



Outreach

INTERIM UPDATE

AUGUST 2001- AV/ELUL 5761

NJOP BEATS THE PERSONALS

The endless search for a "nice Jewish guy or nice Jewish girl" is one of the major challenges confronting the singles of the Jewish community today. In an effort to meet this challenge, Sam Domb and the National Jewish Outreach Program hosted a special, by-invitation-only, sold-out Shabbat dinner for singles on May 18, 2001.

As the guests entered the social hall of Congregation Ohav Sholom on Manhattan's Upper West Side, that was strikingly transformed into an elegant dining room, they were asked to draw a table assignment from the appropriate male or female basket. The lottery-style seating system served multiple goals according to NJOP's Director of Development and Special Events, Amy Vogel. "Selecting a table number out of a basket alleviates much of the stress of finding a seat. At the same time, NJOP was able create a balance in the number of men and women at each table."



Adena Samowitz

In the New York singles' scene, it is a constant challenge to meet new people, rather than simply coming to programs and socializing with old friends. NJOP therefore created a comfortable, warm, slightly romantic yet spiritual setting, in which the 85 invited dinner guests could relax and get to know one another.

Chairperson of the evening, Adena Samowitz, Vice President of Rockwell Abstract, set the tone, welcoming the guests and speaking about the singles' life in New York, where events are constantly being planned to meet the needs of Jewish singles. She emphasized, however, that making the most of these opportunities is up to each individual.

Knowing what you are looking for is another great challenge for singles. Short, tall, funny, serious, passionate or shy...with every unsuccessful date, the ideal characteristics change. Expatiating on the theme of the search for the perfect spouse, Rabbi Buchwald read aloud a selection of humorous "personals" that he had unearthed on the internet:

Agnostic, dyslexic insomniac male, seeks similar female to stay up all night to discuss whether or not there really is a DOG. POB 83

Worried about in-law meddling? I'm an orphan! Write POB 74

On a more serious note, however, Rabbi Buchwald shared a list of the ideal spouse character traits that he had assembled from listening to singles who come to him for help. Offering sound advice to the singles gathered before him, he suggested: "Make (*continued on page 3*)

INSIDE:

Prime Minister Sharon
Validates NJOP's Crucial
Work. 2

A Good Morning America
Appearance. 2

Yeshiva University Honors
Rabbi Buchwald and the
Outreach of NJOP. 3

A Thought on Elul. 4

NJOP Calendar. 4

P. M. SHARON DECLARES HEIGHTENED JEWISH IDENTITY CRUCIAL FOR ISRAEL

In an unprecedented endorsement of the work of the National Jewish Outreach Program, the Prime Minister of Israel, Ariel Sharon, startled a large group of friends and admirers when he told them that the most important thing that the Jews outside of Israel can do to support the State of Israel is to remain Jewish and become more Jewishly committed. The special June 24th gathering, hosted by Mr. Sam Domb and Mr. Jack Avital at New York City's Harmonie Club, was an opportunity for Mr. Domb to bring together his close personal friend, Prime Minister Sharon, and the much admired spiritual leader, Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald, Founder and Director of NJOP.

Mr. Sharon called the efforts of NJOP to keep America's Jews Jewish "crucial," and urged every Jew in America to learn the Hebrew language and to study the Bible. "You know that I am not personally very observant," said the Prime Minister. "Most of you in this room are far more observant than I, but the need to maintain one's Jewish identity, especially outside of Israel, is crucial. The work that NJOP and Rabbi Buchwald are doing must be furthered and supported."

While many Jewish leaders have called on Diaspora Jews to financially support the State of Israel, this was undoubtedly the first time that an Israeli Prime Minister has spoken so forcefully about the central role that a strong Jewish identity plays in Diaspora Jewry's commitment to the State of Israel. The goal of strengthening Israel through educating the Jewish people has always been one of Mr. Domb's primary beliefs, and hearing Prime Minister Sharon confirm that belief with his ringing endorsement of NJOP gave Mr. Domb great pleasure and served as a vindication of his indefatigable support for NJOP.

On behalf of Mr. Domb, Mr. Avital and NJOP, Rabbi Buchwald and Jack Avital presented the Prime Minister with a silver menorah inscribed with a prayerful verse, "And You [G-d] shall give peace to the land, and to all its inhabitants." The Prime Minister graciously thanked them for the gift and promised to display the menorah prominently in his office.



Jack Avital and Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald present Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon with a silver Menorah.



A GOOD MORNING AMERICA APPEARANCE

Through his work at the National Jewish Outreach Program and Lincoln Square Synagogue, Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald knows a lot about leading people into spirituality. His Beginners Service at Lincoln Square Synagogue, which he has been running for over a quarter of a century, has led hundreds of Jews into learning about their spiritual heritage...and the Service still draws crowds. As a guest panelist on ABC's Good Morning America program, however, Rabbi Buchwald was asked about the spiritual future of an often ignored portion of the population – children.

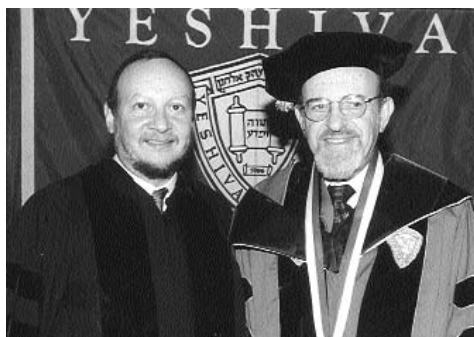


On the Set of Good Morning America

On Friday morning, June 15, 2001, Rabbi Buchwald joined Rosemary Bray McNatt (a Unitarian Universalist minister), Gerald Fitzsimmons (a Catholic priest), and Acharya Judy Lief (a Buddhist teacher) for a panel discussion led by GMA's parenting contributor Ann Pleshette Murphy. The topic of the program "How to Raise Spiritual Children," was focused specifically on how parents can answer their children's many questions without confusing or scaring them.

The diverse panel agreed, on the whole, that parents should be open and honest when faced with their children's questions. Quoting the old Yiddish expression, "You don't die from questions," Rabbi Buchwald said that questions should be seen as an opportunity for parents to foster their children's growth as well as their own. When asked how parents should handle questions about death, Rabbi Buchwald expressed the belief that parents should let children find out about death and guide them to understand that every breath they take is a beautiful.

THE NATIONAL JEWISH OUTREACH PROGRAM'S HONORED DOCTOR



Rabbi Dr. Buchwald and Dr. Lamm

In an unparalleled affirmation of the critical importance of the battle against Jewish assimilation, Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald, received one of four honorary doctoral degrees conferred at Yeshiva University's 70th commencement exercises. He was joined in this honor by former United States Ambassador to the U.N., Richard Holbrooke, Rabbanit Chana Henkin of Nishmat, and Mr. Eli Zborowski, chairman of Yad Vashem.

"As the Founder and Director of the National Jewish Outreach Program, [Rabbi Buchwald] has gone beyond all previous and conventional attempts to draw Jews in North America closer to their faith," Dr. Norman Lamm, President of Yeshiva University (YU), noted in his

presentation. "Under [his] skillful leadership, this innovative and vibrant organization has systematically and creatively developed and carried out many of the most dramatic and effective educational programs for unaffiliated and marginally affiliated Jews."

Among the youngest rabbis ever to be thus honored, Rabbi Buchwald readily acknowledges the major role YU played in nurturing him as a young outreach activist. As a college student, he was recruited by Yeshiva's Division of Communal Services to be an advisor at the YU sponsored Torah Leadership Seminars, a program to reach out to non-observant high school students. "The seminars were truly impactful on Jewish teenagers," recalls Rabbi Buchwald. "They changed many lives, including mine." Rabbi Buchwald went on to become Head Advisor of the seminars, and worked to establish "Yeshiva" Seminars, a parallel program started in 1972 to reach-out to yeshiva high school students. In 1974-75, Rabbi Buchwald served on the staffs of the first Yeshiva co-sponsored Counterpoint outreach programs to Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. He also worked on college campus outreach in the Yeshiva sponsored Dirshu program, and taught Jewish studies in the Erna Michael College of YU.

An alumnus of The Marsha Stern Talmudical Academy (YU High School for Boys), Yeshiva College, Ferkauf Graduate School of Psychology and the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, Rabbi Buchwald has a long, distinguished relationship with YU. The Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters recognizes this life-long affiliation, honors Rabbi Buchwald for his pioneering efforts and unprecedented accomplishments in the field of Jewish outreach, and confirms the pre-eminent importance of outreach in the Jewish community.



NJOP SINGLES *cont...*

(continued from page 1)...a list of the top ten characteristics that you feel are most important. If you meet someone who has 6 or 7 of those -- grab 'em!"

NJOP's sponsorship of a special singles' evening came at the suggestion of Mr. Sam Domb, who greeted the gathered singles. He could not help but smile at the potential in the room for *s'machot* (joyful occasions). To realize this potential, Mr. Domb reminded everyone that more than a desire, more than a dream, it is a sacred obligation for each and every Jewish person to marry, and that there is no better place to begin the search for a mate than with NJOP.



Mr. Sam Domb

While the formal program concluded with a beautiful buffet of desserts, the evening continued on as guests mixed, mingled and hopefully met their future life-partners. Unlike Cinderella, even midnight could not clear the Ohav Sholom social hall. Whether matches result from the event or not, NJOP's first Singles' Shabbat Dinner was an unqualified success, one which NJOP looks forward to repeating in the future, and to encouraging other communities to replicate.

ELUL ALARM

Starting on the morning of August 20, 2001, corresponding to the first day of Elul, the shofar will be sounded for the first time since last Yom Kippur. The sounding of the shofar serves as a spiritual alarm clock, reminding us that Rosh Hashana, the Day of Judgement, is just a few short weeks away.

The Jewish New Year is a time for renewal, a time when every Jew, indeed every individual, has the opportunity for a new beginning, a fresh start. According to Jewish tradition, wiping the slate clean often requires a combination of *teshuva*, *tefillah*, and *tzedakah* -- repentance, prayer and charity.

The *teshuva* process requires that we repent not only for our private sins, but also for those of our actions which may have hurt other people. Above all else, G-d desires peace among people. Consequently, the unity of the Jewish people can be accomplished only through healthy individual relationships. During this spiritually charged time of the year, we Jews also pray that G-d will forgive not only ourselves, but all of Israel -- again focusing on the fact that our positive connection to G-d can only be achieved when we, *Am Yisroel*, the Nation of Israel, are one people. To this end, this time of year is also a time when we increase our giving of more charity, demonstrating that we can and do care about all our fellow Jews, especially those who may not have the gifts with which we have been blessed.

As the shofar sounds each Elul morning, NJOP wishes our many loyal friends and supporters much success in all their endeavors.

NJOP EVENTS

New York Governor Geoge Pataki Salutes NJOP - A Day in the Hamptons

Sunday, August 12, 2001
Sam Domb's Beach House
Westhampton Beach, NY

Sukkot Singles' Celebration

Further Information
To Be Announced

4th Annual Read Hebrew America/Canada Program

November 2001
Continent Wide
Literacy Campaign

Annual Chanukah Concert

Further Information
To Be Announced

For more information about attending or sponsoring an upcoming NJOP Program, please contact NJOP's Director of Development and Special Events, Amy Vogel, at (212) 986-1332 or amyv@njop.org

DATED MATTER

Return Service Requested

1-800-44-HEBREW(W)
NEW YORK, NY 10017
485 FIFTH AVENUE, SUITE 701



NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
New York, NY
PERMIT #5047