



Kol HaKehilah

The Kol Nefesh Masorti Synagogue Magazine

Rosh Hashanah 5786/2025

HOPE

In this issue:

Writing by Rabbi Joel; Chazan Jacky; Rena Pearl; Georgia Kaufmann; Mike Fenster; Meira Ben-Gad; Steve Griffiths; Alison Niman; Ruth Hart; Claudia Allan; Sarah & James Burns; Ben Samuel; Tanya Novick; Daniel Preter; Nahum Gordon; Melanie Kelly; Miriam Burns, Leah Greenfield and Isla Silk; Einav Diamond Limor; Shibby Allen & Jay Schlesinger, and others.

Cover art by Chazan Jacky Chernett (see article on page 4)

Editor: Meira Ben-Gad

With thanks to Jon Niman for help putting together this issue.

Thank you to everyone in the community who helped with the publication of this magazine by submitting articles or artwork, buying ads, printing, and mailing.

We are also grateful to The Printhouse for their friendly, efficient, and professional service over the years. Please do consider using The Printhouse for all your printing needs: www.phnh.com.

If you'd like to be involved in the production of the next issue – or if you'd like to suggest a theme – please let us know! The next edition will be Pesach 5786/2026.

The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of KNM.

KOL NEFESH
MASORTI
SYNAGOGUE



www.kolnefesh.org.uk

convenor@kolnefesh.org.uk | admin@kolnefesh.org.uk | rabbi@kolnefesh.org.uk



Rosh HaShanah 5786/2025

25 years
KOL NEFESH
MASORTI
SYNAGOGUE



Kol HaKehilah

HOPE



To Look for Heaven ... Is to Live Here in Hell?

By Rabbi Joel Levy

When the rabbis constructed their world of liturgical language, they generally conformed to a distinction that appears first in the Mishnah in B’rachot 6:4 – *Noten boda’ah le-she’avar, ve’tzo’eke la’atid lavo* (“One should give thanks for the past and cry out about the future to come”). Our past is something that we need to come to terms with and ideally come to “bless”, whether it is good or bad; but the future is an open book and as such we need to fight to shape it and to “cry out” for it to conform to our deepest desires.

The word *tza’akah* – crying out or shrieking – is one of the terms that the rabbis use to describe prayer. This kind of “crying out” prayer is resolutely future-oriented. “Shrieking out” about the past, yearning that things should have turned out differently, is dismissed in the mishnah as *tefillat shav*, vain prayer – the equivalent of “crying over spilt milk”.

Humans developed language in order to be able to describe reality with precision, for example, to communicate “Two days ago I saw a herd of buffalo down by the second curve in the Eastern River”. However, we also needed language in order to describe potential or theoretical worlds that might not yet exist or might never exist, but which would nonetheless inform our behaviour and our orientation in the world. For example: “For everyone will sit under his own vine and fig tree, with no one to disturb him, for YHVH of Hosts has spoken. For all peoples will walk, each person in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of YHVH our God, forever and ever” (Micha 4:4-5). Micha’s vision of an ideal state of affairs might inform the kind of society we work to build.

In this article I would like to think a little about one real danger inherent in daring

to articulate how we would like things to be – in other words, a danger inherent in prayer itself. This is the danger described by Gordon Sumner in his 1985 song “Consider Me Gone”: “To search for perfection, is all very well, but to look for heaven, is to live here in hell!” This danger is what the Talmud, in the text we are about to read, calls *ke’ev lev* – heartache. If we dare to articulate, or even pray for, our dreams for a different world, then won’t we end up making the gulf between the way things are and the way we want them to be unbearable? Would it be better not to even whisper what we really want so as to dampen down the pain of disappointment? Maybe hope is just bad for us!

One last thing before we jump into our source: Jews are historically very good at praying for things to be different but at the same time living in the world as it currently is. We prayed for 2000 years to return to our ancestral homeland; a monumental, 100-generation act of dream maintenance and deferred gratification. To pray for something, to dare to say that you want it, to know that you are unlikely to achieve it and yet to hold it in your aspirations, to know how to live a good life in the meantime without wallowing in self-pity and dejection: this is a good trick to know how to pull off!

Now we will look at a piece of Talmud from B’rachot 32b that deals with how to pray without breaking your heart. The text is broken up into four pieces:

1. אָמַר רַבִּי חֲנִינְיָ אָמַר רַבִּי חֲנִינְיָ: כָּל הַמַּאֲרִיד בְּתַפִּלָּתוֹ, אֵין תַּפְּלוֹתוֹ חוּזְרֵת רִיקָם. מָנָא לוֹ מַמְשָׁה רַבִּינִי, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "וַיֵּאֲתָפֶּלֶל אֶל ה'"," וּכְתִיב בְּתִרְיָה: "וַיִּשְׁמַע ה' אֵלֵי גַם בַּפֶּעַם הַהִיא".

1. Rabbi Hanin¹ said that Rabbi Hanina said: Anyone who prolongs his prayer,

his prayer will not return unanswered. How do we know this? From Moses our teacher, as it is stated (that Moses said in Deuteronomy 9:26–27), “(So I fell down before YHVH the forty days and forty nights that I fell down) and I prayed to YHVH” and it is written straight afterwards: “And YHVH heard me that time as well.”

Rabbi Hanin says in the name of Rabbi Hanina that praying gets results, and that more of it gets more results. Moses is the archetypal case of someone who offers a long prayer; he goes at it for forty days and forty nights of prostration in his attempt to save the Israelites after the sin of the golden Calf. Rabbi Hanin says that if it worked for Moses it will work for us too!

2. אֵינִי? וְהָא אָמַר רַבִּי חֲנִינְיָ בְּרַ אָבָא אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: כָּל הַמַּאֲרִיד בְּתַפִּילָּתוֹ וּמַעֲיִין בָּהּ סוֹף בָּא לִידֵי קָאָב לָב, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "תוֹחֶלֶת מִמְשָׁכָה מַחֲלָה לָב".

מֵאִי תִקְנֶתֶיהָ יַעֲסוֹק בְּתוֹרָה, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "וְעַץ חַיִּים תֵּאָנֶה בָאָה"," וְאֵין עֵץ חַיִּים אֶלָּא תוֹרָה, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "עֵץ חַיִּים הִיא לַמְחַזְּקִים בָּהּ..."

2. Is that really so (that prolonging prayer is a good idea)? Didn’t Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba say that Rabbi Yohanan said: Anyone who prolongs his prayer and delves into it will ultimately come to heartache, As it is stated (Proverbs 13:12): “Hope deferred makes the heart sick.”

And what is the remedy (for one afflicted with heartache)? He should engage in Torah study, as it is stated (Proverbs 13:12):

“But desire fulfilled is the tree of life” and the “tree of life” is always a refence to Torah! As it is stated (Proverbs 3:18): “She is a tree of life to those who hold fast to her, and whoever holds onto her is happy.”

Rabbi Hanin’s simple model (section 1) is opposed by Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba speaking in the name of Rabbi Yochanan (in section 2). Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba thinks that prolonging prayer is a just a recipe for frustration, pain and heartache. Prayer does not get answered in the real world, so prayer taken too seriously will just hold up a devastating mirror to the gulf between the way things are and the way we’d like them to be. Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba recommends that we should not pray excessively, but rather just enough to maintain the power of the dream, and we’d actually be better off engaging our full energies in activities that offer immediate tangible benefits to us in terms of raw pleasure, such as Torah study. Torah study is not about seeking pleasure in some dim distant unlikely future—it is incrementally life-enhancing in the here and now!

Now we appear to have a major contradiction between the pro-long-prayer voice of Rabbi Hanin and the anti-long-prayer position of Rabbi Hiyya Bar Abba. They both lean heavily on quotations from the Bible, so maybe the Torah contradicts itself! That can’t be right, says the voice of the Talmud itself in section 3:

3. לֹא קִשְׁיָא, הָא דְּמַאֲרִיד וּמַעֲיִין בָּהּ. הָא דְּמַאֲרִיד וְלֹא מַעֲיִין בָּהּ

3. This (apparent contradiction) is not a problem: This one (Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba’s statement that one who prolongs his prayer will end up suffering heartache – this refers to the case of a person who) prolongs his prayer and *me’ayen* (delves) in it. That one (Rabbi Hanin’s statement that one who prolongs his prayer will have his prayers answered – this refers to the case of a person who) prolongs his prayer and does not *me’ayen* (delve) in it. Here is the Talmud’s resolution of the

contradiction. Both sides end up agreeing that long prayer is okay and may even be beneficial, as long as it is not accompanied by delving – *me’ayen*. Not atypically, the Talmud omits to tell us here what *me’ayen* actually means,² but commentators on the page of our Talmud have interesting things to say about what it means to *me’ayen* – to delve into prayer – and why it is so destructive:

רש"י על ברכות לב: ומעיין בה מצפה שתעשה בקשתו על ידי הארכתו סוף שאינה נעשית ונמצאת תוחלת ממושכה חנם והיא כאב לב כשאדם מצפה ואין תאוותו באה:

Rashi on B’rachot 32b
Me’ayen (delves) in it – He expects that his desire will be met through prolonging it (the prayer). In the end it is not met And then “hope is deferred” (Proverbs 13:12) for no reason. And that is heartache.

תוספות על ברכות לב: כל המאריך בתפלתו ומעיין בה פירושו שמצפה שתבא בקשתו לפי שכוון בתפלתו...

Tosaphot on B’rachot 32b
Anyone who prolongs his prayer and *me’ayen* (delves) in it—this means one who expects that his desire will be met because he concentrated in his prayer.

Both Rashi and the Tosaphot think that prayer is good, and concentrating when we pray is good, but that in any way expecting that God will answer our prayers has a negative effect. Concentration while praying should not entail increasing our expectation that our supplications will be answered! These rabbis want us to take prayer seriously as an act in and of itself, but not to focus our attention on the efficacy of prayer to bring about the results that we are praying for. This is subtle stuff – they hope to maintain our hope, without causing us the inevitable heartbreak of dashed expectations. They want us to want a better world without reinforcing the pain of living in this one! They are arguing with the thesis that “to look for heaven, is to live here in hell”. They are challenging us to regularly raise

our eyes to heaven without tainting our relationship with the here-and-now.

And here’s one final part of this piece of Talmud:

אָמַר רַבִּי חֲמָא בְּרַבִּי חֲנִינְיָ: אִם רָאָה אָדָם שֶׁהִתְפַּלֵּל וְלֹא נִעֲנָה יְחִזּוֹר וְיִתְפַּלֵּל. שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "קוֹנֵה אֶל ה' חֲזָק וַיֵּאֱמָץ לִבָּד וְקוֹנֵה אֶל ה'"

Rabbi Hama, son of Rabbi Hanina, said: If a person saw that he prayed and he was not answered He should pray again, as it is stated (Psalms 27:14): “Hope in YHVH strengthen yourself, let your heart take courage, and hope in YHVH.”

Prayer is an articulation of the hope that we feel. The person who prays and whose prayer is not answered is likely to be disheartened and to be tempted to give up on their desires. This person is encouraged to dig deep and find it within themselves to go back and pray again. Prayer is also the act that maintains and evokes a hope that we ought to feel. Prayer is self-programming; a mechanism for training ourselves to maintain hope in the face of a world that is often resolutely mute to our deepest yearnings.

Section 4 ends by quoting a verse from Psalm 27: “Hope in YHVH, strengthen yourself, let your heart take courage, and hope in YHVH”. The Talmud reads this verse as an injunction to dig deep and find it within ourselves to stay connected to hopeful prayer even when all previous supplications have failed. It is not by chance that this is taken from the High Holiday psalm, the psalm recited from Rosh Chodesh Ellul all the way through The Days of Awe. The Yamim Nora’im are a time of resolute fidelity to determined hopefulness, a time of reckless commitment to optimism, to the idea that we and our world can change for the better. ■

¹All the names mentioned in this piece of Talmud alliterate, beginning with or con-



Thanks to Chazan Jacky for designing our cover. Read about her inspiration here.

Hope

By Chazan Jacky Chernett

from wherever light is refracted through water.

Hatikvah, the poem, was written by Naftali Herz Imber (1856–1909). The music, however, has been the subject of much speculation, and many theories have been offered. The melody is familiar to us in many variants. In the image on this page you can see some comparisons made by the great Jewish musicologist Abraham Zvi Idelsohn from which you will recognise other iterations of the same theme (A. Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Music in its Historical Development*, Shocken 1967). Of note of course is the Leoni Yigdal! The so very familiar melody may well have its roots in European musical folklore – “a common melodic skeleton or archetype that may be considered a member of what ethnomusicologists cite as a ‘tune family’” (Neil W. Levin, Milken Archive). I would even go further to suggest that if you turn the minor melody into major you can easily see three British nursery rhymes following a similar pattern (“Baa Baa Black Sheep”, “I Had a Little Nut Tree”, and, of course, “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star”, which Mozart even turned into a piano sonata) – and it goes on.

Two Israeli musicians, Eliyahu Hachohen and the composer Menashe Ravina, concluded that Leon Igli, a musician who had studied at the St Petersburg Conservatory, was the first to set to music Imber’s original work, Tikvatenu. But this never took hold because it was difficult for people to sing communally. The person responsible for the melody that has become the National Anthem of Israel and is so loved by everyone is Samuel Cohen, a First Aliyah settler in Palestine from Moldavia. He based it on a Romanian folk tune known as Carul Cu Boi (“Wagon and Oxen”), which he referred to as Hois! Ceal (“Right! Left”). His setting caught on immediately.

The poem Hatikvah as we know it seems to have reached its fusion with the current melody around 1888. It is not difficult to see why it became so popular. A

lot of people became excited when they heard the Czech composer Smetana’s Ma Vlast, written in 1874, as they heard the opening theme in it. But, of course, Smetana could not have borrowed his melody from Hatikvah.

The most poignant part of Hatikvah is its musical development in the words *Od lo avda tikvatenu*, with its octave rise. This is why, in my colourful rainbow, it swirls around in larger letters with the drop of dew. This musical device raises the emotion of the piece. You can experience it too when we compare this rising – we would say uplifting – motif in the musical development with the two moving pieces we now include on Shabbat morning: Acheinu by Abie Rotenberg (with the words *Hamakom Y’rachem*, “God will have mercy”), and Avinu Shebashamayim Tsur Yisrael V’go’alo by Sol Zim (with the words *Barech et Medinat Yisrael*, “Bless the State of Israel”).

Hatikvah underwent various adjustments in text and music. Some people attempted to reconcile the punctuation and accentuation of the words with standard modern Hebrew – to no avail, as we know only too well when metrical music takes over. And the music always wins (and should!).

It is known that Hatikvah was sung at the fifth Zionist Congress in Basel in 1903, the so-called Uganda Conference at which the African territory was offered by the British for a Jewish national homeland in place of Palestine. This was received with much jeering, at which point it is reported that people broke into Hatikvah and it has been sung ever since at Zionist Congresses. But its formal adoption as the official anthem of the Jewish people was in 1933. Hatikvah became a sort of hymn of Jewish solidarity, sung at Jewish functions, gatherings and sometimes even services. Chazananim often used its melody in passages of the liturgy where they wanted to sing about hope or, indeed, about Israel.

Continued at bottom of next page.

Hatikvah: The Story of a People’s Hope

By Rena Pearl

There is a moment, maybe you’ve experienced it, when the first soft notes of Hatikvah begin to rise in a synagogue, a stadium, a school hall, or a Holocaust memorial, it doesn’t matter where. The room shifts. People stand, often placing a hand over their heart. Some close their eyes. Others hold back tears. It is more than just a national anthem. Hatikvah – “The Hope” – is a heartbeat echoing across generations. It tells a story not just of a country, but of a people who refused to let their dream die.

The first time I truly, and I mean truly heard Hatikvah, I wasn’t standing in a school assembly or at Habonim, or the other usual places. It was in the mid-70’s at Yad Vashem, surrounded by silence and stone. And then, faintly, from a nearby speaker, came that familiar melody – slow, mournful, yet rising. “*Od lo avdah tikvatenu...*” Our hope is not yet lost.

In that moment, it wasn’t just an anthem. It was a prayer, a memory, a declaration – somehow carrying centuries of exile, endurance, and faith in just a few haunting bars.

The story of Hatikvah begins not in Israel, but in 19th-century Europe. The poem that would become the anthem was penned in 1878 by Naftali Herz Imber, a young Jewish poet from what is now Ukraine. He wrote it after being inspired by Jewish pioneers in the Land of Israel, who had returned to till the soil of their ancestors, building new lives in the ancient homeland.

Continued from facing page.

On May 14th, 1948, at the formal declaration of the State of Israel, Hatikvah was sung at the opening of the proceedings and played at the end by the Palestine Symphony (now the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra). Since then it has been the national anthem of the State, although, strangely, it was not confirmed by the Knesset until 2004. Even then not all people agreed to it, as not all residents of Israel are Jewish, to such an extent that a left-wing MK, Uri Avenary, suggested that Naomi Shemer’s Yerushalayim Shel Zahav (Jerusalem of Gold) replace it. His proposed bill never came to a vote.

Long may we sing Hatikvah. *Od lo avda tikvatenu*: Our hope will never be destroyed! ■

The poem was called Tikvatenu – “Our Hope” – and it resonated with a yearning that every Jew in the Diaspora understood. For nearly two thousand years, we had prayed “Next year in Jerusalem.” Imber’s words gave emotional voice to that spiritual longing. His verses told of a soul that had never ceased to hope, even while scattered in foreign lands:

*As long as in the heart within,
The Jewish soul still yearns,
And onward toward the ends of the east,
An eye still gazes toward Zion...*

Four years later Imber immigrated to what was then Ottoman Palestine in 1882. He traveled there with Sir Laurence Oliphant, a Christian Zionist who employed him as a secretary.

Over time, Imber’s poem found its melody, composed by a Romanian immigrant, Samuel Cohen; it is a melody tinged with the deep emotion of Jewish memory. This haunting, hopeful tune began spreading across Zionist gatherings and Jewish communities. By the First Zionist Congress in 1897, Hatikvah had become the unofficial anthem of Jewish renewal.

During the Holocaust, Hatikvah was sung quietly in ghettos, behind barbed wire, and even defiantly in the camps. It became a quiet rebellion and a spiritual lifeline. Survivors remember singing it with broken voices as liberation came – a song of hope rising from the ashes.

On 14 May, 1948, when the State of Israel was declared, the people sang Hatik-

vah. And though it wasn’t officially designated as Israel’s national anthem until 2004, its place in the peoples hearts was never in question.

Since 7 October, 2023, when Hamas launched its brutal and barbaric attack on Israel, taking lives and abducting 201 hostages, Hatikvah has taken on an even deeper, more visceral meaning. At rallies around the world, in candlelight vigils, and in pro-Israel gatherings, the anthem has been sung through tears and trembling voices. In shuls like ours, we have stood shoulder to shoulder, singing not just in solidarity, but in grief, in resilience, and with a cry for the return of every captive. Each word now feels like both a lament and a defiant declaration: “Our hope is not yet lost.” It is a song that binds the tribe.

What makes Hatikvah so powerful is its honesty. It’s not a song of victory, but of hope, not a declaration of arrival, but of the journey. It reflects who we are: a people who carry dreams across deserts, centuries, and continents.

We sing Hatikvah today, not just to honour the past, but to affirm that hope is alive in us. It lives in every act of kindness, every prayer for peace, every visit to Israel, every Jewish child learning Hebrew, every candle we light.

And though modern Israel is filled with complexity, political, social, spiritual, the simple truth is this: Hatikvah remains. The hope remains.

Because to be a Jew is to believe that no matter how far we’ve wandered, we can still return. No matter how much darkness we’ve seen, the light still rises. And no matter how long it takes, the dream will not die.

We are still here.

Od lo avdah tikvatenu – Our hope is not yet lost.

Am Yisrael Chai. ■

On Feeling Hopeless

By Georgia Kaufmann

As emotions go, hope is a fairly use-less one. It implies a lack of agency. When we wish for something, desire a certain outcome, but cannot effect it, then we can only hope or wish that fate or the gods, spirits or chance will bring it about. “It’s in the hands of the gods”, as the aphorism goes. For some religions, prayer, sacrifice and good deeds are attempts to persuade the powers that be to render an action – to barter for the outcome rather than just “hope and pray” for it. Eli the priest castigates Hannah for drunkenness when he sees her mumbling silently. She explains that she has been pouring her heart out to God, because she is unhappy. His next words, however, show that he assumes she has been praying for something, rather than just opening her heart: “May the God of Israel grant you what you have asked” (I Samuel 1:17).

What Eli seems to understand is that prayer can be a step towards agency, an attempt to help change the outcome of the future. The shift from hoping to expecting something is characterised by moving from passivity to action and agency. For millennia the diaspora did no more than hope to return to Israel. In the late nineteenth century, with the emergence of organised Zionism and the influx of East European settlers to Palestine, the poem Hatikvah, “The Hope”, was adopted by settlers and then the Zionist movement, eventually becoming the Israeli national anthem.

Our hope is not yet lost,
The hope of two thousand years,
To be a free nation in our own land,
The land of Zion and Jerusalem.

The irony is that Israel came into being at the point people stopped just hoping to return, but began to return. Action, not sentiment, changes the world.

When I spent an afternoon trawling through Sefaria (the online library of Jewish sources) for biblical texts on hope, I was surprised how little hope features in the Tanakh.

Even one of the three citations of it given by Sefaria, in Psalm 27:14, fails to mention hope per se in the English translation, though the first word, *Kaveh*, contains the root letters of the word hope (*tikvah*).

קוֹחַ אֶל־יְהוָה חֹזֵק וְנִצָּמֵץ לִבּוֹד יָקוֹחַ אֶל־יְהוָה:
Look to the LORD;
be strong and of good courage!
O look to the LORD!

I became politically active after the Brexit referendum because I had seen what happens when people hope for a good outcome but do nothing to bring it about. “Evil flourishes when good men do nothing” became my axiom. In Proverbs 24:10–12 we have a call to arms:

הִתְרַפִּית בְּיוֹם צָרָה צָר כְּחֶכֶחַ:
If you showed yourself slack in
time of trouble,
Wanting in power,

הִצַּל לְקַחִים לַמָּוֶת וּמִטָּיִם לְהוֹרֵג אִם־יִתְחַשְׁדּוּ:
If you refrained from rescuing
those taken off to death,
Those condemned to slaughter –

כִּי־תֹאמַר הֵן לֹא־יִדְעוּ זֶה הִלַּאֲתֶכֶּן לְבוֹתָו
הוֹאִי־בִּי וְנִצֵּר וְנִפְסָד הוּא יִדְעֵי וְהִשִּׁיב לְאָדָם
כִּפְעֻלּוֹ:
If you say, “We knew nothing of
it,”
Surely the One who fathoms
hearts will discern [the truth],
The One who watches over your
life will know it,
And [God] will pay each person
as they deserve.

My reading of this is that hope, while a pleasant unguent when we are feeling overwhelmed, should be nothing more than the catalyst for action. I can’t just

hope for a better outcome, but I need to use that hope to kick start me in the action that will help bring about that better outcome. We cannot afford to be slack, nor wanting in power – we must become agents of change.

The source of many references to hope in Sefaria came through the Chabad Kehot Chumash. The premise of messianism is the hope for a better future and an absolute reliance on God for agency and protection, as the commentary on Leviticus 22:32 below illustrates.

וְלֹא תִחַלְלוּ אֶת־שֵׁם קֹדֶשִׁי וְנִקְדַּשְׁתִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנִי יְהוָה מְקֹדָשָׁכֶם:

You must not desecrate My holy Name – i.e., belittle Me in the estimation of other Israelites by consenting to disobey My commandments – even under pain of death. If I see fit, I may rescue you miraculously from martyrdom, and, it is true, doing so would enhance My estimation even more than your willingness to die rather than transgress My will. But you must not offer up your life with any such hope, for doing so taints the sincerity of your devotion, and I will therefore not rescue you if you offer up your life hoping for a miraculous delivery. Therefore, offer up your life without hope of delivery so that **I may** in fact rescue you miraculously – if I see fit – and thereby **be sanctified** in the onlookers’ estimation.

This interpretation suggests we should give up both hope and agency, and rely entirely on God to deliver us with miracles. In other words, step back from the world and pray.

From my perspective, over the last two years we have watched the initial incursion into Gaza by the IDF turn into a systematic bloodbath. We have all hoped

that it would end, hoped that the hostages would be returned, hoped that peace would return. One of the resources that the Israeli government banks on is that the diaspora will close ranks and unconditionally support Israel (the nation) in crises, thereby supporting the government by default. This is what we have been doing. We are hoping for a better outcome, supporting Israel but, to quote Proverbs, “refrain[ing] from rescuing those taken off to death, those condemned to slaughter” (Proverbs 24:11).

Coming to understand that hope can be like an opioid rather than a motivator is liberating. Rather than just hoping that if we say nothing, do nothing, things will resolve, it behoves good people to act on that hope. Those people trying to make Israel the place we aspire to are those campaigning against Netanyahu’s government. In a stirring piece in Ha’aretz (31 August), the Israeli lawyer and activist Michael Sfard argues for action within Israel:

Together we must fight our family by every non-violent means. Follow the path of Abraham, who, according to midrash, smashed the idols his father worshiped; of Moses, who rebelled against his adoptive Egyptian family to lead a people of slaves to freedom; and of all the prophets who rebuked the sinful people and the criminal kings. In today’s terms: support refusers, encourage international investigations and call for sanctions and political isolation. To push in through the feet what will not go in through the mind and heart, to preserve an island of human values, and above all – to stop the annihilation of Gaza.

Rather than relying on hope, or feeling hopeless, hope for a better future must be a call to action. ■

Door of Hope

By Mike Fenster

My last contribution to Kol HaKehilah was titled “Seeds of Hope”, and I was minded to ask Meira to just rerun the article. You could read it on our website (www.kolnefesh.org.uk/kol-hakehilah) if you wanted, but the message of that article was “don’t give up hope”, which I guess is still a good message, albeit harder to accomplish now than it was last March.

The words to the Israeli national anthem, Hatikvah, “The Hope”, were written in the 19th century by Naftali Herz Imber, living near Lemburg. His poem expresses a 2000-year-old yearning, a hope that was nowhere near to being realised in 1878, but which wasn’t completely improbable – after all, he was supposedly inspired after hearing that the *moshava* (village) of Petach Tikva (“Door of Hope”) had just been established in Palestine, which was a significant landmark in the development of the Yishuv, the pre-state Jewish community.

I lived in Petach Tikva for a year, 106 years after the moshava was founded, and it didn’t occur to me that Petach Tikva was likely to have inspired the poem Hatikvah. The town didn’t seem to be aware of its own history in the way that some of the other towns and villages from that period are, and certainly wasn’t the most desirable town in which to live. Has anyone ever written a poem or a song about Petach Tikva, in the way that they have written nostalgically about Bin-yamina, Jerusalem or Tel Aviv? The only one I could find on Spotify was the not so aptly titled song Get Me the Hell Out of Petach Tikva, sung in English and sounding like Morrissey.

But it’s not such a bad place to live. It even has two railway stations now, which wasn’t the case in 1984 and certainly not in 1878. On the other hand, the city (it has grown to over 250,000 inhabitants) now has a Donald Trump Square. But the Door of Hope? That is actually a quote from Hosea (2:17), referencing a valley near Jericho which was the original

location for the group of religious Jews who were hoping to establish a settlement. When their plans were blocked by the Ottomans, they bought land from Christian Arabs 15 kilometres northeast of Jaffa, but kept the original name, The Door of Hope. For many who came to Petach Tikva from 20th-century Europe, and from the communities in the Middle East and North Africa, was the town the fulfilment of their hopes? It was never beautiful, it must have been terribly hard living there in the last years of the 19th century, but gradually it became more prosperous, there were jobs in the orange groves and the numerous factories and workshops, and the new immigrants were “a free people in their own land”. Imber himself did move to Palestine in 1882 but left for New York in 1889.

If I look at Imber’s Hope in 1878 I think that Petach Tikva is fairly typical of how that hope has been realised over about 150 years. A tiny village has grown to a major city; the orange groves have been replaced by high-tech medical centres and companies like Teva, Osem, and Israel’s largest data centre. And the Israeli actress Gal Gadot was born there. It’s an astonishing transformation into Israel’s fourth largest city, with a mixed religious and secular population, along with a small Masorti community.

What has probably helped Hatikvah to remain Israel’s anthem is that the hope, while important, while audacious in 1878, was actually very limited in its ambition. To be free, in the land of Israel – but beyond that it is silent. To be religious, secular, liberal, socialist or authoritarian ... Imber seems not to have hoped for any particular type of homeland or state, just that Jews would be free. It is an anthem that people in every strand of Zionist Israel can sign up to without compromising their beliefs. Just like Petach Tikva. ■

Hope for a better future must be a call to action.

Tel Azekah: Hope and History

By Meira Ben-Gad

Archaeologists come equipped with an array of tools: tools for excavating, tools for cleaning, tools for measuring, tools for removing dirt, tools for recording sites and finds. But some tools don't fit neatly in their pockets or come packed in a special case. These are the tools that are carried around in the head – tools like curiosity, imagination, and of course hope. Without the first of these, no archaeologist would ever get started; without the last, none would keep going.

Hope is everywhere on an archaeological dig. For the volunteers and students, hope is visceral and immediate: perhaps today I will find something exciting, something important. For everyone involved, hope is a lantern in the dark at the start of each morning's work, and the promise of a breeze in the sweltering midday. As long as there are questions to be answered, there is hope. And there are always questions! They start with the mundane, and expand outwards. How does this wall relate to that floor? Was this a house? Who dwelled here, and when? How did they live, work, worship? How were they governed? What happened to them, and why? What can these things tell us about the world they lived in: their social structures; developments in trade, industry, and culture; the rise and fall of dynasties and kingdoms? And then, the really interesting questions: what was it like to be a person living in this place, at that time? What did they know? What did they feel? What did they hope?

This past summer I volunteered at Tel Azekah, a large site in the Shephelah (Judean foothills) a few minutes' drive from the modern city of Beit Shemesh. The site was occupied from the Early Bronze Age (c. 3500–2000 BCE) through the Byzantine period (beginning 330 CE). Azekah has several mentions in the Bible,

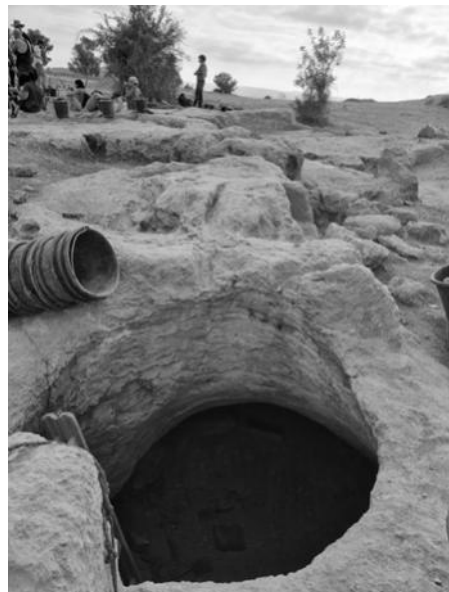
and two in extra-biblical sources. In the book of Samuel it is described as overlooking the place where David met Goliath: "The Philistines assembled their forces for battle; they massed at Socoh of Judah, and encamped at Ephes-dammim, between Socoh and Azekah. Saul and the rest of Israel's side massed and encamped in the valley of Elah" (I Samuel 17:1–2). The other references testify to Azekah's role as a fortified city of the kingdom of Judah, twice destroyed by great Mesopotamian empires. First, a cuneiform text describes the city's conquest by the neo-Assyrian king Sennacherib in 701 BCE: "the city of Azekah ... located on a mountain ridge, like pointed iron daggers without number reaching high to heaven ... I captured, I carried off its spoil, I destroyed, I devastated, [I burned] with fire" (see the Wikipedia article on Azekah for more of this text). The Assyrians failed to conquer all of Judah (or more likely were bought off with tribute), and Azekah was rebuilt, but just over a century later it fell again, this time to the neo-Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar II. In the book of Jeremiah it is named as one of the last remaining Judahite strongholds before the Babylonian destruction: "The prophet Jeremiah spoke all these words to King Zedekiah of Judah in Jerusalem, when the army of the king of Babylon was waging war against Jerusalem and against the remaining towns of Judah –

against Lachish and Azekah" (Jeremiah 34:6–7). Finally, practically the very moment of Azekah's destruction is captured in one of the Lachish Letters, dashed off on pottery sherds by an officer helplessly recording the Babylonian advance: "We are watching for the fire signals of Lachish ... because we cannot see Azekah."

Some 2600 years later, there I was on the slope of the mound, an eager volunteer wielding bucket and spade, hoping to turn up something interesting and important (see above). The area I was assigned to was on a low plateau just below the top of the site (the acropolis), and so hopes for exciting finds were high. What we found, instead, were stones. And more stones. And, well, more stones. Little stones, medium stones, big stones – but stones. Luckily for everyone's spirits, though, persistence and good humour saw us through the stones, and ultimately we exposed rather a complex set of installations: steps, surfaces, walls, plastered pits. The stones were soon explained: during the Hasmonean period of occupation (140–116 BCE), the area where we were working was used as a quarry by workers constructing a new fortress on the acropolis. The installations below (lower in space, and therefore preceding the Hasmonean quarry in time) remain,

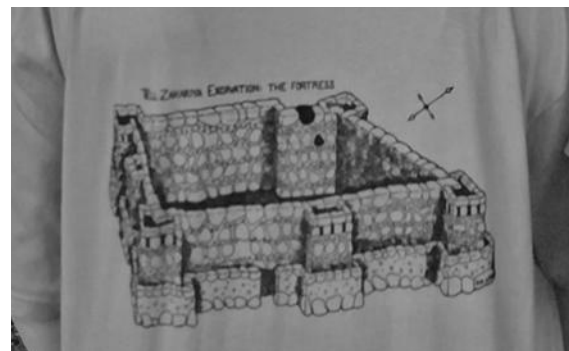


Right: Working in the Hasmonean quarry; a plaster-lined pit, part of an installation with an as-yet unknown purpose.



as of this writing, a bit of a mystery. Presumably there was some sort of industrial processing or storage activity going on there – but what? No artifacts, like pottery or raw product remains, were found to help identify the area's purpose or use (at least pending further examination of samples in the lab). Intriguingly, industrial areas in ancient cities were typically located outside the city walls, or at the very least away from areas where the noises and smells linked with messy economic production would bother the elites in their palaces and temples and nice homes. Here, though, as I said, we were right under the acropolis – just a short climb away. So what was going on? The archaeologists have promised to pass on any answers when they emerge.

Fortunately, there was plenty to learn and see beyond what was under our feet. Work during previous seasons (and earlier excavations) had revealed two massive fortresses on the acropolis – one the Hasmonean fortress I mentioned earlier, and the other dating to the Middle Bronze Age (2000–1550 BCE). The Middle Bronze Age in Canaan was a period



Above: The Middle Bronze Age fortress on this year's excavation t-shirt. Below: The excavated part of the fortress area from recent seasons, with excavation participants marking the rest of the boundary. Below right: The first task of every day is setting up shade nets before dawn in all work areas.



of cultural and technological development, a time of prosperity when Canaanite rulers were able to build flourishing city-states. Largely peaceful relations between the Canaanites and neighbouring peoples (Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Aegean) allowed the flow of goods and ideas, and promoted the rise of successful social groups, such as skilled artisans. And yet not all the people of Canaan necessarily enjoyed this age of optimism. The dig director – Prof. Oded Lipschits of Tel Aviv University – spoke evocatively of the labour that must have gone into the construction of the Middle Bronze Age fortress, which had a stone foundation topped with thick layers of mud bricks. The peasants tasked with gathering the raw materials for these mud bricks, shaping the bricks themselves, and then transporting the heavy bricks to where they were needed might perhaps have felt a bit hard done by. Listening to Oded, I couldn't help but think of the biblical accounts of the Israelites in Egypt, forced to gather mud and straw to make bricks for Pharaoh's store cities. The historicity of the Exodus is too big a question to discuss here, but my own view is that the Egypt/Exodus narratives are more myth than history. Our ancestors did not come up from Egypt (except perhaps a small group, the Levites), but were simply marginalized Canaanites who eventually took the name Israel, and survived because they put their memories and traditions down in scrolls that people took the trouble to preserve – and that became

the Bible. Yet the stories of brick-making and slavery and oppression bear the ring of truth. Could it be that they reflect a real historical memory, carried by descendants of the labourers who suffered under the lash at places like Azekah?

The city of Azekah experienced some of history's big moments – periods of upheaval and change. Over the years, its people enjoyed times of prosperity, and times marked by crisis and suffering. Azekans, like us, lived sometimes in hope, sometimes in stoic endurance, sometimes in happy ignorance, sometimes in despair – but always in the face of uncertainty as to what the future might hold.

As Jews and Israelis, we are living right now in uncertain and frightening times. On the site each day we worked and laughed and shared jokes – but not one of us truly forgot for a moment the war continuing 50 or 60 kilometres away, the plight of the hostages in Hamas's terror tunnels, the terrible risks and awful choices faced by our soldiers, the wilful blindness of the world to basic truths about right and wrong, the dismaying prospect of a moral and democratic collapse in the Israeli government. I cannot say that working in archaeology provides cause for hope in the face of these current threats, at least in the sense of hope for a happy ending. What it does provide is perspective. Like the Azekans of 2600 or 2700 years ago, we have no natural right to long, fulfilling, untroubled lives. All we can do is play the cards we're dealt, as individuals and as communities, and try to make the best of what we've got. There, perhaps, we may find hope. ■



A Forlorn Hope

By Steve Griffiths

We had had a very busy and somewhat exciting morning. It had started as a bright, fresh but cool morning in that May of 1983. Spring had been trying hard to shake off the shackles of what had been a cold, snowy winter. The sky had been blue, the visibility almost perfect and we were ideally located to observe Soviet MIG 23 aircraft at their military airbase near Falkenberg some 120km south of Berlin in the heart of the old East Germany.

We had found a lovely observation position in dead ground in a field on the approach to the eastern runway. I was getting super photos of the aircraft and all the weaponry they carried, but by mid-morning the flying programme had become rather repetitive, so it was time to move on to the next target. The trouble was the local Soviets from the airbase had other ideas. We must have been reported possibly by one of the pilots because we found all normal exits from the field we were in blocked by lorries, with armed soldiers slowly walking towards us from various directions.

There was only one thing to do in such circumstances: leave it to the highly trained skills of our Corporal driver. He took the view that if all normal exits were blocked, he would use an abnormal one. Which is why a couple of minutes later we had crossed a grass meadow at some 60mph and crashed through a gap in trees at the edge of a nearby wood, hurtled down narrow, bumpy woodland tracks for what seemed like forever, and burst suddenly onto a country lane.

After such excitement we all agreed we should get right away from the area, stop somewhere for a nice cup of tea and re-think our next moves. So it was some 60 minutes and about 80 kilometres later we found ourselves parked in the central square of the town of Treuenbrietzen, located on the Route 2 about 60km south of Potsdam. TB, as we always called the place, was a busy market town with plenty of traffic through it on the Route 2.

We were parked very openly, innocently exercising our right to be there, enjoying a cuppa and a slice of cake that the tour NCO had found in a nearby bakery. Passers-by stared at us as they always did, and a Volks Polizei (VoPo) patrol car slowed right down as it passed us on more than one occasion. But we smiled sweetly, waved a friendly greeting each time and they were satisfied and left us alone.

I also noticed a youth, possibly in his mid-teens, passing us on more occasions than could be justified and taking very close interest. After the VoPo patrol had gone by for perhaps the fourth time the youth suddenly walked straight up to our car and indicated he wanted to speak. In rather faltering English he explained that he was watching and timing the VoPo patrol and did not want to approach us until the coast was clear.

He asked if we had a German–English dictionary we could give him. I asked him why he would want one. His reply summed up exactly the social conditions the East Germans faced. At school he was forced to learn Russian as a second language after German. He hated it and knew that English would offer far better prospects for his future. He did not dare to ask for the dictionary at school, knowing that he would be refused and that such a request would place him under suspicion by the authorities. I complimented him on the standard of English he had acquired, but he had relied solely on listening to Western radio such as the BBC World Service and the American Forces radio network. He felt he could go no further without the aid of a dictionary.

At this point I switched to German to ensure he fully understood my reply. I had to explain to him that his was a forlorn hope. I told him under no circumstances to turn round but parked on the other side of the square was a Wartburg car in which were sitting two members of the Staatsicherheits Amt. Known everywhere as the Stasi, this was the state secu-

rity organisation that specialised in spying on and reporting members of the East German population to ensure everyone obeyed the Communist party line. We knew the Stasi had been watching us from very shortly after we had arrived in TB because we were trained to look out for and recognise such situations.

I explained to the youth that the Stasi were continuously photographing his presence by our car and would immediately arrest him if they had any evidence that we had passed him a package such as a book. The VoPos might just give him a stiff warning, but the Stasi had powers of arrest and imprisonment without a warrant. I further explained that the Stasi would definitely approach him immediately we departed. I told him that if he was to avoid any detention, he should lie about what had happened. He should tell them that I had called him over and asked about the passage of any Soviet vehicles, that he had point blank refused to say anything and would report us to the VoPos if they returned. He should also show complete surprise at being approached by the Stasi as he had no awareness of their presence, which was true.

I instructed our driver to leave the square, but to drive round the back of it and park out of sight. The tour NCO and I then discretely returned to the square. Sure enough the Stasi were deep in conversation with the youth, but thankfully after about 10 minutes they walked away without detaining him. His was indeed a forlorn hope, but he learned a very important lesson and hopefully is now fluent in English. ■

Editor’s Note: If you’re new to Kol Nefesh and haven’t yet read Steve’s previous articles for Kol HaKehilah on his time as a British spy in Soviet East Germany, you’re in for a treat. I particularly recommend Steve’s articles in our Pesach 2016, Pesach 2019, and Pesach 2021 issues. You can find them on the Kol Nefesh website, www.kolnefesh.org.uk/ kol-hakehilah.

Hope

By Alison Niman

1. HOPE IS THE NAME of a girl I used to work with. Hope did not live up to her given name. Instead, she put out an aura that her life was hopeless.
2. Hope is a village in the Derbyshire Peak District. If you are hopeless at geography that might not mean much to you.
3. Hope is also a district municipality in British Columbia, Canada. If you don’t know where that is either, consider yourself doubly hopeless at geography.
4. Hope is worth at least 9 points in Scrabble. If you are hopeless at Scrabble and would like to get better, why not give the Kol Nefesh Games Night a try? You might find that you are not quite as bad as you think.
5. Speaking of word games, it is hopeless trying to work out an anagram of the word Hope in English.
6. “Faith, Hope and Charity” is a well-known quote, but as it appears in the New Testament it might be hopeless to expect it to turn up in discussion in Torah Chat.
7. “Hope you are well” and “Hope to see you soon” are two phrases we often use in e-mails whilst omitting the first-person pronoun. Is this acceptable or have we become hopelessly sloppy at English grammar?
8. Hope is a programming language developed in the 1970s at Edinburgh University, but it’s no use asking me what that means! I am hopeless at these things.
9. Hope is the former name of a hospital in Salford which is now known as The Salford Royal Hospital. It is possible that my mother used to work there but it would be hopeless trying to find anybody to ask. Sadly, my mother and her colleagues are all long dead.

10. Hope is the subject of one of the most famous quotes in the history of film, but you have to decide whether you are on the side of the ever-hopeful Andy Dufresne, or Red who was of the opposite opinion.

In short, and to avoid hopelessness:

Be careful not to raise expectations when naming your child;

Learn geography;

Take up Scrabble and other word games;

Go to Kol Nefesh Games Nights;

Listen in on Torah Chat;

Write good e-mails;

When an expert is required find one;

Ask your loved ones all you need to know whilst you still can.

Most importantly of all, watch The Shawshank Redemption and decide whether you are on the side of Andy or Red, who said, “Hope is a dangerous thing; hope can drive a man insane.”

Maybe that is so; but don’t you just know what happened in the end? ■

Liquid Hope

By Ruth Hart

THE FIRST APPEARANCE of the Hebrew root for “hope”, *kvh* (*kuf rav beh*), is in Bereshit (Gen 1:9): “And God said, ‘Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together (*y’kann*) unto one place and let the dry land appear.’” The mikveh, the place of purification, was only to be built over running water (*mayim chayim*). In the month of Ellul, we say *Kaveh*, hope, for HaShem. Our more recent ancestors built a city called Petach Tikvah (Gate or Opening of Hope) and created an anthem which we now know as HaTikvah. What is the connection between water and hope?

Life on earth could not exist without water but neither could it continue without dry land, as we read in the following parashah. Life and all its possibilities depend upon order and balance, and the episode of Noah shows us how easy it is for humans to revert to *tohu vavohu* and for God to show them the logical conclusion to that. Rabbi Moshe Chayim Luzatto’s essay on hope extends the meaning of *mikveh*, “gathering” or “reservoir”, to include *kav*, a line or a stream that has to go somewhere. We might also infer the idea of *kinun*, even though it is spelt with a kaf, not a kuf, and *kavannah*, direction, aiming, intention and devotion. (The pun on spelling is my own, even if some better scholar has also thought of it.) The water does not just cohere statically, nor circle the drain, but moves forwards. Hope is to look forwards, but if it is to be a verb rather than a noun, and an abstract touchy-feely one at that, we could all use some direction.

Leshana tova tikatem. May you be written for a good year. ■

Who Is Hope For?

By Claudia Allan

IN THE AFTERMATH of October 7, Hamas’s home videos spread across the internet like wildfire. Documentary evidence of torture, of murder. I watched in horror, unable to look away, as if somehow my bearing witness would make their deaths mean something. As one video after another appeared on social media, I was gripped with a singular despair, realising at least one of the bloodied bodies being dragged to Gaza was someone I knew of through a mutual friend. I wasn’t the only person making similar realisations; I listened to friend after friend recount similar stories. The terrible realisation that this person being subject-

Continued on next page.

Continued from previous page.

ed to unimaginable cruelty is your kith and kin.

When I saw that video, I knew they were dead. One doesn’t survive those sorts of injuries. One doesn’t survive those sorts of injuries and being taken hostage. One doesn’t survive those sorts of injuries, being taken hostage, and being kept in an oxygen-deprived tunnel. I knew they were dead. I knew they were dead, and I knew that their being dead was better than the alternative. I knew they were dead until, months later, Hamas released another video. A video of them alive.

I did not feel relief.

An immense feeling washed over me, filling my chest with a hollowness I cannot describe. When I saw them alive, it was not joy that washed over me. It was guilt. I had known in my heart that they were dead, and there’s no point having hope for someone who is dead. It wasn’t even that I’d lost hope; I hadn’t even had the hope to begin with. Suddenly, I felt guilt over that lack of hope. As if my hoping could somehow have made a difference. If we’d all just hoped enough, things would be different.

Who is hope for? For the hoper? Or the “hope”?

I don’t believe in the supernatural. I don’t believe in telepathy, that if someone thinks something hard enough other people will be able to detect their thoughts (although, I did once go on a date with a deceptively normal guy who did think that). And yet, when my uncle was being treated for pancreatic cancer, I found myself quietly speaking his name in the Refuah Shlema list, and joining in with the “*El na, refah na la*”s, as if our saying these things would have some sort of influence. Perhaps asking God for help is different to just hoping.

We know that personal, or individual hope – that is, hope related to oneself and one’s situation – can have positive effects on one’s health, with unwell people who are more hopeful reporting fewer symptoms than their hopeless peers. But there is little research on the effect of

uncommunicated hope on others. If they don’t know you’re hoping for them, does the hope still work? Or does our hope just make us, ourselves, feel like we’re doing something?

Since those hostage videos were released, I have gained some hope. And then I lost so much more than I ever gained, when the person I knew through our mutual friend was horrifically killed. I write this on his first yartzheit, something that should not have happened for many, many years, and as I write, news is slowly filtering through that Hamas has agreed to release 10 “living hostages” and 18 bodies of those they murdered. I hope that by the time this is read, all the hostages will have been returned alive. I worry that hope is in vain, but now, at least I do hope. After all, who is the hope for?

What It Means To Have Hope

By Rena Pearl

HOPE IS ONE of the most powerful and quietly persistent forces in human life. It is not simply wishful thinking or blind optimism – it is the internal compass that guides us through darkness, hardship, and uncertainty. To have hope is to believe, even without evidence, that something better is possible. It is the act of holding space for the unknown, while still choosing to move forward.

At its core, hope is both emotional and cognitive. It involves both desire for a certain outcome and belief that it can happen. This dual nature is what sets hope apart from mere fantasy. A person with hope not only imagines a better future but also seeks out paths – however narrow or difficult – to reach it.

Psychologist Charles Snyder, a pioneer in the field of positive psychology, defined hope as a combination of agency

(the will to move toward goals) and pathways (the ability to see or create methods to reach them). According to this view, hopeful people are not passive dreamers. They actively engage with challenges, often adapting when their original plans fall apart.

Why does hope matter? Hope can be a quiet form of resilience. When everything else is stripped away – health, wealth, certainty – hope is often what remains. It gives people the strength to get up one more time, to try again, or to hold on just a little longer. Many Holocaust survivors clung to hope to stay alive so that they could defy Hitler.

In medical settings, hope has been shown to improve outcomes. In education, hopeful students are more likely to succeed. In daily life, hope allows individuals and communities to rebuild after crisis. It is not just a feeling; it’s a driving force for action.

Hope is often confused with optimism, but they are not the same. Optimism assumes things will get better. Hope acknowledges that they might not, but insists on trying anyway. It is not about denying reality; it’s about refusing to be paralysed by it. Put differently, hope doesn’t mean ignoring pain or pretending things are fine. In fact, real hope requires facing the truth. It lives alongside grief, fear, and frustration. What makes it remarkable is that it stays anyway.

Hope can come from many places: faith, family, community, stories, or personal values. It can be inherited, cultivated, or even rediscovered after being lost. Sometimes it shows up in unexpected moments – in a kind word, a sunrise, or the simple act of being seen.

It is also contagious. When one person holds on to hope, it can inspire others to do the same. This is why hope is such a powerful tool in leadership, education, and healing.

To have hope is, in some sense, a choice. It’s a decision to keep believing in possibilities, even in the face of disappointment. It doesn’t require certainty or proof. It requires courage.

In her book *Hope in the Darkness: Untold Histories of Wild Possibilities*, the author Rebecca Solent states: “Hope is not a lottery ticket you sit on the sofa clutching, feeling lucky. It is an axe you break down doors with in an emergency.” Hope is not fragile. It is fierce, persistent, and often quietly radical. In a world that can feel indifferent or chaotic, choosing hope is an act of defiance, and of humanity.

In short: To have hope is to refuse to give in. It is to look at what is and still imagine what could be. It is not the absence of fear or pain but the insistence that something meaningful can still grow from it. Hope, ultimately, is what makes us keep going, and what connects us to each other across time, struggle, and uncertainty.

And let us be honest. Amid the global turmoil and chaos since October 7, one thing remains clear: we all need hope.

Thoughts on Hope

By Sarah & James Burns

WE ALL THINK about hope every day. “I hope my delivery arrives.” “I hope I pass my test.” “I hope you are feeling better.”

Our hopes are big and small, mundane and serious, sometimes feather-light, flitting through our minds and barely making a mark, and other times weighing heavily, casting a shadow over us, a solid lump in our hearts.

Sarah:

James and I are firmly in the “sandwich generation”, tending both to young adult children and to elderly parents, adding their hopes to our own, all the positive hopes for achievements, careers, relationships, mingling with the bittersweet wish that our dads will be there to share those moments. And what of our own hopes? The matter-of-fact: “I hope someone

remembered to put the bins out”; the anxious: “I hope dad’s symptoms improve”; the joyous: “I hope we can go away to celebrate our anniversary”; the inevitable: “Whatever life throws at me this week, I hope I have the strength to deal with it, with grace, dignity, humour.”

James:

As a young child my only hope was that I’d get the gifts I longed for on my birthday and Chanukah, but that that perception changed in December 1977. My aunt took my cousins and me to the cinema in Southend to see a sci-fi film, Star Wars. Before it was even released, many people thought the film was a folly which would flop, but its story – the triumph of good over evil and hope for the future – resonated with the public, perhaps because during those years of economic and political turmoil, we needed to see a beautiful princess utter the words “Help me, Obi-Wan Kenobi, you’re my only hope” before the good guys beat the baddies. Before the 1980 sequel, the film was given a new title: Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope, echoing Princess Leia’s quote.

The film was released just before the Winter of Discontent, and as we look at the world around us nearly fifty years on, we still need stories of hope, whether those hopes are for our families, our communities, or the whole world.

Go Bean This 5786

By Ben Samuel

DECADES AGO THERE WAS a youth group who could not find a place to meet. They agreed with an old people’s home to go in and entertain them. They formed working groups to re-write the lyrics to popular old-fashioned songs, that the seniors were able to enjoy and dance to if they wished. This was at a time that plays were being regularly banned, so a friendly librarian would

put the books aside for them. It was disguised as innocent volunteering but this was agit-prop at its finest. It was a great tradition after Siegi Moos, who used to organise cheap and cheerful musical theatre.

At a time when there was nothing else on hand for young people to do, they all joined what became the youth league in the Western Cape. Their politics was to the left of the African National Congress, and they would boycott anything and everything at the drop of a hat. Can you imagine? One time they even pestered their parents to boycott red meat. I could not believe it when I heard that South Africans would go without their national dish. It would only be temporary of course.

Last year I took part in an initiative called “go bean, go green”. It is possible to swap out chick peas in home-mixed humous. I found red beans were high in iron and created an authentic pink coloured bean dip.

I think something the Masorti movement has not managed to do is to switch out some of the most harmful ingredients that have a major impact on water, land use, and methane emissions.

But here is the case for salmon. Salmon used to be the most luxurious and rare fish and a special part of Jewish food culture. Since fish-farming was developed the price of farmed salmon has come down. Often my parents insist on preparing a farmed salmon and a wild salmon for us. The farmed salmon is about three times as fat, almost a totally different creation. Salmon farms are over-crowded and lead to pests and diseases which spread through the entire water system, threatening wildlife as well. Did you know that they paint the salmon pink? Because the farmed salmon actually comes out grey.

They say that chicken soup is nature’s penicillin. Pumping chickens with penicillin has become industry standard and made the \$5 chicken possible, but at what cost?

This Rosh Hashanah I hope that we will always be at the head and not the tail!

Community News

Mazal Tov...

... To **Jay Schlesinger & Michael Sluckis** on their marriage! And mazal tov on their new shared name: the newlyweds will soon sign their deed polls to become **Jay & Michael Kissinger**.

... To the **Herman family** on **Rafi's** marriage to **Georgina James**. A special mazal tov to **Hayley & Marc Herman, Ellie, and Mia**.

... To **Ruth Kaufmann Wolfe & Ben Collins** on their marriage! And mazal tov as well to **Richard Wolfe & Georgia Kaufmann, and Hannah**.

... To the **Simmonds family** on **Josh's** marriage to **Liz Rose**. A special mazal tov to **Brenda & Mike Simmonds**, and to Josh's sisters **Abi and Naomi**.

... To **Simon Gordon** on his engagement to **Melinda Simon**, and to **Nahum Gordon and Miri**.

... To **Maurice & Sylvia Gold** on the birth of a new grandson, **Joel Henry**, first child to **Paul & Bess**.

... To **Andrew & Zvia Bowman** on the birth of a new granddaughter, **Gabriella Peterman**, born to **Keren Bowman & Simon Peterman**, a little sister for **Sophia**.

... To **Andrea Grahame** on the birth of a new grandson, **Solly Philip Marie Bernard-Grahame**, born to **Chloe & Robin Bernard-Grahame**.

... To **Lizzie and Katie Higgins**, daughter and granddaughter of **Richard Wolfe**, on completing their conversions!

... To **Hannah Kaufmann Wolfe** on graduating in Medicine at Edinburgh University.

... To **Emily Kinchuck** on her graduation from university, and to **Amiad Diamond Limor, Erin Silk, and Katie Higgins** on completing college/A-levels. We wish them luck and joy in all their future endeavours.

... And to all the young people who finished GCSEs last year, as they begin A-levels, college, or apprenticeships.

Welcome to New & Returning Members!

Murray Brown

And sorry to see you go...

Goodbye to members who are leaving us. You're always welcome within our doors.

Emma Weleminsky

Condolences

To **Jacqueline Needleman** on the death of her brother **Andrew**. We wish Jacqueline and her family strength and comfort.

יהי זכרו ברוך



Above: Jay & Michael. Facing page, clockwise from top left: Rafi & Georgina (with Hayley & Marc), Ruth & Ben, Josh & Liz under the chuppah, Solly, Simon & Melinda, Gabriella (with Zvia, Andrew, and Sophia).

The Kol Nefesh Menahem Avelim Group – New Members Needed

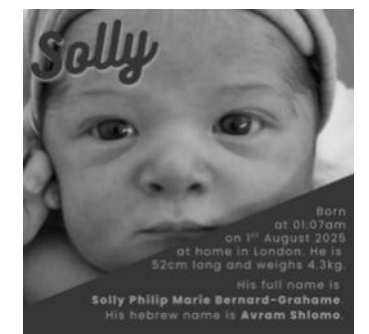
The Menahem Avelim group was set up in the early years of the community to respond in the event of the death of a member. The group aims to be available to provide whatever support might be needed.

The Menahem Avelim group is not the same as the Chevra Kadisha. The Chevra Kadisha is specifically involved with the preparation of the deceased for burial. The Menahem Avelim group has a different role: to be the face of the community at a difficult time, to be present, to be available, to be of service, to find answers to questions that may be asked.

Every situation is different. Often there are close relatives or friends able to sort out whatever tasks need to be done. In other situations, closer involvement by the team might be required. Even where funeral arrangements are taken care of there is usually a need to assist with aspects such as arrangements for a Shiva. And often there are questions.

The group seeks one or more new members. As with all Kol Nefesh pelachim, participants can make whatever they wish of the role. A knowledge of the Halacha (law) and Minhag (custom) relating to end of life is useful. And an understanding of the services provided by the JJBS together with its rules and regulations can also assist. But learning sessions on these topics can be arranged. Being able to respond at short notice, often in person, is important.

Please contact the Convenors, convenor@kolnefesh.org.uk, if you can help or to find out more.



Sponsor a Kiddush!

Do you have a **yahrzeit, birthday, new opportunity or simcha** to mark or celebrate? Please consider sponsoring a kiddush, and share your good news or life cycle event with your community.



Our regular kiddush package is **£80**. Bespoke kiddushim can be arranged on request.

Please contact **Rochelle Bloom**, rochellebloom@hotmail.com



Tikkun Olam

The CommUnity Quilt Project

By Tanya Novick

THE COMMUNITY QUILT project is a grassroots, non-affiliated initiative run by people in Barnet. The project began in the wake of the riots in the summer of 2024, and was aimed at fostering unity and standing against the racist and divisive rhetoric of the far right and the systems that feed it. Through the collaborative creation of a community quilt, this project sought to celebrate and commemorate the diversity of Barnet, particularly welcoming and integrating refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants. The quilts, composed of patches contributed by people of all ages and backgrounds, symbolise the unity and solidarity of the evolving community for years to come. They have been on display at various locations around the borough. Find out more here: barnet.gov.uk/connecting-communities/, or on Facebook under CommUnity Quilt Project Barnet.

This isn't a Kol Nefesh project, but we're proud of Kol Nefesh members' involvement! ■

Tanya's New Citizens Gateway refugee women's group, with their contributions to the Barnet CommUnity Quilt project.



*Continued from page 3
(Rabbi Joel)*

taining a chet. It is possible that this alliteration means something but I'm not sure what. Answers on a postcard to....

²Even more disturbingly, there are rabbinic traditions where *iyun tefillah*—a term that seems linked to *me'ayen*—is clearly presented as a good thing! For example, we are told in Shabbat 127a, in a text often quoted in the siddur, that *iyun tefillah* is one of the things that is guaranteed to bring reward in this world and the next! The continuation of the Tosaphot here tries to resolve this problem. They suggest that there the Talmud contains two distinct types of *iyun tefillah* – one positive and one negative. The positive one is about focus and concentration, the negative one is where our anticipation of satisfaction by God grows as a result of our prayer. ■

EcoJudaism Silver Award

ECOJUDAISM is a cross-denominational Jewish movement, bringing Jewish environmental responsibility to life in synagogues and all parts of the community through education and Torah teaching. There is a survey every synagogue can take to see how sustainable their practices are. This, of course, gives communities ideas on how to improve their practices too.

Kol Nefesh has been part of the EcoJudaism umbrella for quite a few years. We managed to reach Bronze status in the original tier system a few years ago, but more recently EcoJudaism changed their sustainability survey to bring it up to a higher standard and include other activities Jewish communities can partake in. The Kol Nefesh Green Team went through the updated survey together, and we are very happy and proud to announce that we have now reached Silver status. We were able to include some activities we run, including our speaker sessions, Green Walks, and taking part in Reverse Tashlich (watch out for that in the weekly bulletin!), as well as making small changes such as starting to use recycled paper for mailouts. If we had our own building and a say in how we run it we could even reach Gold status! So, here's something to work towards! ■



The Kol Nefesh Green Team

Our Green Team remains active in bringing speakers to Kol Nefesh, and in advancing our EcoJudaism activities. We're thrilled to report that thanks to their efforts, Kol Nefesh has achieved the EcoJudaism Silver Award! See page 16.

Anyone interested in joining the Green Team, please speak directly with Green Team head Daniel Preter, or email via our administrator, admin@kolnefesh.org.uk.



Hope and Humanity

By Daniel Preter

HOPE IS A WONDERFUL THING. It means someone has an optimistic state of mind and an expectation of positive outcomes for whatever circumstances they are thinking about.

It must be a way of thinking reserved for humans, as it requires the ability to envisage the future. It is unlikely that animals would be capable of similar thoughts. And what would humans be without hope!? We do manage to get ourselves, other people and our surroundings in dreadful situations and cause terrible suffering. Homo Sapiens is very good at that. Hope keeps us going and helps us survive situations that seem bleak and despairing.

However, there is one thing that humans are even better at than hope: taking action. Humans are the most inventive species on earth. Homo Sapiens' inventive capabilities enabled them to develop tools, techniques, and strategies for survival in various environments, including harsh conditions. Rather than just hope, it's human nature to "do" and take action to change the negative situation they might find themselves in. Our ability to invent, innovate and transform our environment allowed Homo Sapiens to become the most successful species on Planet Earth.

And boy, did we do that. There is hardly any piece of this planet left untouched or unaltered by us. Nowadays, less than 20% of the Earth's landmass is considered wilderness, meaning it has not been significantly modified by human activity. Of course this was done with intentions to improve our survival rate, increase the population and accumulate wealth, which is again a very human concept.

In the wake of all this we managed to see ourselves as "apart from nature", rather than remaining a part of nature. Human lives have become so complex and, particularly through increased urbanisation, removed from the natural world, that we think we can live without nature. That nature is merely something to be exploited and used to our advantage.

However, we are now realising that none of this comes without a price. Conversion of natural habitats for agriculture, urbanisation, and infrastructure development is fragmenting and destroying ecosystems. Agricultural runoff, plastic pollution, and industrial waste are contaminating land, water, and air, harming wildlife and human health. Hunting, fishing, and logging, when unsustainable, can lead to population declines and ecosystem damage. Increased CO₂ levels from industry, farming and transport lead to climate chaos and drought.

We can now see that our fantastic ability to invent and change the world around us affects the human population too: air and water pollution, food insecurity due to biodiversity loss and climate change, and the spread of diseases from animals (zoonotic diseases) all pose serious threats to human health. A lack of access to natural spaces causes mental health issues. Resource scarcity and environmental degradation can exacerbate existing inequalities, leading to social unrest, conflict, and mass migrations.

So maybe, just maybe, we are, as a species, still "a part of nature". Maybe now it's time to reflect, save what's left of the natural world, and improve our ways of life – for the sake of the planet, but also, for our own sake.

So, this is where hope alone is not enough. There are many brave and bold decisions governments need to take, together, to secure our planet's, and our, survival. However, each one of us can take a number of actions to do our bit.

How about:

- Cultivate a wildlife-friendly garden: choose native plants that attract wildlife, mow less to turn your lawn into a wildflower meadow, add a small pond to your garden, use peat-free compost and do not put down artificial lawns.
- Be a conscientious consumer: buy local, reduce single-use plastic where possible, eat less meat and grow your own veggies where possible.
- Spread the word: talk about the importance of healthy nature, sign petitions, speak to your local MP.
- Join a conservation charity to support them. National charities include the Wildlife Trusts or the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). Internationally strong charities include Fauna & Flora International (Prince William is a patron, and the vice-president is Sir David Attenborough) or the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

There is a lot we can all do to keep us going.

And then there's of course always hope....

Gmar chatima tova,
Daniel ■

The Revised Kol Nefesh Prayer for the State of Israel

After October 7th, 2023, as Israel responded to the horrific attacks by Hamas against Israeli communities in the Gaza Envelope, we at Kol Nefesh replaced our usual Prayer for the State of Israel with a new prayer expressing our devastation at the atrocities committed and fear for the hundreds of Israeli citizens and others held hostage in Gaza. As time passed, it became clear that this new prayer, hastily prepared in the wake of the massacre, no longer fit the full set of circumstances around the ongoing war. We thank the members of the working group set up to look anew at the prayer: Rabbi Joel, Mike Fenster, Nahum Gordon, Meira Ben-Gad, and in particular Emma Weleminsky, who galvanized us to get this project started.

The new prayer appears here, along with comments by Rabbi Joel, Mike, Nahum, and Meira about their thinking during the process. The prayer was recited in shul for the first time on Shabbat the 23rd of August, 2025 (appropriately, Shabbat Mevarchim for the Hebrew month of Ellul).

Importantly, this new version is not meant to be permanent, but to serve our needs at the moment. We all hope and pray that the war will end speedily and the remaining hostages will return home, at which point we will be glad to revisit the prayer once again.

A Prayer for the State of Israel

Kol Nefesh Masorti Synagogue, August 2025

Avinu Shebashamayim, God of our ancestors, bless the State of Israel and all who dwell in it.

Protect Israel from bigotry, hatred, internal division, and war.

Watch over the Israel Defence Forces and all those involved in defending the state. Give our soldiers, and those who command them, moral courage and wisdom. We pray for an end to the killing and maiming of all innocents, as it is written in Your Torah: “Will You sweep away the innocent with the guilty?”

Merciful and Compassionate God, aid and support all those held hostage by Israel’s enemies. Return them quickly to their loved ones.

Spread the sukkah of Your peace over Israel and its neighbours. May the leaders and peoples of the region be granted the wisdom and compassion to swiftly achieve a just and durable peace.

Let the vision of Your prophet Michah come true: “Nation will not lift up sword against nation; they will never learn war again. Everyone will sit under their own vine and fig tree with no one to disturb them.”

May it be Your will and let us say, Amen.

Rabbi Joel

I AM DELIGHTED that instead of running away from Israel as a subject too divisive to touch, we decided to revisit how we pray for Israel every week in shul. We were forced to talk about and address our deepest concerns and sensitivities and to try, the strangest idea of all, to reach some kind of consensus. Of course, no one got exactly what they wanted. Strangely not everyone agreed with me all the time! But through multiple minute revisions we heard everyone’s concerns and ideals, and we ended up trying to take everyone’s voice into account in the final version. The process was probably more important than the end result – we now have a model for how to address really hard issues together and to hear from all sides. Hopefully we will be able to re-visit this prayer in a similar way once peace returns to the region.

There were two things I really wanted in the prayer, and one of them ended up in the final version. This is the thing I did manage to get into the final version: I wanted a reference to Jewish power rather than just our vulnerability. We do fight for our existence in Israel and so it makes sense to call on divine protec-

tion. But we are also powerful actors in this struggle. That is why the classical language of antisemitism fits only approximately in the current situation. For most of Jewish history we really did nothing wrong and yet they hated us. Since the rebirth of the State of Israel we have, thank God, the power to get a lot wrong, so some of their hatred is justified! I want to pray each week for us to learn to use our new power wisely and humanely.

Give our soldiers, and those who command them, moral courage and wisdom. We pray for an end to the killing and maiming of all innocents, as it is written in Your Torah: “Will You sweep away the innocent with the guilty?” ■

Mike Fenster

UPDATING OUR PRAYER for Israel was a balancing act. We had a prayer which for the first 23 years of our community seemed to reflect all our hopes for Israel, and seemed to remain appropriate throughout all of the conflicts and crises that Israel endured during that period. But October 7th upended that; in the immediate shock of that day and the unending trauma of the hostages, a new prayer was needed, and Rabbi Joel and Jacky

came up with a prayer that fitted the new reality. But as Israel’s wars continued, the hostages didn’t come home, and the internal divisions in Israel re-emerged, various members pushed for a second look at the post–Oct 7th prayer. Was the prayer still a reflection of our current hopes, our feelings, our concerns that we were praying to God to resolve? There are so many different but overlapping views on the situation in Israel and Gaza within our community – we are blessed to have members so passionate about it – but the group looking at revising the prayer had to hold everyone together and focus on those parts of the theoretical Venn diagram where all our views intersect. When we looked at the prayer, we realised that it didn’t include some things we all felt were important after more than a year of war – healing internal conflict in Israel, wanting the soldiers of the IDF to be protected but also to have the moral strength to act ethically, and for “the leaders and peoples of the region be granted the wisdom and compassion to achieve a just and durable peace” – a sentiment which we had included in our prayer before Oct 7th, but then omitted from the revised prayer. There were other hopes which we didn’t agree on, which were outside the consensus that we recognised existed, and everyone had to give up on some nuance or phrase which for them was really important. The new closing quote from Michah, by way of Rabbi Joel, expresses a wish for peace that will let all peoples of the region live their own lives without interference and threat from their neighbours.

My hope is that this version of the prayer isn’t needed for long – that we will very soon see the hostages returned and an end to this war, and I will be overjoyed to volunteer to revise this prayer again. ■

Nahum Gordon

THE TEFILLAH FOR ISRAEL was changed radically soon after 7 October 2023. For me, there were two problems. As far as I know, there was no consultation. Neither the Tefillah Pelach nor the Tapuz were given an opportunity to comment. The other issue was that the new version was too long, overblown and did not ring true. For instance, was the IDF really “fighting for the existence of the State”? The language felt alien to a community like Kol Nefesh which rarely indulges in hyperbole.

Emma was the spark for change. A small group finally met on 23 March comprising Rabbi Joel, Emma, Mike Fenster, Meira and me. Our discussion covered questions such as: i) Should we pray for the release of all hostages, be they Jewish or not? ii) Should we be more explicit in expressing sympathy for all innocent casualties, be they Israeli or not? iii) Should we re-introduce the hope that all the leaders of the region would show wisdom and compassion? iv) Should we remove the sentence about the alleged existential threat to Israel? And v) should the final piece be shorter? There were more contentious areas, such as vi) if we did mention the IDF, then could we not ask them to demonstrate the highest ethical standards? and vii) should we mention Palestinian victims specifically?

I think we listened carefully to each other. We did not lose focus

on the primary objectives – it was a prayer for Israel, not the Middle East, and there was an urgent need for peace. What were my lines in the sand? Just one – I am appalled by the misery inflicted on innocents in Gaza, but I could not agree to mentioning the Palestinians overtly. To my knowledge, no Palestinian group publicly condemned Hamas’s actions. Regrettably, I remain sceptical as to whether Palestinians and their leaders are willing to accept a two-state solution. The final version of our deliberations on 23 July was a compromise. Nobody got everything but to have delivered a consensus on six of the seven issues listed above was no mean achievement. ■

Meira Ben-Gad

FOLLOWING OCTOBER 7TH, 2023, it was obvious that our usual Prayer for the State of Israel was insufficient to capture the magnitude of what had happened. A new prayer was hastily constructed to replace it, not a literary masterpiece, but what was needed at the time. That prayer expressed the anguish we all felt at that moment, and the terrifying thought that Israel had narrowly escaped a real existential threat. (Imagine the outcome if Hizbollah and Iran had attacked alongside Hamas on October 7th.) At the same time, I think we all believed this new prayer would be needed for only a short while. Surely the IDF, though caught off guard on October 7th, would quickly subdue Hamas. Surely the hostages would quickly be rescued, or released under international pressure. Some of us even dared to hope that something good could come out of this disaster, with Israel’s government stepping down, Hamas being replaced in Gaza, and new circumstances somehow letting us totter toward peace.

How wrong we were. As the war dragged on, with (as of this writing) potentially 20 living hostages still, unbelievably, entombed in Hamas’s torture tunnels, the prayer we were reciting in shul felt increasingly wrong. Israel is no longer facing an existential threat. More depressingly, Israel’s leadership seems to be ceding all power to those in government with the very worst impulses, and allowing the emergence of a moral rot within segments of the IDF. While (in my view) Hamas still bears vastly the most responsibility for the deaths of Palestinian civilians, we Israelis can no longer consider ourselves morally pure.

That said, different members of our community hold differing views on these matters. There are some who don’t hesitate to make “Israel” the subject of a verb with the object “genocide”. Equally, there are those who look back with regret on Israel’s 2005 withdrawal from Gaza, and would be glad to see new Israeli settlements there. In revising our Prayer for Israel, I felt strongly that our prayer had to be one that everyone in the community could recite wholeheartedly – even if we don’t all interpret every line in the same way. We have to all be able to say “Amen” to the same words and mean it, even if we have differing ideas about what some of those words signify. The import of “an end to the killing of all *innocents*” isn’t necessarily the import of “an end to the killing of *all* innocents”. I hope we have managed to produce a prayer that everyone can subscribe to, even if sometimes you might need to hear the words in your heart differently from how they are spoken at the bimah. ■

The Kol Nefesh Hineini Project:

An Opportunity to Listen and Garnish Hope to Build Our Future

By Melanie Kelly

THIS YEAR AS PART OF MY WORK as a Trustee of Kol Nefesh I have led on the Hineini Project, a multi-disciplinary listening project to take the temperature of the community and to work towards building our future. We have been celebrating our 25th anniversary as a Kehilah, and have faced challenges with regards to our shul’s home and future direction. This seemed like the ideal time to harness our efforts towards listening and planning, and it’s been an honour to work with a team of other members to build and develop this project.

We have asked you to complete online surveys and attend in-person and virtual guided conversations, and of course shared a wonderful anniversary celebratory Shabbat lunch. Thank you to everyone who participated. We had responses and participation from over 50% of the community.

As we approach Rosh Hashanah, we are invited into a season of reflection and renewal – not only as individuals, but as a community. And this year’s learning theme of Hope, together with the shofar’s call, reminds us that we are part of something larger, bound by hope, tradition, and the vision of what we can create together. As Rabbi Sacks wrote, “Optimism is the belief that things will get better. Hope is the belief that, together, we can make things better.”

We have shared so many stories of why Kol Nefesh works for us; what is it about this community that has helped us choose it as our synagogue of affiliation. The responses and memories were wide and varied. For me it’s being part of a community that doesn’t exist without all of us. I remember Cheryl Sklan would always say, “there’s no such thing as ‘The Shul’.” There’s no point in saying The Shul should do this or that. The Shul only exists in as much as the members choose to make things happen, be that prayer services, cultural events, learning, or supporting each other. We are the sum of our parts.

Through the Hineini Project, many of you shared your experiences, your joys, and your hopes for Kol Nefesh. The results are both heartening and inspiring. Here is a peek at some of the highlights.

The message that rings out loud and clear is that **we are a community deeply rooted in belonging and pride**. An overwhelming 95% of respondents expressed positive feelings about the sense of welcome and connection here at Kol Nefesh. That is a powerful testament to who we already are – a place where people feel seen, supported, and at home.

Our commitment to **Jewish learning and spiritual growth** also shines brightly. Nearly 8 in 10 respondents spoke positively about our opportunities for education and study, while expressing a desire for even more diverse ways to deepen engagement. This is a hopeful sign: it means our members want to grow, to explore, and to share in meaningful Jewish life together.

When it comes to our wider values, the results are heartening. 75% of respondents are proud of our work in **Social Justice** and **Tikkun Olam** – a reminder that Kol Nefesh not only nurtures the soul but helps repair the world. Our leadership, too, was recognized with great appreciation, with over 93% expressing confidence and gratitude in our governance model and Rabbinic leadership.

And perhaps most uplifting of all: **87% of respondents said they are proud to belong to Kol Nefesh**. Pride and belonging are not small things – they are the fertile soil from which hope for the future can grow.

There were obvious areas for growth and further consideration, such as supporting families, concerns over finding a more permanent home, and of course the current situation in Israel and how we as a community hear and support each other during these challenging times. But this is where exciting opportunities lie.

Listening is only the beginning. The real work – and the real joy – is in what we do next, together. The data gives us not just a snapshot of where we are, but a compass to guide us into the next five years. It reminds us that we are strong, and that we can be even stronger. It tells us that we already embody community, shared values, justice, and learning – and that we are ready to dream bigger.

This month, JPR, the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, published their What Works report, looking at the impact of Jewish programmes and experiences on Jewish identity. They argue that we need to “shift away from ‘silver bullet’ thinking ... and towards understanding ... different components as fitting together into a broader Jewish ecosystem.” As for the individual so for the community. We often hear that the shul needs to focus on this one area, or fix this issue, or provide this type of service, whereas in fact what we need is to do a bit of everything. As Rabbi Tarfon says in Pirkei Avot: “It is not your duty to finish the work, but neither are you at liberty to neglect it.”

This Rosh Hashanah, let us take hope seriously. Hope is not a wishful thought; it is the courage to imagine a thing and to work together to build it. Our task now is to develop a guiding strategy for Kol Nefesh – one full of ambition that will carry our community forward, grounded in our values and aspirations and with achievable and measurable goals.

To that end, we warmly invite you to join us on **Sunday, 28th September** at the Hyman Hall for a special workshop where we will explore the listening project findings in more depth and begin to co-create our community’s new strategy. Your voice matters. Your presence matters. Together, hope can turn into action.

Shanah Tovah U'Metukah – a good and sweet New Year to all. ■

Noam Israel Tour 2025

By Miriam Burns, Leah Greenfield, and Isla Silk

THIS SUMMER, Noam took 57 chanichim to Israel, where we spent three weeks touring the country from north to south.

Our base for the first few days was Sha’ar HaGolan, a kibbutz near the Jordanian border, and we learned about the kibbutz movement at Hatzer Kinneret, swam in the warm spring at Gan HaShlosha, did a hike, went kayaking and learnt how to weave baskets in Kfar Kana.

The next few days were spent in Akko and Haifa, where we learnt about the end of the Ottoman Empire and how it became a British colony, went to a Tunisian synagogue, a mosque, a monastery, a Bahai garden and had a Druze lunch. After our first Shabbat in Nes Ammim, we visited Zichron Ya’akov and Caesarea.

After a night sleeping outdoors under the stars, we drove down to Tel Aviv, where we went to some markets, did some volunteering including cleaning out a communal shelter, went to the beach, learned about Rabin, visited Hostage Square and learnt how things have changed since the 7th October attack. We also had the first “family visit” (for people who have family in Israel) and our second peaceful Shabbat.



From left: Leah, Miriam, and Isla with Rabbi Joel at the Conservative Yeshiva in Jerusalem.

Our next base was Jerusalem. We went to the Kotel and the egalitarian section of the wall, visited the Conservative Yeshiva where we saw Rabbi Joel, who told us about his work there, and had a talk by the Women of the Wall. The following few days, we went to Yad Vashem, had some sessions about the conflict and did some more volunteering. The second family visit day was in Jerusalem, and Rabbi Joel and Susanna (and Kibby the dog) met up with Leah and Miriam, and took us for ice cream. It was lovely to spend time with them!

From Jerusalem, we drove south, taking in some star gazing, Masada at sunrise, a float in the Dead Sea and then to the pluralistic Kibbutz Ketura for our final Shabbat and the last few days of the tour which consisted of hiking, snorkelling, a visit to the beach at Eilat and a pool party.

The final stop before coming home was a trip to Ben Gurion’s tomb, where we sat and reflected on our time in Israel. The whole tour was amazing and meaningful. We learned a lot about the country and embraced our Jewish identity. ■



The Kol Nefesh 2025 Sukkah Crawl!

Sunday 12th October

Join us to celebrate the chag together, and to observe the three mitzvot of Sukkot! Full addresses will be shared closer to the time.

Nibbles and drinks hosted by Nahum Gordon 12pm–1pm

- ⇒ Fulfil the mitzvah of waving the lulav (a lulav and etrog will be available).
- ⇒ Welcome drinks and mezonot bites.

Main course hosted by Brenda & Mike Simmonds 1:30pm–3:15pm

- ⇒ Fulfil the mitzvah of *Ushpizim* (hospitality in the Sukkah).
- ⇒ Pot luck Ha-Motzi meal with blessing and washing.
- ⇒ Main course vegetarian potluck contributions greatly appreciated.

Dessert hosted by Melanie & Jeremy Kelly 3:30pm

- ⇒ Fulfil the mitzvah of feeding the poor (in lieu of this please consider giving to the Edgware local food bank).
- ⇒ Dessert and tea/coffee kindly provided by the Kellys, followed by Bircat HaMazon.

Please register your attendance with Elaine, admin@kolnefesh.org.uk.

Many thanks to all our generous hosts!

Kol Nefesh Word Corner

At Kol Nefesh, a *pelach* (plural *pelachim*; Hebrew for “segment”) is a committee or working group.

Tapuz (“orange”) is our word for a community meeting, when all the *pelachim* come together.

Does the Hebrew Bible Define a “Woman’s Role”?

A Critical Examination of Female Agency and Expectation

By Einav Diamond Limor

This article was written in the course of Einar's university studies last year. We're very happy to print it here for the community's enjoyment. This version has been slightly condensed from the original.

"FEWER THAN 10 PERCENT of the named individuals in the Hebrew Bible are women. Those who do appear tend to be exceptional women, not representative of most ordinary women."¹ However, while they may be few in number, their presence is crucial in offering insight into the diverse roles fulfilled by biblical women. The Hebrew Bible presents women not only in traditional roles as mothers, wives, and caretakers, but also as powerful figures of agency and influence, stepping outside societal expectations when necessary. This essay will first examine the so-called "expected" roles of biblical women before discussing their more unconventional roles. Drawing on both biblical texts and archaeological evidence, I will argue that the Hebrew Bible does not inflexibly dictate a woman's role; rather, it demonstrates women's adaptability in shaping Israelite society. From their more standard roles of childbearing and wifehood to their roles as temptresses and warriors, women play a fundamental role in the survival and stability of the Israelite people, often demonstrating resourcefulness in ensuring lineage continuity and their own place in biblical history.

Firstly, it is imperative to briefly examine an Israelite household itself to understand the primary role of a

woman within the home. The household was the fundamental unit, shaping all aspects of life, and within the household, women played a central role in its maintenance and management, undertaking essential tasks that ensured survival. Biblical texts, backed up by archaeological remains, confirm that the primary component of the Israelites' diet was grain-based food. The process, however, to turn grains into edible substance was labour-intensive, lengthy, and physically demanding, as shown through the variety of grinding tools and ovens recovered from archaeological sites. Evidence from the broader Ancient Near East, alongside biblical references (Exod. 11:5 for example), supports the idea that women were primarily responsible for this food preparation. Furthermore, many of the tasks that women did (extending to textile production for another example) required specific understanding and a technological proficiency, granting women a considerable degree of power in creating essential resources that could not be obtained elsewhere.

Women also exercised control over household resources, as demonstrated in Abigail's narrative. Abigail, "a clever and beautiful woman" married to "surly and mean" Nabal (1 Sam 25:3) acts independently without

consulting her husband to save her household from destruction, demonstrating autonomy and strategic intelligence. In this case, Abigail goes even further and reverses her husband's foolish actions. Interestingly, in her speech to David, she does not describe herself as Nabal's wife, appealing to him instead with her own wit and humility, thereby succeeding and avoiding potential bloodshed.² This example illustrates that while women's roles in the Hebrew Bible were often centred around the home, they wielded significant power within the domestic space, ensuring the household's stability and survival.

Building on these foundational roles, childbearing was perhaps the most vital responsibility expected of Israelite women. In the Hebrew Bible, children are depicted as a blessing from God, so divinely treasured that God's first commandment to humankind is to "be fruitful and multiply" (Gen 1:28). This command, though theological, was also practical, given the conditions of the ancient world and the necessity of children for economic stability and family survival. Thus, this burden fell on women, highlighting their indispensable role within society. Moreover, it is argued that God values children so much that "he is intimately involved in the procreative or gestational process of an unborn child".³ Whilst this delves into a broader discussion on the

claim that God holds the power over a woman's womb which is not relevant to this essay, the emphasis on childbearing as a woman's role is clear. In fact, the Hebrew Bible presents conception and pregnancy as being so deeply guided by God that the human father's role appears almost secondary.⁴ This emphasises even further the idea that fertility and childbearing was distinctly a woman's role within Israelite society.

When discussing childbearing in the Bible, it is crucial to examine not only the frequent occurrence of barrenness but also the ways in which women responded to it, navigating societal and familial pressures tied to fertility. In her article, Bergmann highlights the theme of barrenness among Israel's matriarchs: Sarah (Gen. 18:11–13), Rebecca (Gen. 25:21), and Rachel (Gen. 35) all experience prolonged infertility before eventually bearing children, while Tamar's delayed conception is resolved somewhat unconventionally. Many barren women in the Bible protest their infertility, seek involvement from God and are therefore able to change their circumstances. Sarah recognises God's part in her infertility yet takes matters into her own hands by suggesting surrogacy with Hagar (Gen. 16:2). Though partially motivated through jealousy, Rachel primarily fears for her legacy, "Give me children, or I shall die!" (Gen. 30:1) and offers her maidservant to

Jacob in her place to preserve her lineage. Both women, originally faced with the inability to conceive naturally, resort to their own resourcefulness, showing how women played not just an active role in ensuring the continuity of their families, but were sometimes the sole reason for their survival. This suggests that the Hebrew Bible does not rigidly define a woman's role but instead presents women as individuals who challenge societal expectations to secure their family.

While I briefly mentioned Tamar earlier, her story introduces another important role of biblical women in response to her lack of conception – that of the temptress. In Genesis 38, Tamar takes drastic action to ensure the survival of her husband's lineage after his death and the failure of his brothers to produce an heir. Disguising herself as a prostitute, she seduces Judah, her father-in-law, in order to conceive twins, and thus secures her place within the ancestral line of Israel. Tamar's calculated seduction is not framed as sinful but rather as an act of necessity and justice, as shown by the Hebrew *haker na*, "please recognise". This phrase underscores this moment of revelation, as Tamar enables Judah to acknowledge his wrongdoing and to accept his obligations without public disgrace. Rather than being condemned in the texts, Tamar is positioned as a crucial figure in the narrative, "the threat of extinction [propelling her] into forbidden territory".⁵ Her role here as a temptress highlights that the Hebrew Bible acknowledges moments where women take agency even through controversial means, proving

that their roles are not rigidly defined but shaped by circumstance and survival.

Building on the theme of sexuality as a woman's weapon, the story of Rahab presents another instance where a woman's perceived role as a temptress is overlooked in favour of strategic gain. As prostitute in Jericho, Rahab does not use seduction in a literal sense. Instead, she uses her position to hide Joshua's spies, defying her own king and putting herself at risk (Josh. 2). Her decision, stemming from an awareness of Israel's growing power and a belief in the Jewish God, ensures the survival of her family and she later fully assimilates into the Israelite community. Though she is described as a *zona* ("prostitute") in the biblical texts, the Hebrew Bible does not condemn her for this profession, which is made even more significant by its association with "leaving, turning aside from God". Instead, she is acknowledged for her bravery and resourcefulness.⁶ Her story reinforces the idea that the biblical narrative values survival, strategic thinking and faith, further challenging the notion of a singularly defined role for women in the Bible.

Finally, I would like to highlight one more role that women occupy in the Bible – the military leader, particularly Deborah. Deborah's role in the battle against the Canaanites is presented in two versions: Judges 4, a prose narrative in which she is an advisor, and Judges 5, a poetic song where she is a military commander. Although Judges 4 appears first in the biblical text, scholars widely acknowledge that the poetic traditions of Judges 5 predate

it by several centuries. Thus, I will focus on Judges 5, which I believe provides a more direct insight into how Deborah was originally viewed.

Susan Ackerman builds on Carol Meyer's research, which uses a variety of evidence to argue that women in premonarchic Israel held significant influence. Ackerman extends this argument, noting that Judges (the book corresponding to this era) features more female characters, suggesting that "this plethora of women in Judges perhaps coincides with the 'vital and active' roles that Meyers argues women played within Israel's premonarchic society".⁷ Deborah, as depicted in Judges 5, serves as a useful example of this thesis. The text presents her as crucial for rallying the troops, declaring "the peasantry prospered in Israel, they grew fat on plunder, because you arose, Deborah, arose as a mother in Israel" (Judg. 5:7). Regardless of whether this depiction reflects historical reality as Ackerman and Meyer discuss, what is significant is that the biblical text envisions a woman in a position of military authority, actively shaping the fate of her people.

In conclusion, the Hebrew Bible does not rigidly define a woman's role but rather presents women as dynamic figures who adapt to the circumstances necessary for the survival and continuity of the Israelite people. While traditional roles such as motherhood and household management are emphasised, biblical narratives also highlight women who act with agency and strategy, whether as decision-makers, figures of seduction, or warriors. From

Abigail's autonomy in safeguarding her household to Tamar and Rahab's unconventional but ultimately justified actions to Deborah's military leadership, the text acknowledges and even legitimises women who step outside societal norms to fulfil the greater purpose of Jewish continuity and survival. Ultimately, the Hebrew Bible presents a multifaceted view of women, portraying them as essential contributors to Israelite society, accentuating how their roles were not defined but shaped by necessity and preservation of the Jewish people. ■

¹Carol L. Meyers, “The Importance of Bread: Archaeology, the Bible, and Women’s Power in Ancient Israel,” in *The Biblical World of Gender: The Daily Lives of Ancient Women and Men*, ed. Cecilia Durgin and Dru Johnson (Cascade Books, 2022), 3–11.

²Ken Mulzac, "The Role of Abigail in 1 Samuel 25," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 41, no. 1 (2003): 45–53 (48).

³Alice Yafeh-Deigh, "Children, Motherhood, and the Social Death of Childless Women: The Social and Theological Construction of Infertility in the Hebrew Bible and in Cameroon," *Biblical Interpretation* 28, no. 5 (2020): 608–634 (609).

⁴Claudia D. Bergmann, "Mothers of a Nation: How Motherhood and Religion Intermingle in the Hebrew Bible," *Open Theology* 6, no. 1 (2020): 132–144.

⁵Rachel Adelman, "Seduction and Recognition in the Story of Judah and Tamar and the Book of Ruth," *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Issues*, no. 23 (2012): 87-109 (92).

⁶Athalya Brenner-Idan, *The Israelite Woman: Social Role and Literary Type in Biblical Narrative* (Bloomsbury, 1985), 80.

⁷Susan Ackerman, "Digging up Deborah: Recent Hebrew Bible Scholarship on Gender and the Contribution of Archaeology," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 66, no. 4 (2003): 171–184 (176).



A Message of Hope from Masorti Judaism UK

AS ROSH HASHANAH and Yom Kippur approach, we all carry questions that feel heavier than ever. This year, the world seems particularly fractured and sometimes frightening. Yet each year we gather, as generations of Jews have for thousands of years, to confront the fragility of life and the power of renewal.

The answer begins with hope. Not naïve optimism, but the steadfast courage that has sustained our people for millennia. We have evidence for that courage: here we still are, approaching the *Yamim Noraim* as generations of Jews have before us.

Our sages taught: “Even if a sharp sword rests upon a person’s neck, one should not despair of God’s mercy” (Berakhot 10a). Despair closes us off; hope opens us to possibility. It is the belief that the future can be better, and that we can help bring it about.

When we come together, to pray, to learn and to sing, we create something greater than the sum of our individual fears. We strengthen one another. We find grounding. We draw deeply from the well of a tradition that has carried our people through times far darker than these. Though we emerge changed by experience, we remain anchored in what endures: our sacred tradition of purpose and light.

At Masorti Judaism, we are committed to nurturing that hope, not only within communities, but between them.

This year, we are proud to be launching a new Bnei Mitzvah programme, helping young people across our movement step into Jewish adulthood with learning, joy, and confidence. We continue to support prayer leaders, educators, and anyone wishing to deepen their spiritual connection through Shema Koleinu, our online hub for liturgy and prayer. Our Beit Din remains active; we are there for our rabbis at all stages of their careers and support community leaders and congregants alike.

We run Noam and Drachim for our youth and invest in the next generation of lay leaders. Earlier this year, our Yom Masorti conference brought people together from across the movement to learn, reflect, and dream about the future of Jewish life in the UK. In December, we will take some community leaders to Israel to witness first-hand both the challenges and the resilience that shape our shared story.

Wishing all our members a *Shanah Tovah*. May we draw strength from one another, may our shared hopes lift us toward a year of sweetness and renewal, may the blessings of our tradition sustain us and keep despair at bay, and may we all be inscribed and sealed for good in the Book of Life.

Ketivah v'Chatimah Tovah. ■



Honey for a Sweet New Year....

We're pleased to be able once again to deliver a gift of honey with this edition of the magazine, in a tradition that began with the COVID-19 pandemic. Huge thanks, again, to the anonymous sponsors who each year have helped bring some sweetness into our homes (and thanks also to our delivery team!).

Julie Parker, our supplier, is a local beekeeper and Education Officer for the North London Beekeepers Association. Julie has been keeping bees across North and Central London for nearly two decades. Her raw honey is extracted by hand, then filtered and bottled. It is full of the flavours of pollen and nectar collected by the bees from local flowers and trees. Email julieparkerbees@gmail.com.

Shanah tovah u-metukah!



Reminder: Sign up for the Kol Nefesh Erev Rosh HaShanah Communal Meal

Everyone's welcome to join us for our traditional **Erev Rosh HaShanah potluck**, following the service on 22 September.

If you keep a kosher kitchen, please bring a milky or pareve dish – starters and desserts welcome! Bought-in food items with a hechsher or fruits are also more than welcome.

Please be ready to share a little story behind the dish, and how it represents your wishes for the new year. We also ask you to label your dish so we all know what it is, and whether it contains any common allergens.

Please sign up via Elaine, our administrator, on admin@kolnefesh.org.uk.

Shanah Tovah!



From the Convenors

DEAR FRIENDS,

We do many things well at Kol Nefesh and our magazine is one of those things that some of us might take for granted, but embody the best of our shul. Our magazine has it all – a diversity of views, intellectual depth, a space for vulnerability, communal announcements and, most importantly, a chance for everyone to get involved. It is a wonderful reflection of who we are.

Having mentioned vision and communal involvement, it might sound counter-intuitive to run a listening campaign at an uncertain time like this. The past year in Hyman Hall was not something Jay and I could have predicted as incoming co-convenors, and yet, this space served us well. With the EMS and EBMC merger and the creation of SHEMA, there were those who felt a little apprehensive about a return to the place whence our founding families were asked to leave 25 years ago. And yet, here we are. A small community in a big building, getting ready to spend High Holy Days in an even more egalitarian way than ever before thanks to our recent steps towards greater gender equality for b'not Kohen and b'not Levi. Slow, gradual shifts like this, as direct consequences of our commitment to the halachic process, give us hope for the future of our Judaism, and of our community.

We are incredibly excited to learn more about our community thanks to the Hineini Project spearheaded by Melanie Kelly and supported by many volunteer listeners. We launched our silver anniversary with a celebratory meal in April and the meal has been followed by the first events in the Hineini Project. We enjoyed being a part of meaningful and honest conversations about the future of our community and, perhaps even more importantly, about what needs to be done in order to realise that future. With

another Hineini event planned for the Ten Days, we're one step closer to bringing the listening exercise to a close this Chanukah. Thank you all for enthusiastically showing up and sharing your views.

It is highly likely that we will have vacated Hyman Hall by Chanukah and relocated to a different building. The Building Search Committee has been working incredibly hard to make this possible, and we owe them a deep sense of gratitude. Once a proposal is put forward to the community, it will enable us to take the next step in strengthening our foundation as we remain Edgware's only Masorti community.

We would both like to add some personal reflections of hope.

Shibby is not one for nature; she likes stones, bricks and pottery, not rocks and lava fields. On a recent trip to Iceland, she had the chance to see many whales and dolphins up close swimming and diving in the middle of the north Atlantic. Rather unexpectedly, she found it extremely emotional and felt the overwhelming urge to make a b'racha ... and she did. Sure, as Jews, we say many brachot, such as over fruit on Rosh Hashanah and on seeing a tree bloom in spring. But it was right there, on that occasion, that Shibby really understood it because she felt compelled to bless, merely by witnessing something that is normal for that part of the planet. The b'rachot remind us to be grateful to the One responsible for the seasons and weather patterns, and just like the seasons, our lives are cyclical too. Our calendar with its chagim nicely locks into those seasons, and it's here that gratitude can catch us unexpectedly with hope for better days to follow.

For Jay, getting married was a culmina-



tion of months of study and deep engagement with traditional halachic sources on marriage and partnerships. He and Michael were called up for an aufruf at Kol Nefesh – most likely the first same-sex aufruf we have celebrated as a community. Michael and Jay were really moved by how welcoming the community has been to them as a same-sex couple and how natural the aufruf felt, something many people reflected on during the kiddush the couple sponsored. After kiddush, Michael, Jay and Rabbi Joel engaged in a panel discussion about Jewish marriage and Jewish halachic partnerships, each with their unique perspectives.

Often in years past, Jay has focused the *chazak ve'emats* message from Psalm 27 – “Be strong and of good courage” – during the month of Elul. With the theme of hope, he immediately thought about Hatikvah, the national anthem of the State of Israel. But then, looking back at the Elul Psalm, the word at the beginning of the last verse, *kaveh*, caught his attention. While *hatikvah*, a noun, is translated as “the hope”, *kaveh* is the imperative form of the verb “to hope”. Psalm 27 talks about adversities and challenges and yet encourages us to hope. As long as we care, step up and get involved, there is hope.

May we enjoy a lot of caring, stepping up and getting involved in the year 5786.

Shanah tovah u'metukah!

—Siobhan (Shibby) Allen & Jay Schlesinger

The Kol Nefesh Book Group/ Culture Club



Ten-Day Programme Theatre Outing

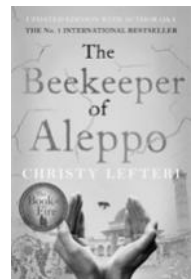
On **Tuesday September 30th**, join us at the Soho Place Theatre to see **Every Brilliant Thing**.

You're seven years old. Mum's in hospital. Dad says she's "done something stupid". She finds it hard to be happy. You start a list of everything that's brilliant about the world. Everything worth living for. You leave it on her pillow. You know she's read it because she's corrected your spelling.



Every Brilliant Thing is a comedy about the lengths we will go for those we love.

After the performance, we'll meet for a discussion led by Rabbi Joel, as part of our ten-day programme, "Bridging the Yamim Nora'im", on the theme of **Hope**. More details and booking information can be found on the Soho Place website, sohoplacetheatre.org/.



Yom Kippur Book Discussion

Our annual book discussion during the Yom Kippur afternoon break will focus on **The Beekeeper of Aleppo**, by Christy Lefteri.

Nuri is a beekeeper; his wife, Afra, an artist. They live a simple life, rich in family and friends, in the beautiful Syrian city of Aleppo - until the unthinkable happens. When all they care for is destroyed by war, they are forced to escape.

Start reading now!

Helen & Robert Stone

send warmest
Shana Tova greetings
to all our friends
in Kol Nefesh
and wish everyone
peace and happiness
in the New Year

Lisette & Daniel

wish all at Kol Nefesh
and in the world beyond
a healthy and peaceful
5786

Mark & Tanya
wish Kol Nefesh,
family, friends,
the wider community
and Israel
a Happy, Healthy
& Peaceful New Year

Mike & Aviva
wish all our friends
at Kol Nefesh
a year of
peace and health

Georgia, Richard,
Ruth & Hannah
wish everyone a
Happy New Year
and well over the fast

Sylvia & Maurice
wish everyone
at Kol Nefesh
a Shana Tova

Wishing all members
of Kol Nefesh
a happy and healthy
forthcoming year
Rochelle & Ian