the broader campus by AHC as orthodox.

It was suggested by the working group that the members of the AHC steering committee would be best suited to describe the positive vision for the future of the site as a hub for Auckland and New Zealand Jewry. The next public step in the process would be a Beth Shalom community meeting (ideally before the end of November) which would afford AHC leadership with opportunity to speak directly with our members, and to answer questions and concerns.

The date and time of the community meeting to be advised.

Potential Relocation Steering Committee

AUCKLAND JEWRY INTO THE 21ST CENTURY – GET YOUR COPY NOW...



“Auckland Jewry into the 21st Century” is the third book in the Identity and Involvement series, edited by Ann Gluckman.

Now available for \$25 plus post, from the Beth Shalom office, this handsome volume provides valuable insight into the contributions made by so many Jewish families, as well as giving an excellent overview of what it is to be Jewish in New Zealand.

Community Security Group

***Serving the Jewish Community in
New Zealand***

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Post: PO Box 68 728, Auckland

Email: contact@auckcsg.org.nz



CSG is looking for more people!

THE COMMUNITY NEEDS US – WE NEED YOU.

**If you are aged between 18 and 80 and would like
to contribute to your community then please
contact the CSG using the details above.**

Education Update

Back at Beth Shalom Sunday School.

We were back at Beth Shalom Sunday school this week preparing to lead Friday night services and

Pot Luck on October 30th at 6.30. Please come and celebrate shabbat with us all.



Bring along your instruments and games so we can have some singing fun



afterwards. Bring us

your best gourmet vegetarian or kosher fish dish to share. If you want, BYO wine or beer to share = that is also welcome.

It is a privilege we should not take lightly, this ability to meet as a community. It is one of the few places in the world where it is happening. We are a light. Please come and help us shine.

We also had lots of fun making shabbat candles.



Shabbat kat is also back with Ayelet and Arie returning to the country and Gal and Stacey back in New Zealand and out of quarantine. We hope to have the gang back at Saturday morning services in the library.

SHABBAT KAT Children's service

Saturday 31 October, 2020, 10-11am



Singing



Puppets



Dancing



Torah



Stories



Hebrew



Challah and juice



**Musical
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Bring all your spirit and energy.

Contact: educator@bethshalom.org.nz

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We only have 7 more Sunday schools until the end of a very weird year and a Chanukah party on Friday the 11th of December, so lets do a lot in the last term of the year.

November 9 Beth Shalom will be hosting an interfaith discussion and Debbie Miller will be presenting the Jewish perspective on...

Preserving the Environment
Abrahamic Faiths in Dialogue

DATE: MONDAY, 09 NOVEMBER
TIME: 07:30PM - 09:00PM
VENUE: BETH SHALOM PROGRESSIVE SYNAGOGUE
REGISTRATION: [SHORTURL.AT/AOZVZ](https://shorturl.at/AOZVZ)

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SPEAKER
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TRINITY THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

Bnei Mishna Lech Lecha Drash

Drash Parshat [Lech Lecha](#) (Genesis 12:1-17:27)

Daniel

"Go forth from your native land and your father's house to the land that I will show you...and you shall be a blessing." That was God's challenge to Abram. And Abram accepted the challenge.

But every day, we face a similar challenge. Every day, we must leave what we know and face the unknown - the future. Some days, the journey is easy. Other days, the journey is difficult. But when we set out, we never know what to expect - we only know that today will be different than it was yesterday.

JD

God told Abram to go forth, and he did. But he did not go alone. He brought his wife, his nephew, and his household on the trip. Similarly, we don't face the future alone - we go with our families, our neighbours, our country, and the rest of the world. Not everyone will help us on our journey, but we need to be mindful of our companions.

And, of course, God went with Abram. Does God go with us? Perhaps not in as direct a form as Abram saw and heard, but if we want God's company, we can have it.

Agam

Abram faced obstacles on his journey, as do we. Since Covid 19 some of those obstacles have seemed a lot bigger. Remember when the biggest worry about being late to school? Remember when CNN didn't have a constant count of how many people were infected or dead from covid on its screen? Remember when going to the airport to fly abroad was a possibility?

I know I spent the first months in lockdown in a funk. I watched more TV news that month than I usually see in a year, and I checked news websites every few minutes while I sat at home on my computer having school online instead of in a classroom with my friends. And at the end of every day, I felt that I hadn't done anything.

Sam

But this past week as we returned to level 1, things changed. It wasn't a conscious decision, but somehow, I realised that I had a life to live. I started getting more done at school again. I started to read things other than the news. I even started watching TV for fun (mostly reruns, of course!) I realised that the new normal has not just changed our lifestyle but it changed our focus to a community of one versus a real in person community. It did not just hide us away in our houses it isolated us from our identity and our support. It was called keeping us safe but it also left many of us alone in a journey that for some was quite scary. It forced us to stop living normal lives. And now we need to reconnect with the Journey of the Jewish people. We are not alone we are all here for each other on this journey. We need to look forward to our Journey and listen to those around us.

Goldie

Abram's journey continues after the end of today's parsha - we know of the challenges he has yet to face, and how he'll respond. We know that God's promise is fulfilled, and that Abram is the ancestor of a great nation. We don't know what lies ahead of each of us on our journey, but at the end of every day, we can look back and see what progress we made. Did we learn? Did we grow? Did we contribute to tikkun olam? Were we a blessing? Shabbat shalom.

Beth Shalom Hebrew/Sunday School, Contact: educator@bethshalom.org.nz

Ph: 027 765 3677. Your place to make friends and build community.

Bar Mitzvah, Lucas Volodzskis

Hi, my name is Lucas and my family and I would like to invite the Beth Shalom community to my Bar Mitzvah on the 7th of November.

My family and I are from the United States except for my dad who is from Uruguay. I was born in Hawaii. We have lived in New Zealand for about five years. I currently go to Selwyn College and I have almost finished my first year. I enjoy playing soccer and tennis, cubing and calculating (I like maths a lot). You are also all invited to the Kiddush afterwards.

As part of my Bar Mitzvah studies, I have committed to a Tzedakah project. For my Tzedakah project I will be raising money to provide school lunches from Eat My Lunch. Eat My Lunch is an organisation which sells lunches to people in Auckland and Wellington on a buy one-give one basis. For every lunch they sell, they give a free lunch for a child in New Zealand who does not have one.

After I raise money for Eat My Lunch, I will help them to make the lunches and then deliver them to local schools who have children on their lunch list. For every \$10 raised, I can give two lunches to school kids who do not have one.

I would appreciate any support you are willing to give in helping me reach my goal of making and delivering 100 lunches for kids in Auckland. Thank you.



Auckland Jewish Burial & Benevolent Society

This month the B&B will be meeting with Davis Funeral Directors at their invitation to share some of the rituals and practices we perform at the end of life and in our funeral services so that they may better understand and support families .

Our regular committee meeting is the second Tuesday of the month and this is a good time to bring to our attention any enquiries or requests for benevolence. Just a further reminder that the committee holds all decisions in confidence and names are not included in the recorded minutes.

Your membership of the B&B both supports the community to meet benevolence requests as well as to work with you at a time of loss. We quietly support the family, Rabbi or Layreader with the arrangements for funerals, burial and shiva minyan. We also can help with the arrangements for pre-purchase of plots, stone-settings/unveilings, and the care and maintenance of the cemetery. We once again thank you all for your regular membership support and donations.

Sue Berman 022 051 3589



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Proud to serve the Jewish community

Community Care ...

Todah Rabba ...

Despite the challenges we faced over the latest lockdown this year we had a very successful outcome to our Give a Kid a Blanket/Women's Refuge Winter Appeal. A huge "thank you" to everyone who donated blankets, knitted items, winter clothing and also to those of you who made financial contributions.

A special "shout out" has to go to Raisa Polishchuk who knitted and sewed over 50 beanies, gloves and blankets - I think she even surpassed her last years effort!



One of the Community Care initiatives this year was to deliver Pesach parcels to some of our senior members of the community and those who were unable to maybe get to shul to obtain supplies. Well of course that all changed almost overnight as we went very quickly into level 4 and complete lockdown.

The committee then decided to plan to make gift packs for Rosh Hashanah because, after all, everything will all be back to normal by then, right? Well of course, Auckland was back in lockdown and at level 2.5. Beth Shalom was closed but social gatherings were allowed up to 10 people so Sue Kranz very generously allowed us to take over her home for the morning to make the gift packs of honey cake, apples, honey and chocolates plus a card to wish the recipients a happy new year. Not only did Sue allow us to use her home but she also baked every one of the 40 honey cakes so special thanks to Sue.

I'd also like to thank:

Shirley Roland - Shirley donated their own special Waiheke Island honey, helped assemble the packs and then also delivered several around town.

David Kranz - not only was he banned from his own kitchen but he then drove all over Auckland to deliver the parcels.

Lita Summerfield - for delivering to our community members out west.

Sue Berman, David Singer and the B&B committee for their support.

Finally, Community Care is in need of volunteers to help in our community work. If you are able to maybe visit someone in your area - perhaps a new member, someone who may be unwell, a new mother, give someone a lift to shul or just to call on someone - please contact either me or Lita Summerfield. This does not mean that you have to attend meetings (although of course you will be more than welcome!) - we are currently compiling a list of people we can call on when needed.

Chris Shiller 021 177 4934 shiller@iorcon.net.nz

Contact: Lorna Orbell 022 026 2899 chaim@slingshot.co.nz Lita Summerfield 021 297 9462
(TEXT ONLY) serendipitylms40@gmail.com or contact the office 09 524 4139





Book list - new titles to choose from...

Replacement Girl, Anne Beaglehole

The Rescue of Memory, Cheryl Paul Sucher

A Perfect World, David Cohen

At the Edge of Memory, Michael King

The Sunflower, Simon Weisenthal

The Last Ember, Daniel Levin

Bakol, Ruben Geller

Broken for You, Stephanie Kallos

Mila 18, Leon Uris

As a Driven Leaf, Milton Steinberg

Honey from the Rock, Rabbi Lawrence Kurshner

Morality: Restoring the Common Good in Divided Times, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

TO JERUSALEM AND BACK-Saul Bellow- published 1976 about his visit in 1973 or so. Fascinating to compare the state of things with now to 1973! He meets with a variety of people, politicians, poets etc. A good read, well written, worthwhile. 180 pages excellent length!!

A YEAR AT THE CIRCUS- Jon Sopel, BBC News Editor in N America, writing currently about life at the White House. He visits each room in each chapter and writes about what goes on there, giving recent examples. Well written, enlightening and entertaining

2020 VISION

SUNDAY
8 NOV
2020

UPJ VIRTUAL BIENNIAL

Dear friends,

We warmly invite you to join with your friends and community for our first Virtual Biennial on **Sunday 8 November**.

Over one day of sessions we will present a **compelling vision of Progressive Judaism for 2020 and beyond**, and new ways to grow and strengthen your community and your congregation.

We are delighted that **Rabbi Sharon Brous** will present a welcome address at the beginning of the Virtual Biennial. Rabbi Brous launched and leads IKAR, one of the fastest growing congregations in the US today. Her TED Talk, "It's time to reclaim religion", has had 1.4 million views on YouTube and has been translated into 23 languages. Rabbi Brous will also be our guest presenter "in person" at the UPJ Biennial in October 2021.

The Virtual Biennial will be preceded by Kabbalat Shabbat hosted by the United Hebrew Congregation of Singapore on Friday 6 November at 6.00pm and Havdalah co-hosted by Temple Beth Israel (Melbourne) and North Shore Temple Emanuel (Sydney) on Saturday 7 November at 8.30pm.

The UPJ Biennial is open to anyone interested in envisioning our Jewish future.

Our dedicated Virtual Biennial page on the UPJ website provides information about the exciting program. The registration fee allows us to provide reliable and high-quality streaming and opportunities to work together online.

With your support and participation, the Virtual Biennial will allow us to connect with Progressive Jews from across Australia, Asia, New Zealand and worldwide.

We hope you can join us!

Sincerely,

David Knoll AM and Brian Samuel OAM, UPJ Co-Presidents

Susan Kadar, UPJ Biennial Chair

For more Information visit the Virtual Biennial web page: <https://upj.org.au/virtual-biennial>