



## חדשות משדה התעופה

News from...*International SYNAGOGUE*

by Rabbi Bennett M. Rackman

**UPDATE, MAY, 2010**

**VOL. VIII, No. 3**

**שבועות, ה'תש"ע**

### ***KOSHER FOOD AGAIN RETURNS TO IAT/TERMINAL 4***

Two weeks after Passover, a new kosher vendor opened in Terminal 4. For now the name of this new purveyor of kosher food is Yummy Sandwich. The company will also feature a new brand of food products under the label, FRESKO. They offer a full array of strictly kosher salads, sandwiches, wraps, and dessert/snack items. The food is delicious and reasonably priced. They have an ideal location on the Commercial floor (third floor) of the building. The food is under the STAR-K *Hashgachah*.

All FRESKO products will be featured both pre- and post-security. Pre-security, the food is available at a concession called Peet's Coffee, a nationally recognized coffee chain. They have allocated two shelves for kosher food, including FRESKO products as well as kosher hummus. The concession is centrally located pre-security where many EL AL passengers and their families congregate before a flight. Permission has been requested from the building administration to install a "washing cup" in each of the Rest Rooms so that people can wash their hands before eating bread.

Rabbi Rackman has surveyed the other terminals in JFK to learn what kosher food provisions are available. Terminals 1, 2, and 3 provide kosher snacks (candy bars, chips, packaged cakes and crackers, and ice cream) both pre- and post security. In Terminals 5 and 8, CIBO EXPRESS, both pre- and post security, a wide selection of items (sandwiches, salads, wraps, side salads, fruit cups, and yogurt parfaits) can be purchased in the Food Court and elsewhere. Most of these products have either the STAR-K or O-U supervision.

### ***ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 22, 2010***

The By-Laws of the *International SYNAGOGUE* require that annual elections be held each June to elect officers and Board members of the *SYNAGOGUE*. The activities of the past year are reviewed and plans are discussed for the future year. The financial situation and budget for the upcoming year are approved. We will also be discussing plans for the upcoming "Family Fun Day at JFK" scheduled for September. What we hope will become an annual event for the Airport community, as well as neighboring communities, promising to be an exciting and enjoyable day for all, with thousands participating. This year the meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 22. A sumptuous breakfast will be served at 8:45A.M. The meeting will start at 9:00A.M. Please call 718-656-5044 or send an e-mail ([intlsyn@yahoo.com](mailto:intlsyn@yahoo.com)) to confirm your attendance and participation.



Project Interchange: LATINO BUSINESS WOMEN



RABBI KUPPERMAN



KOSHER FOOD



PORT AUTHORITY AVIATION DEPARTMENT'S CUSTOMER CARE AWARDS LUNCHEON



VOLCANO LAYOVER



MSMTA TRIP TO POLAND



Project Interchange: SECOND GENERATION INDIANS



BIRTHRIGHT ISRAEL 051710



TORAH READING GROUP

## ***PLANES AND VOLCANOES DO NOT MIX***

As all our readers know, JFK Airport was severely impacted by the events that took place several weeks ago in Iceland. Because a volcano in Iceland erupted, trans-Atlantic air traffic was disrupted. All the news media reported on the terrible conditions of the stranded passengers on both sides of the ocean.

On Thursday, April 15, Mt. Eyjafjallajokull erupted in Iceland sending large clouds of ash and molten glass high into the atmosphere. This endangered aircraft since this mixture of smoke and ashes at high temperatures could incapacitate jet engines. Planes in Western Europe and the United States were grounded. By Saturday night (April 24) when Rabbi Rackman arrived at the Synagogue to greet a group of travelers on a Project Interchange mission, there were more than 400 stranded people outside the Chapels in the hallways on the fourth and third floors of Terminal 4.

The Red Cross had been contacted by the Port Authority to assist. They supplied the people with cots and blankets. The Airport had the task of **maintaining** these individuals for the duration of their unexpected visit.

In JFK/IAT staff at the four chapels worked cooperatively to alleviate the travail of these travelers. Father Krystian Piasta (the newly appointed Catholic Chaplain) and Rabbi Rackman went to great lengths to assure that more than 400 stranded passengers were well served. But, by Monday morning the situation became more desperate as these 400 travelers were seeking additional support and services from the airlines impacted and the Port Authority.

Port Authority and IAT staff, led by Jim Fazio, Susana Cunha, and Lillian Soto coordinated the delivery of care. But, clergy are trained as pastoral care providers (especially for "lost flocks"). And, the close proximity of the passengers to the Chapels, meant that the Chapel staff provided "hands-on" care throughout the ordeal.

Father Piasta arranged with SSP (the "Food Court") to supply food. Rabbi Rackman oversaw the distribution of newspapers, magazines, and some over-the-counter medications. Federation of Jewish Philanthropies offered to provide kosher food, and the Archdiocese of Manhattan donated money to help pay for the food. The Council of Churches of the City of New York supplied cases of water. They were also ready to contribute food, if necessary. Individuals from neighboring communities donated food and some even came to the Airport offering to host some travelers in their homes for a day or two. Both chaplains regularly circulated among the stranded travelers offering counsel and emotional support.

Alice DiBenedetto, Marianne Fazio, and Nicole Geramita, Administrative Assistants for all the Chapels, were available throughout the ordeal, even late into the night, offering hot and cold drinks and other help as one day became two, then three, then more. Imam Ahmet Yuceturk was also available in the evening offering drink and support to those stranded.

By the second day, people wanted to shower. Some passengers complained to The Chaplains that they could not sleep because construction workers were making repairs to one of the restaurants on the third floor. The loud noise kept people awake at night. By passing these requests on to the Port Authority and staff in IAT, much of the frustration and discomfort was alleviated. This "**good news**" was not publicized widely.

After working long days, there was "light at the end of the tunnel." By Thursday afternoon when many of the flights were reinstated and people were able to reach their destinations. The Port Authority Aviation Department's Customer Care Awards Luncheon is held each year to acknowledge those individuals and groups for their commitment to excellent service. On May 12, all the chapels were recognized for "assistance during the recent volcanic episode that stranded so many of the Port Authority customers at JFK Airport. The Chapels were an integral part of the Port Authority's customer care plan." The award is inscribed with:

Terminal 4 Chapels - JFK  
Special Partner Award  
May 2010

### ***NO MEGILLAH READING THIS YEAR***

While we have offered travelers the opportunity to hear the *megillah* reading on Purim night prior to their boarding planes, this year it was not necessary since Purim was celebrated on Saturday night, February 27.

### ***YOM HA'ATZMAUT/YOM YERUSHALAYIM OBSERVED AT JFK***

The ***SYNAGOGUE*** again hosted a party for EL AL employees in celebration of *Yom HaAtzmaut* - Israel Independence Day. We served Middle Eastern foods and expressed gratitude for their diligence in ensuring the safety of all passengers. This has become an annual tradition at JFK. And on *Yom Yerushalayim* - Jerusalem Reunification Day, we placed bowls of hard candy which had a *MAGEN DAVID* (Star of David) on them, at the check-in counters for everyone to enjoy.

## ***VISITORS TO THE SYNAGOGUE***

In February, a group of young men from Yeshiva University High School traveled to Poland on the "Marsha Stern Talmudical Academy Winter Mission to Poland." Morris M. Fajtelewicz, First Vice President of the Port Authority Police Employees Shomrim, arranged for the seven young men and two adults to depart first from the ***SYNAGOGUE***. The group visited many holy sites (synagogues and memorials) and was inspired by their journey. The mission also brought inspiration to all those Jews whom they met, both young and old, wherever they visited. The Chapel is ready to host all missions (to Israel, Europe, or wherever) leaving from JFK.

During March, the ***SYNAGOGUE*** hosted one of the many March of Living missions leaving from JFK and traveling to Poland and Israel. And, on March 8, we hosted a mission from Bnai Brith Youth Organization on their way to Israel. In the coming months, we plan to host additional groups from these organizations (כּן ירבו) whose goal is critical for the Jewish future: that our past not be forgotten.

Rabbi Rackman received an unusual request to host a group of yeshiva students in the ***SYNAGOGUE*** for a *mincha* service on March 16. The group of fifteen young men were returning to New York to be with their families for Passover. They flew on Turkish Airlines. They were able to pray with a *minyán* en route, but could not read from the Torah. They wished for the opportunity to daven *mincha*, and then read the appropriate Torah section for *Rosh Chodesh*. We were happy to accommodate them.

On March 26, the ***SYNAGOGUE*** hosted a group of travelers sponsored by Project Interchange of the American Jewish Committee. This particular mission consisted of prominent Latino business women. On Tuesday evening, April 27, Rabbi Rackman came to the Airport ready to host another Project Interchange group of travelers to Israel. A group of fifteen second-generation Indians, prominent in the business community were going on a ten-day mission to Israel.

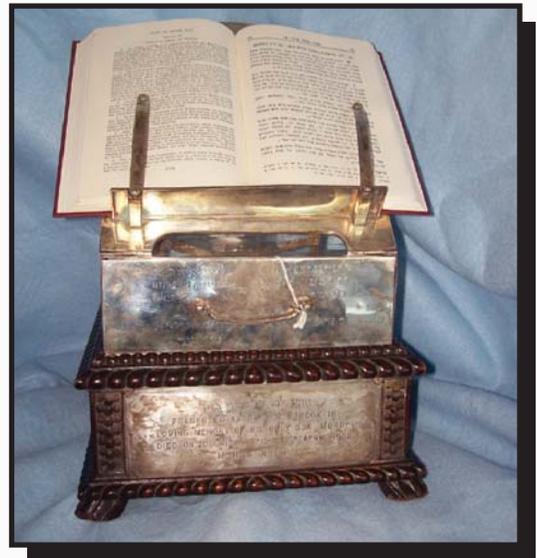
(Flights on EL AL were apparently not affected by the volcano since these planes were re-routed to fly on a more southerly course.)

In April, we were again able to host Rabbi Kupperman, a very elderly and highly respected Jewish leader from Zurich on his way back to Switzerland. This religious icon attracted a crowd of almost two hundred adults and children who came to escort him and seek his blessing. The rabbi enjoyed the singing and dancing of those who came to greet him. He blessed everyone with good wishes for a happy Pesach.

## ***MUSEUM HIGHLIGHTS***

In this issue of Update / חדשות, we feature another of the artifacts displayed in our Museum. People are aware that young men studying Talmud (or another subject) will sometimes stand at a "shtenda" or lectern as they study. Other students may sit at a table with a modified lectern or book rest to raise the book up to make it easier to read. Pictured below is a wood and sterling silver "shtenda" from India. The inscription engraved states:

קודש לכל הב' שערי רצון  
PRESENTED BY MR. E. M. BAROOK IN  
LOVING MEMORY OF HIS ONLY SON MORDY.  
DIED ON 20<sup>TH</sup> NISAN 5712 = 15<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 1952.  
M.H.S.R.I.P.



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## *International* SYNAGOGUE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING REPORT to the COMMUNITY

will be held on  
Tuesday, June 22, 2010, at 8:45 A.M.

A lavish breakfast will be served.  
Come and join us for this event.

R.S.V.P. – 718-656-5044