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Hannukiah crafted by Rabbi Leib Falk (Great Synagogue)

EDITOR'S NOTE

Roughly two months ago I put fingers to the keyboard and wrote a few lines at the occasion of our very own New Year, the *Rosh Hashana* of our faith, when we all take stock of our Jewish souls. It has a great meaning to all of us. However, at this point in time we are now coming to the end of the other year, the *shana loisit*, to which we subscribe as well. A few thoughts are called for.

A common feature of most, possibly all books that describe the history of our ancestors, in particular the history we have been burdened with as a result of the Second World War, begin on the first page with a dedication to those who were loved, to those who did not live to be able to love us because it was not to be. Or to those who did survive and fought their way through to a very different world and made their mark

on our lives. The changes that our parents and ourselves witnessed throughout the years that elapsed since the end of the war are beyond the imagination of the younger, happy-go-lucky generations. But for us, Jewish people, there is one thing that did not change: we remain a minority that is targeted - precisely because we are Jews. Only too often our wishes for a long life, our '*zichronam l'bracha*' do not follow the natural passing of the flow of life but its cutting down by a fanatical enemy who subscribes to the same hatred and determination to eliminate us as that of their predecessors in Europe in the last century and centuries that preceded it. This reality was once more brought forward with the recent slaying of the young Rabbi and his wife in Mumbai. To the outside world, desensitised towards Jewish casualties, it was another run off the mill death to which few gave only scant attention. To us it was another reminder of our plight, that of victims of perpetual antisemitism.

As the current *shana loisit* is running out of time and we are anticipating a new one, we should gather strength and hope that 2009 will have some good news in store for us. Let us not expect too much, just a sign that things might improve, that one day we might look back at the passing of another *shana*, albeit *loisit*, and say '*zichrona l'bracha*' because we want to be able to remember it for some good that it brought into our lives.

So let us say to ourselves and to those around us – we wish for strength, courage and peace. Nothing else really matters.

Award to Associate Professor Suzanne Rutland

'Bob Hawke and Malcolm Fraser: Australian Prime Ministers and the Campaign for Soviet Jewry'

Associate Professor Suzanne Rutland has been awarded a grant from the Australian Prime Ministers Centre for her present project on Australia and the campaign for Soviet Jewry. Whilst Israel and the larger Jewish communities in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and France were the major players in the struggle for Soviet Jewry, the significance of Australia and its Jewish community was out of proportion with its small numbers. One reason for the effectiveness of Australia's contribution was the key role played by two Australian Prime Ministers: Robert (Bob) J. Hawke and Malcolm Fraser.

A/Prof Rutland's project will focus on the actions of Fraser and Hawke in regard to this issue. The grant covers the period from December 2008 until 30 June next 2009 and includes a trip to Israel to work in the archives of Mr Isi Leibler, and two weeks research in the National Archives of Australia in Canberra in February.

We congratulate her on this achievement.

**THE SHALOM INSTITUTE:
Scholars - in - Residence 2009
A fabulous array of world-class scholars and experts in their
fields**

• Professor Steven Katz is Director of the Elie Wiesel Center for Judaic Studies at Boston University. He has held many important academic posts, including Visiting Scholar at Harvard University. He was Chair of the Academic Committee of the US Holocaust Museum and is a representative to the EU-sponsored International Task Force on the Holocaust. His publications include *Jewish Philosophers* (1975); *Jewish Ideas and Concepts* (1977); *Historicism, the Holocaust and Zionism* (1992); a multi-volume study on the Holocaust, deemed “the outstanding book in philosophy and theology”; and *Wrestling with God: Jewish Theological Responses During and After the Holocaust* (2007). He has also written on Mysticism. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Jewish Research and the Academy of Jewish Philosophy.

Evening classes at ECLC, Shalom College Wednesday 4, 11, Monday 16, 23

March

Day classes at Academy-BJE Tuesday 3, Monday 9, Tuesday 17, Tuesday 24

March

Evening classes at Chatswood Tuesday 3, 10, 17, 24 March

• Professor Colin Tatz AO, a Natal University and Australian National University graduate, has been Professor of Politics at the University of New England, Armidale, and at Macquarie University, Sydney.

He is currently Visiting Fellow in the Social Sciences at the Australian National University and at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, and a director of the Australian Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the Shalom Institute. He has authored several major books and articles, as well as contributing chapters to books, on race politics, genocide, the Holocaust and antisemitism, and racism in sport. His book *With Intent to Destroy: Reflecting on Genocide* (2003) was particularly highly-regarded.

Evening classes at ECLC, Shalom College Wednesday 10, 17, 24 June, 1 July
+ seminar TBC

- Dr Yael Avrahami hails from Haifa, Israel. She holds an MA in comparative religion from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and recently completed her PhD in Biblical Studies for the University of Haifa. Yael has worked as a tour guide and educator for various organizations including Birthright, The Jewish Agency, and the Department for Overseas Students at the University of Haifa and the Organisation for Nature Preservation in Israel. Yael's research focuses on understanding the cultural and social world of the Israelites and their roots in the Ancient Near East. Yael is currently teaching at the University of Sydney and will conduct her course with colleagues in the field of archaeology.

Day classes at Academy-BJE Tuesday 9, 16, 23, 30 June 21, 28 July, and 4
Professor Rachel Elijor was born in Jerusalem and earned her BA and PhD Summa cum Laude at the Hebrew University, where she has taught since 1978. She is Professor of Jewish Philosophy and Jewish Mystical Thought, and Head of the Department of Jewish Thought. Elijor has taught at prestigious universities around the world, including Princeton, Tokyo University, Yeshiva University and the University of Michigan, and is a senior research fellow at Van Leer institute in Jerusalem. She has twice been scholar-in-residence at The Shalom Institute. Her research interests are focused on the history of Jewish Mysticism and Kabbalah, early Jewish Mysticism, Sabbatianism, Hasidism and Frankism in the modern era, and the presence and absence of women in Jewish intellectual history. She has written 13 books and edited 7 others.

Evening classes at ECLC, Shalom College Monday 11, 18, 25 May, 1 June.
Evening classes at Chatswood Tuesday 12, 19, 26 May, 2 June.
Day classes at Academy-BJE Tuesday 12, 19, 26 May, 2 June

August

- Dr Paul O'Shea is an outstanding educator who teaches at St Patrick's College, Strathfield. His experience in inter-faith dialogue and his chutzpah to teach Shoah to and with Jews makes for stimulating and challenging learning. Paul has degrees in theology, education and history. His PhD was on Pius XII and his responsibility for Catholic responses during the Holocaust.

Evening classes at ECLC, Shalom College Monday 15, 22, 29 June, 20, 27
July, 3 August

• Joanne Fedler is a full-time mother and writer, former law lecturer and advocate for women's rights. She is the author of six books, including *Secret Mothers' Business* (2006) and *Dreamcloth* (2005), and is the co-founder of Moonstone Media. She grew up in Johannesburg and now lives with her husband and two children in Sydney. Her latest novel *Things Without a Name* was published in June 2008.

Evening classes at ECLC, Shalom College Monday 10, 17, 24, 31 August, 7 September

Day classes at Academy-BJE Tuesday 11, 18, 25 August, 1, 8 September

• Dr Leanne Piggott is the Deputy Director of the Centre for International Security Studies, and a specialist on the Middle East, with a particular interest in governance reform and security in the region. She has authored books on the Arab-Israeli conflict, Australian-Israeli relations and is a regular media commentator on Middle East politics and security. Leanne is also a member of the Australian Government's Foreign Affairs Council and the Editorial Advisory Board of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Evening classes at ECLC, Shalom College Monday 12, 19, 26 October, 2 November

Day classes at Academy-BJE Tuesday 13, 20, 27 October, 3 November

Evening classes at Chatswood Tuesday 13, 20, 27 October, 3 November

• Dr Zohar Raviv received his Ph.D from the University of Michigan in Jewish Thought and Mysticism. He completed his MA at Brandeis University and BA at Bar Ilan University. He has Diplomas in Youth Work from the Israel Ministry of Education, and in Experiential Education from Melitz Institute of Jewish and Zionist Education. Zohar is fluent in English, Modern and Biblical Hebrew, Biblical and Talmudic Aramaic; he speaks some Arabic and Persian and has scholarly reading knowledge of French. A master teacher, Zohar has committed himself to the world of education in the US and Israel. His popularity as one of the educators for the Melton Israel Seminar has led to invitations around the world, including in Melbourne for Melton's 10th anniversary celebrations, and in Sydney at The Shalom Institute in 2007.

Evening classes at ECLC, Shalom College Monday 9, 16, 23, 30 November

Day classes at Academy-BJE Tuesday 10, 17, 24 November, 1 December

Evening classes at Chatswood Tuesday 10, 17, 24 November, 1 December

Peta Jones Pellach is Director of Adult Education at The Shalom Institute. She will offer her weekly study of the Torah reading, exploring the text for contemporary meaning, using the interactive methodology of Nehama Leibowitz.

Morning classes at ECLC, Shalom College Every Monday 10-11.30am

AAJS 39 PORTRAIT:

PAUL FORGASZ — CENTRE FOR JEWISH CIVILISATION, MONASH UNIVERSITY

Paul lectures at Monash University in two areas: he teaches Jewish history at the Centre for Jewish Civilisation and he lectures on educational leadership at the Faculty of Education.

During his recent stay in Sydney, Paul ran a course on Texts and Contexts at the Shalom Institute and at North Shore Temple Emanuel. This course focused on examining the current academic debate about the Bible as a source of history, on unravelling the puzzle of who wrote the Bible, on reading the story of creation through a number of different lenses and exploring how the rabbis did a “midrashic job” on the Bible.

The second course, “Unscrolling the Scrolls” was held at the BJE Academy at Bondi. It explored the distinctive message of each of the five Scrolls (*Megillot*) of the Hebrew Bible and their significance in Jewish history and religious life.

Moreover Paul delivered the key note lecture at North Shore Temple Emanuel as part of the opening night of a four-week adult education program. Being closely involved with the Melton program in Melbourne, he also participated in a meeting held in Sydney to discuss more effective ways of marketing the Melton program to the wider community.

His teaching experience in the area of educational leadership is important for the running of a professional development session with the staff at the Shalom Institute on how to develop a well balanced team.

• DR Yael AVRAHAMI — DEPARTMENT OF HEBREW, BIBLICAL & JEWISH STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Dr. Yael Avrahami is currently the coordinator for biblical studies at the University of Sydney. She recently participated in the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) that took place in Boston. The SBL is the leading international scholarly membership organization in the field of biblical studies and its annual meeting attracts approximately 5000 scholars from all around the globe. In the meeting, Yael had the opportunity to attend various sessions, and hear intriguing papers. Some were theoretical and others more practical (such as methods in teaching classical Hebrew). She also had an opportunity to read my own paper, in the session named History and Literature of the Persian Period. Her topic was: "Who is left among you who saw this House in its former glory?" (Haggai 2:3) — An adaptation of Deuteronomistic pattern to Persian period sensibilities. The book of Haggai is one of the ‘minor prophets’, also known as ‘the twelve’. It deals with the rebuilding of the Temple after the return from the Babylonian exile (c. 520 BCE). High hopes and expectations were replaced by disappointment and dismay

in the early days of the Persian Empire, when the returnees faced economical stipulations resulting in a theological crisis. Haggai was convinced that rebuilding the Temple would solve both, as it would provide the Lord with a dwelling place, his presence would be manifested within the people and they would enjoy an economical bloom.

With this paper Yael was able to demonstrate how Haggai, in his second address to the people (Haggai 1:15-2:9) drew on older traditions in order to evoke a variety of emotions amongst the people and in order to motivate them towards the rebuilding of the temple. In particular, the oracle was structured as a parallel (and at times as a contrast) to the narrative of the dedication of Solomon's temple (1Kings 8:1-11). Haggai used a well known text which described a glorified and in many ways idealized past: united nation, divine presence, covenant, prosperity. It was a narrative that probably had served as one of the building blocks of the hope for the restoration with the return from exile and the rebuilding of the temple. Haggai used it to build an ideal future, where divine presence, riches and national independence will be restored, and he urged the people not to be afraid of that day, when it would all happen.

JEWISH STUDIES FORUM FOR AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

Convenor: SUZANNE FAIGAN

A Jewish Studies Forum for Australian and New Zealand scholars was held at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, on 13-14 July 2008. The event was intended to provide an intimate opportunity for participants to learn about the research currently being undertaken on Jewish Studies topics in New Zealand and Australia, and to meet and discuss common issues with their fellow researchers in our two countries. The schedule included twenty-one academic papers on a wide range of topics, a panel discussion between four panelists on Holocaust education in secondary schools and universities, and facilitated discussions on contemporary antisemitism and on the state of Jewish Studies in Australia and New Zealand. Breaks for kosher lunches and refreshments, and a convivial conference dinner, provided further discussion time.

This enjoyable event was generously sponsored by the Raye Freedman Trust. Mandelbaum Publishing (Mandelbaum House, University of Sydney) are currently in discussion about the format of the published proceedings. Scholars in New Zealand and Australia who did not attend the Forum itself are also welcome to submit a recent paper. If you would like to submit a paper or to be kept up-to-date with plans relating to the Jewish Studies Forum, or for any other information including a copy of the conference schedule, please write to suzanne.faigan@anu.edu.au.

21st Annual Conference of the Australian Association of Jewish Studies (15-16 February 2009) at Shalom College, University of NSW

Thinking Jewish – Jewish Thinking

Presenters from Australia and round the world will be assembling to present papers from a variety of disciplines. Dr Rachel Kohn, who broadcasts on “The Spirit of Things” with ABC Radio National will be the keynote speaker with a talk entitled: “Is There a Uniquely Jewish Way of Thinking?”



Speakers include Professor Pao-Hsiang Wang, from Taiwan University, who specialises in Dramatic Arts with research interests in Jewish studies and Dr Yael Avrahami, currently teaching at Sydney University who will speak on “*Names in the Bible as a Clue to Jewish Identity.*” Professor Seth Kunin from Durham University, a social anthropologist who has written extensively on biblical and Jewish subjects will present a paper entitled: *Challenging Normativity: Identity Juggling Among the Crypto-Jews of New Mexico.* Professor Bill Rubinstein, one of the founding members of the Association is coming from Wales to speak on “*The Jewish Mind*”: *Contrasts and Decline.* In addition, Rabbi Raymond Apple, now resident in Israel will speak on “*What did Maimonides Omit from his 13 Principles?*” Professor Hans Lausch, Emeritus Professor of Mathematics at Monash University will follow with: *Moses Mendelssohn – Mathematics during the Early Haskala.* **THE CONFERENCE PROMISES TO BE A REWARDING EXPERIENCE.**

A draft of the programme is available on the website at: <<http://www.geocities.com/aaajssite>> with details of registration.



REMINDER

Have you paid your membership subscription for 2008 or even 2007? Now it is time to pay for 2009. If in arrears we would be grateful for back fees, as our Association relies almost exclusively for funds on members' support. We have raised the fees for 2009 to reflect rising costs.

2009 \$60 AU regular membership

\$80 AU institutional

\$70 AU overseas

\$25 AU full-time student/pensioner

Send fees to: **Dr Marianne Dacy:**

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See us at: www.geocities.com/aajsite/ and

<http://judaica.library.usyd.edu.au/AAJS.html>

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Newsletter edited by Anna Rosenbaum and Marianne Dacy

Hag Sameah for Hannukah 5769 !

