

# OUR

CONGREGATION

Issue 721



SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2022 | ELUL 5782 / TISHRI/CHESHVAN 5783

News and views from  
**Belsize Square Synagogue**

## REFLECTION

# The opportunity of a blank slate

How will you prepare for the High Holydays? asks **Rabbi Gabriel Botnick**

While most people would tell you their favourite Jewish holiday is Chanukah (for the gifts and food), Passover (for the family and food) or maybe even Purim (for the costumes and food), my favourite holiday is actually Yom Kippur (hint: not for the food).

What I love about Yom Kippur – as well as Rosh Hashanah – is its transformative nature. Every year, we are provided with a chance to start again – unencumbered by any missteps of the previous year, as long as we take seriously the call to right any wrongs we may have committed against others.

Therefore the question is: what will you make of this 'tabula rasa'? The High Holydays present us with an open door onto an entirely new world of

possibilities. If you find yourself on a path that no longer excites you, will you seize this opportunity to find a new one that does? Will you use the contemplative and introspective nature of the Holydays to engage in honest internal dialogue? Or will you let this annual chance for change pass you by?

For the most part, the High Holydays can be whatever you allow. They can be beautiful, powerful, and even life-altering, or they can be an inconvenience, a bore, or merely a chance to socialise.

The nature of your Holyday experience is based partly on whether you allow yourself to be fully present in the moment, but mostly on how you prepare yourself for this special time of year. That might mean

reading through the Machzor (prayer book) in advance to understand better the liturgy, listening to a podcast on Teshuvah (repentance), attending a class on spiritual themes of the Holydays, and more.

The point is: you can't just show up on the day, having given little thought to its significance and expect to have a meaningful experience. At the very least, you must prepare yourself mentally and spiritually to be open to possibility. And if you do, this just may be the year that you learn to love the High Holydays as much as I do.

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## SYNAGOGUE SNAPSHOTS

### Dilys Tausz

Mostly retired barrister



#### What is your favourite thing about your work?

My favourite thing about my work is that I am mostly retired! I still produce law reports for various legal publications, but I can pick and choose when I want to write them. It

means that I am still using my skills which I have honed over nearly 50 years, and keeping up with progress in the law. However, I do miss the contact with the judges and my colleagues at the Royal Courts of Justice, where I was a senior legal adviser.

My role in Belsize Square up to 2020 was running the High Holydays Youth Services, which I took over from my late husband Thomas, whom I had assisted for many years. I very much enjoyed working with the children, seeing them grow in confidence and learning that having a role in a service is not a performance but is 'a taking part' and a mitzvah. I am proud that we are inclusive about the children invited to take part in the services. Regardless of learning or physical difficulties, all are part of the Belsize family and able to join in.

#### What is the hardest part of your job?

Fitting in completing the judgments I have agreed to digest, between being a grandmother, daughter to an elderly mother with Alzheimer's, and now representing Belsize Square at the Board of Deputies, where I have been elected to serve on the Constitution Committee which deals with matters of conduct of members and election of new bodies to the Board.

#### If you could do any other job for one day, what would you choose?

Being a party or events manager. There is nothing better than seeing people enjoy themselves at a function that you have organised, and which goes smoothly.

#### How did you come to be a member of Belsize Square?

I married into the congregation, and it became my second family. When Thomas died, I was elected to the Board, which was a great honour.

#### What's your favourite festival?

Simchat Torah. I love the celebration of the Torah, the exuberance, the dancing in the synagogue and having all the scrolls out of the ark.

#### Where do you like to sit in shul?

My favourite place is on the right-hand side about five rows back.

## COMMUNITY NEWS

### NEW MEMBERS

We extend a cordial welcome to:  
Daisy Grostern | Marcus Gee | Hannah Jay  
Marie-Claire Green with children James & Grace  
Sandra & Roy Kashi with children Natalia, Evie & Scarlet  
*Correction from last issue:* Galina Michkovitch and daughter Elizabeth

### BNEI MITZVAH

Mazal tov to:  
Amelia, daughter of Paul Epstein & Laura Binns, who celebrates her Bat Mitzvah on Saturday 3 September

Oscar, son of Katie & Tim Levene, who celebrates his Bar Mitzvah on Saturday 10 September

Naomi, daughter of Victoria & Oliver Jerome, who celebrates her Bat Mitzvah on Saturday 17 September

### EXAM RESULTS

Mazal tov to all of you who have taken GCSE, A-levels and University finals this summer. News of superb results has been reaching us daily. We are always delighted to hear good news, so please let us know how you've done. Whether you are still at school, gapping, trekking, going off to university or starting a career, we wish you good luck for a sparkling future and **please keep in touch!**

## SYNAGOGUE BOARD

Following the Synagogue's Annual General Meeting on 23 June 2022, the members of the Board are:

### HONORARY OFFICERS

Chairman: Jackie Alexander  
Hon Secretary: Annette Nathan  
Asst Hon Secretary: Rob Nothman  
Hon Treasurer: Jimmy Strauss  
Asst Hon Treasurer: Adam Hurst

### EXECUTIVE

Adam Davis  
Francis Joseph  
Justyn Trenner  
Nick Viner

### BOARD

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David Pollins  
Richard Pollins  
Jimmy Strauss\*  
Dilys Tausz  
Justyn Trenner\*  
Nick Viner\*  
Claire Walford

\*Honorary Officers and Members of the Executive

### KEVER AVOT

(Visiting the Grounds)

Sunday 2 October 12.00pm

Edwarebury Lane Cemetery,  
HA8 8QP



## ADULT DISCUSSION GROUP

### Sunday 4 September

Zoom session  
10.00am-11.15am Student Rabbi  
Dr Annette Boeckler - Modern-Day Jewish Philosophy

11.30am-12.45pm Open forum discussion - In an age of Critical Race Theory, what colour are Jews?

### Sunday 11 September

Zoom session  
10.00am-11.15am Student Rabbi  
Dr Annette Boeckler - Modern-Day Jewish Philosophy

11.30-12.45 Victoria Selman (Slotover), award-winning author/crime writer - Truly Darkly Deeply

### Sunday 18 September

Hybrid session  
10.00am-11.15am Student Rabbi  
Dr Annette Boeckler - Modern-Day Jewish Philosophy

11.30-12.45 Jonathan Paris, political analyst and journalist - Middle East Update

4 week Break for Yomim Noraim and Succot

### Sunday 23 October

Hybrid session  
10.00am-11.15am Student Rabbi  
Dr Annette Boeckler - Modern-Day Jewish Philosophy

11.30am-12.45pm Hella Pick, journalist, doyenne of post-war correspondents, former *Guardian* UN and USA correspondent, author - *Invisible Walls: A Journalist in Search of Her Life*.

### Sunday 30 October

Hybrid session  
10.00am-11.15pm Student Rabbi  
Dr Annette Boeckler - Modern-Day Jewish Philosophy

11.30am-12.45pm Gary Mond, Chairman of the Advisory Board and James Marlow, CEO - National Jewish Assembly

### ORDERING YOUR LULAV & ETROG FOR SUCCOT

The price of a full Lulav and Etrog set is £40.00.

Please contact the Synagogue office no later than 3 October to place your order.

## HISTORY

# Stolpersteine – stumbling stones

Ruth Rothenberg recounts the laying of a new memorial in the Netherlands

How do you memorialise the catastrophes of the not-so-distant past? The Second World War was a major factor in the lives of people who were children then and grandparents today. I was a kid, with my London-born father in the British Army, and my personal memories are of playing with other children on the sites of blitzed buildings.

Yes, there are war memorials around the country but it is not the same as on the Continent. There we can look back on what has become history and commemorate it with *stolpersteine*, stumbling stones. These small brass blocks, measuring 10 cm square (4 inches), set into the pavement outside a building, are not there to trip you up, which they can't – and no local authority would allow that. They are there to focus your mind on what happened to the building's former residents, mainly Jews deported by the Nazis to concentration and death camps, but also Roma (gypsies) and disabled people. They were created by the German artist Gunter Demnig who said, 'You do not stumble and fall down. You stumble with head and heart.' The first one was placed in Cologne in 1992 and the project really took off. By the year 2000 there were reckoned to be nearly 40,000 in Germany and surrounding countries.

In June I went with my husband David to the Dutch university city of Leiden for the laying of one of these memorial stones in memory of his maternal grandmother, Kaethe Glaser, who died aged 53. She had left Germany for Holland with her family before the start of the war but while her daughter and son-in-law were granted entry to Britain with their baby daughter, she was still waiting for her permit



when Germany invaded Holland. Significantly, David was born on that day, 10 May 1940, in London. Three years later, Kaethe, his grandmother, was sent by train via the Westerbork transit camp to Auschwitz, where she was gassed to death on arrival on 19 November 1943. The *stolperstein*, which gives the place and date of her death, is set in the pavement outside her last home, 1 Mezenstraat.

We went round as a small group, invited by the Foundation for the Remembrance of the Persecution of Jews in Leiden, to attend the placing of six of these brass memorial blocks, with Kaddish recited at the end. Why only now, 30 years after the birth of this project? According to Rolf Osterloo, director of the Leiden University's Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, the country has been jolted by the current crisis in Ukraine where 'once again, horrors are taking place and people are oppressed.' He went on: 'What we have learned is that it is important to learn to talk about it, so that it does not repeat itself. So that people who live through terrible events learn to face them... That is why commemoration is important.'

## RESILIENCE

# Losing your home and so much of the Alweiss Archive ...

Rob Nothman meets one of our most resilient members

It started with a magnifying glass on a windowsill. It ended with a devastating fire which left Yvonne Alweiss homeless a week before the 89-year-old was due to celebrate the B'not Mitzvah of her twin granddaughters Maya and Zoe.



On the morning of 23 June, Yvonne – who is blind – was lying in bed, listening to the radio.

“I heard the alarm go off – a low sound like a car alarm,” she recalls in her calm, measured way. “My carer was in the kitchen making breakfast and it was only when she came upstairs that she saw smoke. She ran in shouting “Fire! Fire!” and pulled me out of bed. I just managed to get into my slippers, we went down the stairs and I grabbed an anorak from the coat stand. We went outside and saw smoke billowing from the top window on the first floor and soon bricks came falling down from the roof. The carer was in a panic, dancing around. I felt I had to comfort her and told her not to worry. I phoned my daughter Lilian, who lives in Dublin. She couldn't get a flight till half-past three that afternoon, but amazingly, she had the presence of mind to go to Marks and Spencer before she left and bought some clothes as I had nothing to wear.”

Six fire engines were called to the Golders Green house where Yvonne

had lived for 30 years, but 90% of her belongings, including many of the paintings by her late husband's father Alva, were destroyed. She spent the first few nights in a Travelodge in Enfield, then a hotel in Belsize Park, then a care home, and another house in Willesden before Lilian was able to find a bright, airy flat in Hampstead Garden Suburb. One of Alva's paintings hangs on the wall along with a framed photo of her father's four elder brothers.

When I ask how she has been able to cope with such upheaval, she replies: “I see life as transient. It's fate. I've been able to move on quickly with the help of my daughter. She's been fantastic and she's been buying all the things I need – new linen, duvets. To get a trousseau at the age of nearly 90 is quite something. Unreal!”

Born in Kassel in central Germany, Yvonne was only six when she fled to London with her parents three days before the start of the War.

“The biggest loss I feel is all the photographs. I only got to know the history of my family – some of whom perished in the Holocaust – by looking at photos. As for my mother, I think you reach an age when you know you'll be passing on your possessions already, so the loss in that sense is more for me and my sister than my mother,” comments daughter Lilian.

Yvonne nods but adds: “You have to take life in your stride. Think of the future rather than the past and try not to cry over spilt milk. In the old house I knew where everything was – here I know nothing. I feel a bit lost, so I will have to learn.”

## HELPING REFUGEES

**Kimiyya – mentoring for refugees**

Belsize members Eytan and Danna Heller run a charitable mentorship programme that helps refugees integrate professionally in their chosen world of work in their adopted countries. It runs in both the UK and Germany. ‘Kimiyya’ is the Arabic for chemistry, because that is vital for successful connections.

In March this year, Eytan travelled to the Poland-Ukraine border to witness what was happening on the ground and to see how their charity Kimiyya might be able to help. For refugees, as many in our own congregation know from our family histories, crossing borders and making it to safety is only the first challenge. Even once settled in a new country, there is still the need to navigate the job market, with no connections, while still processing the trauma of leaving home. The Red Cross refer refugees and asylum seekers to Kimiyya, who pair them with established local professionals to help forge these vital connections that can lead to pathways into work.



Kimiyya want to extend their mentoring programme to help the new Ukrainian refugees. If readers are interested in assisting, Kimiyya would be glad of volunteers to help with the matching efforts for around 10 hours per week. They are also looking for more professional mentors for refugees, able to offer two hours per week online for eight weeks. Please contact [info@kimiyya.org](mailto:info@kimiyya.org) for more information.

### OUR ANNUAL SELICHOT EVENING INTRODUCING THE HIGH HOLYDAYS SEASON

Saturday 17 September from 7.45pm

8.00pm Havdalah followed by Fish & Chip Supper

9.00pm A Shiur led by Rabbi Botnick

10.00pm Choral Selichot Service

## REMEMBERING

**RON RAPPOPORT**

Sue Mariner



It was with sadness that we learned of the death of Ron Rappoport z"l, choirmaster and sometime organist of the Synagogue for 14 years. He joined our musical team in 1992 after David Lawrence, who had conducted the choir for 10 years, relinquished that position.

Born in South Africa, Ron grew up in a congregation with a strong Lewandowski tradition and so he easily maintained our Belsize heritage. A fluent Hebrew speaker and a composer, he had a rich experience in conducting symphony concerts, oratorios and operas. In 1988, he was appointed Conductor and Musical Director of the London Jewish Male Choir.

He was a graduate of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and established the North London Philharmonia Orchestra explaining, ‘The orchestra has three main aims: to provide high-standard professional symphony concerts in north London, to raise money for worthwhile causes, and to create a platform for unknown professional soloists of distinction to perform in public.’ A kind, generous and humble man, he achieved all these aspirations.

He was a polymath, interested and knowledgeable in arts, literature and of course, music in all its expressions. He had a thirst and curiosity for learning new things and was an eternal student. Learning Arabic didn't faze him!

Life with Ron in the choir loft was never dull! He was an enthusiast, ebullient and energetic. He always arrived very early for services and had a habit of writing notes on the scores for each singer. The notes would change week by week and it was a contributory factor to our lovely Henry Kuttner z"l to embarking on our Sibelius music score software project so that we could always reprint a piece of music if it got tatty. Office staff will remember that he seemed to have a ‘love affair’ with the photocopy machine. Is that a trait of all contemporary Music Directors?

Ron conducted the choir on the first CD recording of our High Holydays music in 1997 and collaborated with Rev Larry Fine, occasionally playing the organ at services.

We are grateful for his loyal and valued service to us. May his music linger on in the memories of his wife Andrea, children Jason and Abigail and their children, as well as members of BSS whose lives he touched and enriched.



Enabling Holocaust survivors and refugees to live in dignity and comfort in their own homes.



Contact us for more information

[enquiries@ajr.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ajr.org.uk) · [www.ajr.org.uk](http://www.ajr.org.uk) · 020 8385 3070

[Association of Jewish Refugees](https://www.facebook.com/AssociationofJewishRefugees) [@TheAJR](https://twitter.com/TheAJR)

If you need guidance, help or support please contact the Jewish Care Direct helpline on 020 8922 2222 or visit [jewishcare.org](http://jewishcare.org)

JEWISH CARE

Charity Reg No. 802559

## NEWS FROM ABERNEIN MANSIONS NW.3.

Dear Fellow Members

So autumn comes, und with it the High Hollydays. First always is Roshoshono und won weak later Yom Kipper. I have never understood why Yom Kipper is not the third day of Roshoshono. To me it would make more sense to rub the slate clear as the New Year brakes.

At this time, my mind always goes backwards to when we were in the cinema business for the "Days of Or" services. First they were holded at the no longer Odeon Haverstock Hill und then at the Odeon Swiss Cottage. What always sticks to my mind is that in these places several of our long-standing members remained long-standing threw out the hole day of Yom Kipper. This we don't see anymore.

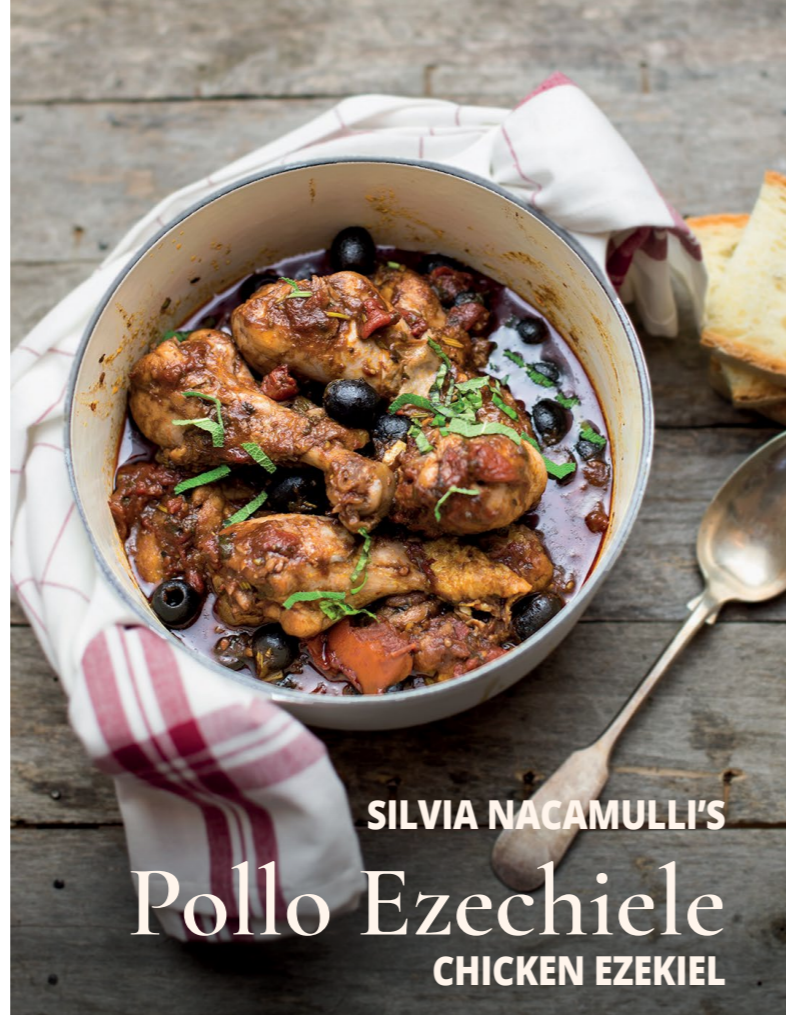
Und vile I mention standing, Mrs Klopstick has started a Pilatus class here in the Mansions. Befour her classes she begins each day with sit ups, press ups, bent overs und stand ups. She is trying to per suede me to join her. But I am too busy with my button collection und for me, getting up from my share und staying uprite for a phew minutes are now too of my most strenuous exercises.

But back with the High Hollydays, I come to a very contagious matter, that from my tallis. A phew years ago Mrs Klopstick bought me a new won, because my old won was more like a scarve, witch she said is two old fashioned. The new won is more like a showl. I have never bean comfortable with it, as it keeps slipping away from my soldiers und I am consistently throwing it back onto me. I see the same things with other members und especially with sum warders on the bimah. Why is not the tallis made more like a Mexican pancho, so you can put your head threw it und this way it will never fall down? It could even have sleeve holes for extra security. I think I might patent this, oder bring it on too the Drekon Dan.

With the best of intentions  
Fritz Klopstick

### ASK FRITZ

I have received a letter from a lady who rites that she has been inwited to a bar mitzvah. It is the first won she has been too in decays. She asks what today wood be an appropriate present. She is very limited in funts. In my day, the most popular gift was a travel alarm clock oder a wallet. Our son Melvyn got four travel alarm clocks und three wallets. Today they all want money und in big sumps. To this lady I recommend that she could offer the bar mitzvah boy the opportunity for millions by buying him won oder too lottery tickets.



## SILVIA NACAMULLI'S Pollo Ezechiele CHICKEN EZEKIEL

The name of the prophet Ezekiel in the title of this dish gives away its likely Jewish origins. I have cooked this chicken endless times using fresh herbs from my garden, and I hope it becomes a classic in your repertoire, too – it is so tasty and so simple to make! I suggest using chicken on the bone here, but if you prefer it off the bone, I would go for boneless thighs as they are juicier and more tender than chicken breasts. Boneless thighs take 10–15 minutes less cooking time than that given below. The dish can easily be prepared ahead of time and reheated in the same pan. or transferred to the oven. Once cooked, it also keeps well in the fridge for a few days, and freezes well.

**Preparation: 10 minutes**

**Cooking: 1 hour**

**Serves: 4**

### INGREDIENTS

- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 4 chicken legs or a mix of 8 drumsticks and thighs, skin on and excess skin trimmed
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 tablespoons good-quality pitted black olives, such as taggiasca or kalamata
- 1 bay leaf
- 2–3 sprigs of fresh rosemary
- 5–6 fresh sage leaves, plus optional extra, chopped to serve
- 400g tin peeled plum tomatoes
- 100ml red wine
- 5–6 fresh basil leaves, plus optional extra to serve
- sea salt and black pepper



### FAMILY FOOD

# Jewish Flavours of Italy

Silvia Nacamulli is a popular contributor of recipes to the Jewish Chronicle and an expert in Italian-Jewish cuisine. She has a new book on the subject out this month. Here she shares a simple but delicious recipe from it and answers our questions.

### What do you consider the quintessential Jewish flavours of Italy?

Jews have been living in Italy for over 2000 years, the flavours of Italian Jewish cuisine are therefore quintessentially Italian, both in the ingredients used and in the cooking methods. Italian Jews change traditional dishes, where necessary, to conform to kosher rules creating new ones along the way e.g. lasagne with cheese or vegetables instead of the traditional Italian meat-dairy combination. Waves of Jewish immigrants throughout the centuries, such as from Spain and Portugal with the Spanish Inquisition, Ashkenazi Jews from Central Europe during the Black Death and, more recently, Jews from Libya after their expulsion in 1967, brought their own traditions and influenced the already rich culinary repertoire. The addition of pine nuts and raisins in savoury dishes such as spinach or pasta, or the use of sweet and sour flavours are Sephardi influences that have become a staple of Jewish-Italian cookery.

### What is the one standard recipe that most British cooks could improve by doing it the Italian way?

Cooking pasta properly! You need lots of boiling water and you need plenty of salt, about 1 tablespoon of rock salt in roughly 4 litres of water. The salt here is a means to an end, you won't eat it all, but is essential to flavour the pasta. In theory this is a simple concept, but I've found

it is one of the hardest things to get across to my students in all my years of teaching. You need plenty of salt in pasta cooking water or it will taste bland, trust me!

### Which dishes stand out in your memory from your childhood?

My Nonna Bianca's gnocchi and her 'melanzane alla parmigiana' (aubergines with parmesan) or her lemon sponge. My mum's ossobuco which she used to make for my birthday, her 'concia di zucchine' (Roman Jewish fried marinated courgettes), her 'carciofi alla giudia' (artichokes Jewish-style), her 'stracotto' (beef stew with tomato and red wine) and quite a few more dishes actually! All are still part of my cooking repertoire today.

### And which dishes do you think your daughters will most associate with their childhood?

I'd like to think that they will associate my cooking with good Italian home-cooking, they are my best guinea pigs and they really appreciate my food, which is the best feeling. My daughter Bianca loves everything to do with aubergines, so my melanzane alla parmigiana, roasted antipasti and pasta alla norma. Thea loves soups, so my 'pasta e fagioli', minestrone and fish soup. They both adore artichokes (which I am so happy about as they are somehow the emblem of Roman Jewish cuisine, especially 'alla giudia' which is deep fried) and my Torta Susanna, rich chocolate cake with chocolate sauce.

## SERVICES

**Friday evenings** at 6.45pm  
**Saturday mornings** at 10.00am

## CHEDER AND BEIT MITZVAH

Sunday mornings 9.30am–12.30pm  
Enquiries to Head: Caroline Loison  
caroline@synagogue.org.uk

Cheder/Beit Mitzvah starts again on 11 September,  
with no sessions on 25 September, 23 & 30 October.  
Kikar Kids is on 3 September & 1 October

## HIGH HOLYDAYS 5783 / 2022

### High Holydays and Yomim Tovim Services

#### ROSH HASHANAH

##### 1st Eve

Sunday 25 September  
Service at 6.45pm

##### 1st Day

Monday 26  
September  
Service at 9.30am

##### 2nd Eve

Monday 26 September  
Service at 6.45pm

##### 2nd Day

Tuesday 27 September  
Service at 9.30am

#### KOL NIDREI

Tuesday 4 October  
Service at 7.00pm (Fast  
commences at 6.17pm)

#### YOM KIPPUR

Wednesday 5 October  
Service at 9.30am (Fast  
ends at 7.19pm)

The Synagogue Office  
will be open for the  
collection of High Holyday  
Prayer Books on Sunday  
25 September between  
10.00am – 12.00pm

## TASHLICH

### Brent Park NW4

#### Sunday 2 October 4.30pm

Meet opposite the children's playground.  
If lost, phone 07949 078366.

Bring breadcrumbs!

*'God will cover up our iniquities, You will cast  
all our sins into the depths of the sea' (Micah 7:19)*

## SYNAGOGUE HELP LINES

### BELSIZE SQUARE SYNAGOGUE

51 Belsize Square,  
London NW3 4HX

020 7794 3949  
office@synagogue.org.uk  
www.synagogue.org.uk

### SYNAGOGUE OFFICE HOURS

Mon–Thu: 9.00am–5.30pm  
Friday: 9.00am–2.00pm

### The office will be closed from 12.00pm on:

Sun 25 Sep – Tue 27 Sep  
Tue 4 Oct – Wed 5 October  
Sun 9 Oct – Tue 11 Oct  
Sun 16 Oct – Tue 18 Oct

### RABBI

Rabbi Gabriel Botnick  
rabbibotnick@  
synagogue.org.uk

To book an in-person,  
video or telephone  
appointment with Rabbi  
Botnick, please email  
office@synagogue.org.uk

### CANTOR

Dr Paul Heller  
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07949 078366

### RABBI EMERITUS

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Cantor Dr Paul Heller

### FUNERALS

During Synagogue office  
hours phone Synagogue

Evenings/weekends phone  
Calo's (Undertakers)  
020 8958 2112

### OUR CONGREGATION

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the Synagogue office

# Shana Tova

*The Rabbi, Cantor, Emeritus  
Rabbi and their families,  
Honorary Officers, Members  
of the Board and Staff  
extend their best wishes  
to all our members for a  
healthy and peaceful  
New Year.*