



International SYNAGOGUE Chapel, JFK Airport



חדשות משדה התעופה

News from... *International SYNAGOGUE*

by Rabbi Bennett M. Rackman

UPDATE, SEPTEMBER, 2007

ראש השנה, ה'תשס"ח

Chanukah Candle Lighting and Party

Tuesday, December 11, 2007 5:00pm-7:00pm

40th Anniversary Celebration

Special recognition to the Past Chaplains:

Rabbi Eugene J. Cohen

Rabbi Alvin M. Poplack

Rabbi Paul L. Hait

The Children's HAFTR Choir will perform.

Airline Limited Raffle drawing

door prizes ~ latkes ~ soft drinks ~ doughnuts will be served

~~~~~

*Please come and join us for this very special event.*

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

The annual meeting of the *International SYNAGOGUE* was held this year on June 8. We had over twenty-five members in attendance. This was the largest gathering we have had in many years to conduct **SYNAGOGUE** business.

The activities of the past year were reviewed and plans were made for the coming year. The financial situation and budget for the upcoming year was approved. We welcomed our new Board members. Please check the letterhead.

### **SYNAGOGUE WEB-SITE LAUNCHED**

At the suggestion of Bonnie Aidelman, we recently engaged David and Rosa Matsas to develop a website for the *International SYNAGOGUE*. We are happy to announce our joining the "information highway." Information can now be accessed through our website. In addition to the Newsletter, we will be posting information on travel, the weekly Torah portion, *minyan* schedule, occasional updates from JFK Airport, etc. People will be able to contact us at the *International SYNAGOGUE* via the web ([www.internationalsynagogue.com](http://www.internationalsynagogue.com) and [www.jfkshul.com](http://www.jfkshul.com)).

### **"SHEVA BRACHOT" - ANOTHER FIRST AT JFK IAT/TERMINAL 4**

Yitzchak and Chava celebrated their wedding day on Sunday, August 12. This was not unusual as many weddings are held in the Summer time. However, the new couple decided during the wedding celebration to leave for Israel on Thursday morning so that the groom might resume his yeshiva studies prior to the new month of *Elul*. A call was made to the **SYNAGOGUE** office by the parents (Levy and Markovitch families) to arrange for a "sheva brachot" brunch prior to boarding an ISRAIR plane. And, so we were able to celebrate the new union at JFK. Onlookers were surprised to behold singing and dancing often seen at a Jewish wedding.

**PLEASE RESERVE TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2007, FOR THE ANNUAL CHANUKAH LIGHTING CEREMONY AND PARTY AT JFK. THIS YEAR WE WILL DEDICATE THE CHAPEL MUSEUM AND GIVE SPECIAL RECOGNITION TO THE THREE PAST CHAPLAINS: RABBIS EUGENE J. COHEN, ALVIN M. POPLACK, AND PAUL L. HAIT. PLEASE BE SURE TO JOIN US AT 5:00 P.M.**

## Pictures –



*Sheva Brachot*



*Elite Academy*



*ELAL Lounge*



*ELAL New 777*



*Students Traveling to Israel*

the phrase 'ה' כבוד, glory of the Lord. The pause should be after the third word. And, the musical notes also convey the same meaning. The notes on this verse are: *mayrcha - tipcha - sof pasuk*. Again, our *mesorah*, our tradition, informs us as to how to read and chant this verse.

**י מ ל ו ך**: The last verse in the “**KEDUSHAH**” is an excerpt from Psalm CXLVI, 10 (The Lord shall reign forever, your God, O Zion, from generation to generation.) We say **ה' ימלוך לעולם**. We do not say the verse found in Exodus XVI, 18: **ה' ימלוך לעולם ועד** - God will reign for all eternity. The verse from Exodus would appear more powerful and desirable for us to quote rather than the verse from the Psalm! Indeed, *Onkelos* who wrote the Aramaic translation on the Five Books of Moses translates the verse as **ה' מלכותה קאם** - in the present tense. The correct English translation should be, God **reigns** for all eternity. On the other hand, the verse in the Psalm translates **ימלוך** as the future tense. How can this be?

The Jewish people at the splitting of the Reed Sea saw God's presence; they saw, experienced God intervening in Nature, in history. They saw **גילוי שכינה** - they had Divine revelation. Our sages tell us that the lowly maid-servant at the Sea had a more profound God experience than even the prophet Isaiah. For them God was not in the past, or future. For them, God was only and forever **present**. Only they could give expression to God's Omnipresence - **ה' מלכותה קאם**, God reigns for all eternity. As for us, we can only look forward to the future; we can only recite **ה' ימלוך לעולם** - that the Lord shall reign in the future.

Additionally, the word **לעולם**, eternity or forever and ever, is written without the “ו” in Exodus, as if to signify that God's kingship is incomplete. On the other hand, in the Psalm it is written with the “ו” as if to signify that in the end of days God's kingship will be complete. We hope and pray that the day will soon come that God **will**, in the future, some day soon, reign forever, from generation to generation.

(Our sages are critical of King Hezekiah. When God performed miracles for his Generation they were worthy that the Messiah should appear and redeem the Jewish people. The reason they offer that the **משיח** did not come was due to the lack of appreciation of that generation. They did not sing a song of Thanksgiving! One may ask, if the Jewish people recognized God's Omnipotence and Omnipresence at the shores of the Reed Sea, then why did not the Messiah appear at that point in history bringing about the Ultimate Redemption. The answer is simple: the Jewish people first needed to receive the Torah on Mt. Sinai and they also had to inherit the land of Israel.)

***May God grant us in this new year, a life filled with happiness. May the year be filled with knowledge and understanding of God's truth. May we be granted a year of peace and health for us, all Israel, and all humankind.***



**HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

**SOME INSIGHTS INTO THE קְדוּשָׁה - "KEDUSHAH"**

(with gratitude to Mr. Harry Harris of Far Rockaway, who taught me how to chant (*layn*) from the Torah and gave me a love for the Torah cantillation)

For the past several months, those attending services in the chapel have been exposed to several new thoughts about the recitation of the "**KEDUSHAH**."

**ש ו ד ק:** Above the *aron kodesh* in the chapel, there is brass sculpture by the famous artist Chaim Gross, which says: *קדוש קדוש קדוש - holy holy holy*. Jews recite this phrase taken from Isaiah VI, 3, several times each day. But, why is it necessary to say "holy three times? What is accomplished by saying the word three times? Does it mean, holy, holier, holiest? I think not! Can't the angels just say "holy" once? What is gained by repeating it?

Each day in our prayers we recite the paragraph: *ובא לציון* which also contains this verse from Isaiah. But, here we also recite the Aramaic translation of *Yonason* the son of *Uziel*. This translation is at least two thousand years old. Each *קדוש* has a different emphasis or focus. The first *holy* refers to God being holy in the Heavens (*שמי מרומא*); the second *קדוש* refers to God's holiness on Earth (*על ארעא*); and the third *קדוש* connotes God as holy "forever and ever" (*לעלם ולעלמי עלמיא*). So now we can understand the need to repeat the word *holy* three times. The angels, and we, are praising different aspects of God's holiness.

This understanding of *Yonasan ben Uziel* can also be gleaned from another source. Our *mesorah*, our tradition, also informs us as to how to read and chant verses in the Bible.

The musical notes assigned to *קדוש קדוש קדוש* are *dargah - tvir - tipcha*. The first *קדוש* is sung with a high pitch (as if going up to the Heavens), the second *קדוש* is sung with a low pitch (as if going down to Earth), and the third *קדוש* is sung with **emphasis** (to connote "forever and ever"). The music gives "meaning" to the understanding of the words we say.

(This is not similar to the comment of the Vilna Gaon on the verse in Genesis XL, 18, since there the *GR"A* is utilizing the **names** of the notes, and not the music, to gain deeper insight into the understanding of the text.)

**ך ו ר ב:** The musical notes also convey to us the proper way to read the second verse in the "**KEDUSHAH**." Some people mistakenly pause in the verse from Ezekiel (III, 12) after the first word, or after the second word. However, the second and third words form

*International* **SYNAGOGUE - A PLACE OF SOLACE IN TRYING TIMES**

Not a week goes by that EL AL Airlines is called upon to transport an *aron* to Israel for burial. Usually the **SYNAGOGUE** and terminal are not involved since this activity takes place in the cargo area of JFK. This past Summer, the wife of Perry Mandel (St. Louis) passed away, and both EL AL and the family sought assistance from Rabbi Rackman. Similarly, when the mother of E. Magnus Oppenheim, a Board member, passed away, he asked for help expediting funeral arrangements so that the *aron* would be able to leave on the proper EL AL flight.

**RABBI RACKMAN LECTURES AT THE HAMPTON SYNAGOGUE**

This past Summer Rabbi Rackman was invited to spend a weekend at the Hampton Synagogue located in Westhampton Beach on Long Island. Rabbi Rackman spoke after Friday night dinner to approximately one hundred people about the activities at JFK Airport. He also spoke of his experiences as a hospital chaplain. The work of a trained chaplain with C.P.E. credentials is very different from the activity of *bikur cholim* volunteers. The audience gained an appreciation for the pastoral skills necessary to assist patients (and sometimes, travelers) in dealing with the anxieties and concerns triggered by an unfamiliar and tense setting in which they find themselves.

**EL AL HAPPENINGS**

During this past Summer, EL AL Airlines has been busy upgrading their services to travelers. During the months of July and August, both the first-class and business-class lounges were closed in order to completely re-build, refurbish, and decorate these areas. Several new amenities were added to the lounges. EL AL also added two new planes to its trans-Atlantic fleet. Two new Boeing 777 planes are now making up to three trips each week to Tel Aviv. We wish all travelers to Israel a safe and enjoyable journey.

**ELITE ACADEMY**

The Israel Aliyah Center of the Jewish Agency for Israel sponsors a program in Israel called Elite Academy. Since 1992, more than 15,000 select high school students have been given the opportunity to complete their studies in grades 10 through 12 in Israel. The students accepted to the program must have excelled in the ninth grade to participate. The program is fully subsidized by the Jewish Agency. They attend different institutions (yeshivot or regional high schools) in Israel. The **SYNAGOGUE** hosted a group of sixty students and their parents on Sunday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>. An orientation program was conducted in conjunction with a catered lunch before the teenagers left for Israel, all coordinated by Rabbi Elie Klein, Director of the Academy.

## **VISITORS TO THE SYNAGOGUE**

As in past years, the summer season is a very busy time at JFK. There are at least three or four flights to Israel each day. Besides conducting services ("*minyanim*"), we try to greet and host groups of teenagers leaving for a visit or longer stay in Israel. We *daven mincha/maariv*, serve light refreshments, and validate parking.

Some of the groups we have met include: YACHAD, Passport to Israel (sponsored by Lynn Schusterman), Bnei Akiva - Camp TVI, NCSY - Michlelet, Young Judea, NCSY - Kollel, Bnei Akiva - MACH HACH, NCSY - birthright, Camp Morasha - SULAM Program, YACHAD - Young Adults, March of the Living, NCSY- birthright, Yeshiva Ohr Yerushalayim (OJ), Yeshiva Shalavim, Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim, Mir Yeshiva, Yeshiva Brisk, Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh, MMY, Midreshet Moriah, Mevasseret, Lev HaTorah, Reishit Shanah Bet, Shalavim - Girls, Michlalah, Netiv Aryeh, Tiferet, Shveilay Hatorah, Bnot Torah, Midreshet Tehilla, Bnos Chava, Bnos Chana, Michlelet Esther, etc. A minimum of 2,500 young adults and their parents were served by the by the **SYNAGOGUE** this past summer.

## **CHAPLAIN INTERNS FILL IN DURING SUMMER**

(The **SYNAGOGUE** was fortunate to have had three rabbinical students assist during the summer. All interns are in the last stages of their studies. They greeted passengers, conducted services, and hosted groups of teenagers on their way to Israel.)

My experience working at the *International SYNAGOGUE* at JFK Airport was as unique and diverse as the as the congregants enjoying our pre-flight *mincha*. Immediately following my arrival, at the airport for my appointed interview time, Rabbi Rackman quickly glanced my way, shook my hand, and said "Okay, let's go." A bit confused at his unorthodox interview technique, it did not take much time for me to recognize the meaning of Rabbi Rackman's first words of wisdom: "If you want to be good at this job, you have to learn how to juggle and you have to enjoy being on your feet."

Twenty exercise-filled minutes later we managed to stop by the food court, the EL AL and ISRAIR check-in lines, back to the **SYNAGOGUE** for a quick head count, pulled a right toward the ISRAIR lounge, back to the check-in lines finally arriving at our destination - the *International SYNAGOGUE* - for a beautiful afternoon service comprised of Jews of all color, creed, hair length, and nationality.

Over the course of the summer I managed to converse [along with Rabbi Rackman] with heads of *yeshivas* from Israel, from America, doctors, lawyers, knowledgeable, and inexperienced Jews from around the world. Furthermore, through the use of the Chapel Museum, we were able to greet and feed members from NCSY - ICE, NCSY Kollel, Sulam Morasha, Mach Hach Bnei Akiva, BBY, birthright, among other groups. My experience working under the mentorship of Rabbi Rackman this past summer not only increased my cultural awareness, but allowed me to appreciate world Jewry from an entirely new and enlightened perspective.

Shana Tova,  
Zvi Schindel (RIETS, YU)

\*\*\*\*\*

I have been a very fortunate person. For the past three years I have been a rabbinical Student at Yeshivat Chovevei Torah. In addition to a comprehensive and fulfilling curriculum, I also have had the chance to intern at interesting places including synagogues, hospitals, and classrooms. But, I don't think I will ever forget my experience at *International SYNAGOGUE* at JFK Airport. I had the good fortune to spend time there this summer. My role was to give men and women leaving for Israel a hardy sendoff on their way to a year of learning.

At first the experience seemed relatively normal. I gathered a *minyan*, called page numbers out, and collected *zedakah*. I quickly learned the importance of my presence beyond these duties. I really felt that the parents of these students appreciated the synagogue's priority in greeting and meeting these families for the joyous event of going to study Torah for a year. I really felt that I was helping to make a *simcha* out of this day. I truly believe that this *simcha* will add importance to their year of learning and remind them of the special opportunity they have this year to surround themselves with the *kedusha* of Eretz Yisroel and the *kedusha* of *Talmud Torah*. I hope to be back next summer to help out again!

Daniel Braune Friedman (YCT)

\*\*\*\*\*

When I agreed to be the intern chaplain at the *International SYNAGOGUE* at J.F.K. airport, I really was not sure what I had gotten myself into. I had been told that I was responsible for coordinating the prayers, validating parking tickets, and providing food for students on group flights on their way to a year of study in Israel. While all that was true, the experience was far more. When coordinating the prayers it gave me a real sense of purpose and satisfaction when we made an average of three *mincha* and *maariv minyanim* on each of the days I was there; enabling that many people to perform such an important mitzvah just before a flight was truly fulfilling. Allowing students who would not be seeing their friends or family for a year, to enjoy the last few moments together in a fun way hopefully allowed them to begin a meaningful year on the right foot. Meeting new people, each with their own story and history, and providing these opportunities to flyers and their families was new, exciting, fun and eye-opening to an important new world of the rabbinate. It is an experience I am glad I had, and am not likely to soon forget.

Meir Lipschitz (RIETS, YU)

\*\*\*\*\*

## **GOOD AND WELFARE**

*Mazal Tov - Mazal Tov:* On July 3, Elana and Jonathan Rackman became the proud parents of *Devorah Bayla* (aka Rhyan Mikayla). May we all be privileged to share joyous occasions in the coming year.



Devorah Bayla