



The United Jewish Congregation of Hong Kong

Welcoming all who seek a Progressive vision of Jewish life

SHABBAT SHALOM

3 – 4 February, 2012

11 Shevat 5772

Parashat Beshalach
(Exodus 13:17-17:16)

Rabbi Stanton M. Zamek
Education & Programming Director Rabbi Martha Bergadine
Cantorial Soloist/Programming Assistant Diego Edelberg



FRIDAY, 3RD FEBRUARY

Shabbat Service 7:00 PM – UJC Sanctuary
UJC Shabbat Dinner 8:00 PM – JCC Coffee Shop
Shabbat Dinner Cost: HK\$125 (Adult), HK\$65 (Children's meal up to 12).

SATURDAY, 4TH FEBRUARY

There will be no Torah Study this week

SUNDAY, 5TH FEBRUARY

No Shorashim this week Classes resume 12th February 2012
Community Tu B'Shevat Outing 10:00 AM – JCC Car Park

TUESDAY, 7TH FEBRUARY

No Introduction to Judaism class or Hebrew Reading for Beginners class this week Classes resume 14th February 2012
UJC Tu B'Shevat Seder 7:00 PM – Apt 3C, One Robinson Place
Cost: HK\$180 per person. Please RSVP with the UJC office by **Monday, 6th February.**

THURSDAY, 9TH FEBRUARY

Jewish Beer Drinking Association 6:30 PM – The Globe Bar and Café
Garley Building, 45-53 Graham Street, Central

FRIDAY, 10TH FEBRUARY

Shabbat Service 7:00 PM – UJC Sanctuary
UJC Shabbat Dinner 8:00 PM – JCC Coffee Shop
The Service will also include a blessing for Laetitia and Jean-Samuel Hentz's son.
The Shabbat Dinner is generously sponsored by Laetitia and Jean-Samuel Hentz in honour of the birth of their son.
Please RSVP with the UJC office by **Thursday, 9th February.**

SATURDAY, 11TH FEBRUARY

There will be no Torah Study this week. Please join us for services.
Shabbat Morning Service and Bat Mitzvah of Tamara Cohas 10:00 AM – UJC Sanctuary

Mazal Tov

To **Laetitia, Jean-Samuel and Leah Hentz** on the birth of their son and brother on Friday, 27th January.

To **Shelly, Jesse and Adin Friedlander** on the birth of their daughter and sister, **Eliana** on Wednesday, 1st February.

Yahrzeits

The following yahrzeits will be observed at services **this week**:
Pearl Granek—Thursday, 2nd February. Grandmother of Ilene Levy.
Rosa Bat Nussan Jacobs—Thursday, 2nd February. Grandmother of Alistaire Hayman.
Cissie Spencer—Thursday, 2nd February. Grandmother of Stuart Spencer.
Ethel Comeras Cohen—Friday, 3rd February. Mother of Eliot Cohen.
Matilda Marcus—Friday, 3rd February. Grandmother of Sharon Cooper.
Anna Gold—Saturday, 4th February. Grandmother of Alicia Messing.
The following yahrzeits will be observed at services **next week**:
Leo Sussman—Sunday, 5th February. Grandfather of Dorri Ramati.

Baruch Dayan Ha'emet

We mourn the recent passing of **Ramah Spencer**, mother of Stuart Spencer.

Tu B'Shevat

UJC Tu B'Shevat Seder

Originally the first day of the "tax year" for fruit-bearing trees, the 16th century mystics of Tzfat transformed Tu B'Shevat into a mystical celebration of God's continual renewal of the life-giving power of the earth.

Join the UJC for a 21st century interpretation of the original kabbalistic Tu B'Shevat Seder, led by Rabbi Zamek. There will be lots of fruit from the Land of Israel, wine, mystical insights, and songs. A light supper will also be served.

When: **Tuesday, 7th February at 7:00 PM**
Where: **Rabbi's apartment** (Apt. 3C, One Robinson Place)
Cost: **HK\$180 per person**

Advanced booking is **essential**. Please RSVP to the UJC office (ujc@ujc.org.hk) by Monday, 6th February.

Meet our Bat Mitzvah



Hi, my name is Tamara Cohas and I'm 13 years old. I was born in London, then moved with my mom and dad to New York when I was 8 months old, and then moved back to London when I was almost 4. We have lived in Hong Kong since 2007. I have two younger sisters, Sarah-Grace who is seven, and Hazel who is four. I am in year 8 at Island School.

Art, French and drama are my favorite subjects at school. Outside school I take a painting class at Kid's Gallery and Ballet and Contemporary Dance at Red Shoe Dance Studios.

I'd like to thank Rabbi Zamek, Rabbi Martha, and Diego for all the help they've given me the past several months as I've prepared for my Bat Mitzvah. It has been a very challenging experience, and I have learned so much.

There will be a special tribute to

Sharon Ser

at services on **Friday, 24th February 2012**
in gratitude for her service to The UJC.

Sharon will give the D'var Torah.

Shabbat Service at 7:00 PM followed by Shabbat Dinner at the JCC. Dinner generously sponsored by **Evan & Cheryl Blanco, Bob & Sharon Cooper, Andrew & Pattie Gordon, Bob & Grace Green, Daniel Kirwin, Jonathan & Samantha Kriegel, Robert Meyer, Mark & Kate Michelson, Chuck Monat, David & Belinda Weisner, Andrea Vidars & Andrew Seiz, Rabbi Stan Zamek & Rabbi Martha Bergadine.**

Please RSVP to The UJC office by Thursday, 23rd February.

Shorashim

There will be no Shorashim on Sunday, 5th February so that every one can take part in the Tu B'Shevat Community Outing. This event is sponsored by the Jewish National Fund-Hong Kong and is always a lot of fun.

Regular classes will resume Sunday, 12th February.

On **Friday, 17th February**, our Gan and Kitah Alef students will participate in Shabbat Services. There will also be an **Early Family Shabbat Dinner** that evening, and children whose birthdays are in February will receive a Birthday blessing and a sweet treat. Please plan on joining us — it is a wonderful way to celebrate Shabbat as a family and to support our youngest students!

Rabbi Martha (rabbimarta@ujc.org.hk)

Jewish Beer Drinking Association

The Jewish Beer Drinking Association is Back!
(And its NOT for Beer Drinkers only)

Meet up with us on:

When: **Thursday, 9th February, 6:30 PM — 8:30 PM**

Where: **The Globe Bar and Café**

(Garley Building, 45-53 Graham Street, Central)

The Globe has a wonderful selection of imported beer and also offers ciders, wine and cocktails for those who prefer other forms of refreshment.

Please RSVP to The UJC office by Wednesday, 8th February.



UJC Torah Boot Camp continues on Sunday, 12th February. Have you signed up yet?

A four session basic training course in synagogue skills. Learn the nuts & bolts of doing an aliyah, leading a Friday night service, giving a D'var Torah, and more. After completing the course interested participants will have the opportunity to schedule one-on-one time with Rabbi Z to prepare a D'var Torah to deliver at a Shabbat service. We're looking for a few good men & women. Enlist today.

Next sessions: **Sundays, February 12, 19**

When: **10:15 AM-11:45 AM**

(Note that Torah Boot Camp will take the place of Bagels & Binah on these Sundays)

Where: **UJC Sanctuary**

Please RSVP to The UJC office (ujc@ujc.org.hk) NOW!!



Havdalah Pajama Party

The next Havdalah Pajama Party is scheduled on **Saturday, 25th February** from **5:30 PM — 6:30 PM**, in the UJC Sanctuary.

This program is for our "older twos" and 3 year old members and their parents. Come in your PJ's to sing and dance, make a craft, and say good-bye to Shabbat and hello to the new week.

We'll be getting ready for **PURIM** so make sure to wear a costume!

Please RSVP to The UJC office (ujc@ujc.org.hk) by Friday, 24th February.



Donations

The UJC gratefully acknowledges donations to our General Fund, and Tree of Life that have been received since January, 2012.

GENERAL DONATIONS

Jeff & Dale Biteen—in honour of Andrea Vidars' birthday

Jordan Potash & Adam Nelson—in honour of the engagement of Heather Brubaker and Zach Yeskel

Dinna & Andy Robbins—in memory of Andy's father, Gerald Morill Robbins

Debbie Wacks—in honour of Andrea Vidars' birthday

TREE OF LIFE

Daniel Kirwin—in honour of Sharon Ser

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THE RISE OF OOMF*

Picard or Kirk? Do you have an opinion?

Do you know the sound Wolverine's claws make when they are extended?

Do the words "winter is coming" mean something special to you?

If the answer to any of the above is "yes" then OOMF — The Overlords Of Maniacal Fandom is for you.

OOMF is the new UJC affinity group for lovers of nerd culture in all its myriad forms. A gathering at which you can let your inner geek run free, as we discuss and debate science fiction/fantasy/horror, comics, games, movies, orangutans, gadgets, beer, awesome websites, beer, and various other areas of arcane knowledge. Of course, the implications of all these matters for Jewish life will be a major topic of discussion. Also, there will be beer.

Come, take your rightful place as an Overlord at our inaugural gathering on **Wednesday, 15th February** at 7:30 PM at the Rabbi's flat. RSVP by emailing us at rabbizamek@ujc.org.hk.

Signed and Sealed on this day.

THE GRAND MAGISTERIUM OF OOMF

Joshua Lavin

Ross O'Brien

Rabbi Stanton M. Zamek

**This is not a joke, although our wives wish it was.*



UJC 2012 Senior Prom

Want to stay "Forever Young," "Have the Time of Your Life"? Dance the night away with "Come on Eileen"?

Grab your powder blue tuxedo and a corsage and join us at the **UJC 2012 Senior Prom**. Ask a date, invite a friend, or gather your "group" for the big event at **The American Club Tai Tam** on **Saturday, 28th April, 2012**.

For those of you who did not recognize the beautiful couple in the Save-the-Date photo, it is our own President and First Lady, Bob and Sharon Cooper, at their Prom!



HK Jewish Community

Bookmark Design Competition 2012

For our youngsters from 4 to 9 years old. Sign out a book from the JCC Library and design a bookmark showing the ending of it. There are 4 prizes in total. The competition ends on **Monday, 6th February**. For details, contact Brenda Yi at jcclib@jcc.org.hk.

Carmel School Association Annual Dinner
Thursday, 16th February at 6:30 PM, at the JCC

Yeshiva Maccabeats in Hong Kong

Sunday, 19th February at 11:00 AM, at Elsa High School
Cost: HK\$250 per person; HK\$750 per family. For details or to order tickets, please call: Susan (JCC) at 2249-7600; Irene (BRC) at 2964-1600; Shannon (SKW) at 3665-5388.



NOT TOO
LATE!!
REGISTER
TODAY!!

THE UNITED JEWISH CONGREGATION'S "ONE CONGREGATION, ONE BOOK" PROJECT RETURNS

Once again, our goal is to get as many UJC members as possible to read the same significant Jewish book during this programmatic year. Please join us as we read Daniel Matt's anthology, [The Essential Kabbalah](#). To take advantage of this significant learning opportunity all you need to do is:

1. Register with The UJC office for the "One Congregation, One Book" project.
2. Get yourself a copy of [The Essential Kabbalah](#). The book can be purchased online through Amazon, shopinhk.com, and Paddyfield. [The Essential Kabbalah](#) is also available as an ebook in both Kindle and iBooks formats.
3. Start reading the book.
4. Attend a "check-in" session and chat with other UJC members who are reading with you. **The first check-in session is on Tuesday, 21st February at 8:15 PM in the UJC Sanctuary. Additional check-ins will be on Sunday, 11th March at 10:00 AM, Tuesday, 20th March at 8:15 PM and on Sunday, 22nd April at 10:00 AM, in the UJC Sanctuary.**
5. Plan on finishing the book by Shavuot (evening of 26th May 2012). We'll celebrate the completion of the project as the festival begins.

Let's get studying UJC!

**Dr. Matt is coming to The UJC on May 25-29!!!
Start reading his book today!!!**

From the Rabbi's desk

Near the end of the Chinese New Year holiday, my boy and I kicked back for some R&R and re-watched the film version of *The Lord of the Rings* saga. About half way through the second movie, *The Two Towers*, Martha walked in the room, looked at the screen, and said, "Huh. Lord of the Rings. Is this the one where those tree things walk around forever." Martha is not a fan.

I ignored the snark and said, in the characteristic tone of the aggrieved nerd, "If you mean — are there [Ents](#) in the *Two Towers*? — then, yes, the [Ents](#), the ancient race of sentient, mobile tree creatures are in the second book and film of *The Lord of the Rings*. They are important to the story. They attack and destroy Isengard." "Yeah," she said, "that's what I thought," and she walked out of the room. Her tone of disdain persisted, even after I educated her. Go figure.*

I am partial to the Ents, no matter what certain philistines have to say. I suppose it is because trees, especially old trees, are inherently Entish to me. I look at a giant cottonwood or a sprawling old live oak and I am awed by its patient longevity. I cannot help but feel reverence for living things whose existence long precedes my own and who will go on quietly digging their roots deep into the earth and spreading their branches against the sky long after even the memory my passing has faded away. It is not very difficult for me to imagine that such a being might speak or move of its own volition. I am sure that I project Tolkien's vivid stories onto certain trees. The Lord of the Rings captured my imagination when I was a kid and never let go. I am equally sure that my idle imaginings and Tolkien's masterpiece spring from the same deep, mythic place. Tolkien himself wrote that all stories are merely leaves on "the Tree of Tales."

Great and ancient trees grew in dense thickets in Tolkien's imagination, just as they have been a mysterious and sacred presence rooted in the psyches of people of all cultures and all times. Tolkien's trees, Yggdrasil, the "world tree" of Norse mythology, the Buddha's Bodhi tree, and my Entish imaginings are all leaves on the much greater tree of myth, from which grows the human capacity for wonder and awe.

We have our great tree. It is the Etz Chayim, the Tree of Life. The mystics conceived it as inverted. Its roots are in the heavens, growing out of the unfathomable realm of Pure Divinity. It grows down toward the earth, its branches reaching out to us. The Tree of Life is the circulatory system of blessing. It is the conduit through which God flows

Scholars-in-Residence

DR. CHARLES SMALL Scholar-in-Residence March 16-18, 2012



Dr. Charles Small, is the Founder and Director of the Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP) and the President of the International Association for the Study of Antisemitism (IASA). He was the Director and Founder of the Yale Initiative for the Interdisciplinary Study of Antisemitism (YIISA), the first university based research center in North America.

DR. DANIEL MATT Scholar-in-Residence & Tikkun Leil Shavuot Special Guest Speaker May 25-29, 2012



Dr. Matt is one of the world's leading authorities on Kabbalah and is the author of over ten books, including *God and the Big Bang* and *The Essential Kabbalah*. He is currently engaged in an immense project of translating and annotating the *Zohar*, the masterpiece of Kabbalah. This work earned Dr. Matt the National Jewish Book Award and the Koret Jewish Book Award, in recognition of his "monumental contribution to the history of Jewish thought."

into the world, bringing enlightenment and life. In the *Sefer Ha-Bahir*, one of the earliest kabbalistic texts, God reveals:

I am the one who planted this tree for all the world to delight in. With it I spanned the All, calling it All, for all depends on it, all emanates from it, all need it, all gaze upon it and await it. From here souls fly forth in joy.

The Tree of Life is a myth. If you go looking for it to measure it and classify it, to claim it or to cut it, you will be greatly disappointed. This is because it is real, not actual. This is because it is true, not a fact. Myths are stories that point to ultimate reality, not reports, not historical accounts. To borrow Zalman Schachter-Shalomi's terminology, myth provides inspiration, not information.

So the myth of the Tree of Life is true. There is such a tree. In the knowing that lives in the heart we are sure of it. We are sustained by the Divine flow of blessing into this world that courses from its heavenly roots to its earthly branches. We cannot see the Tree, because we live within its foliage, it fills all space. It spans All and is All the *Bahir* tells us. The Tree can be found in no place, and yet is continually present.

The mystics of Tzfat had the Etz Chayim in mind when they transformed the 15th of Shevat into the Tu B'Shevat we celebrate next week. Originally Tu B'Shevat was simply the date that marked the end of one "tax year" and the beginning of another for the tithing of the produce of Israel's orchards. Now it is an intensely spiritual celebration of God's ongoing renewal of Creation. The fruits we eat on Tu B'Shevat are the ordinary fruits of apple, apricot, and pomegranate trees, but they are also the fruits of the Tree of Life, reminding us that all of existence is a gift of the Holy One.

This is the great truth that we will celebrate at our Tu B'Shevat Seder. Join us. It will be a mythic evening. Through the mystic fantasy of the Tree of Life, we will direct our hearts and minds toward ultimate reality — The Blessed One whose love sustains all that lives.

**(Note: Martha read this piece and wants it made clear that she is not anti-tree, just anti-Ent. "I love trees, I just don't want to watch Ents carry hobbits around for two hours." Tolkien fans should feel free to be offended)*

All Blessings
Rabbi Z (rabbizamek@ujc.org.hk)

UJC Calendar

February 2012 Shevat / Adar 5772						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 7:30pm The Bookers	2	3 7:00pm Shabbat Service & Dinner	4 No Torah Study this week
5 No Shorashim 10:00am Community Tu B'Shevat Family Outing	6	7 No Academy of Adult Learning classes 7:00pm UJC Tu B'Shevat Seder	8	9 6:30pm Jewish Beer Drinking Association	10 7:00pm Shabbat Service & Dinner	11 10:00am Shabbat Morning Service and Bat Mitzvah of Tamara Cohas
12 9:30am Shorashim (No Bagels & Binah) 10:15am Torah Boot Camp	13	14 7:00pm Introduction to Judaism (Cycle 1) 8:15pm Hebrew Reading for Beginners	15 7:30pm OOMF	16 6:30pm Carmel School Association Annual Dinner	17 6:00pm Early Family Shabbat Dinner 7:00pm Shabbat Service & Dinner	18 9:30am Torah Study
19 9:30am Shorashim (No Bagels & Binah) 10:15am Torah Boot Camp	20	21 7:00pm Introduction to Judaism (Cycle 1) 8:15pm Hebrew Reading for Beginners 8:15pm One Congregation, One Book Check-in Session	22 8:30pm Rosh Chodesh Group	23	24 7:00pm Special Shabbat Program & Dinner in honour of Sharon Ser <i>(more details to follow)</i>	25 9:30am Torah Study 5:30pm Havdalah Pajama Party
26 9:30am Shorashim	27 7:00pm ExCo Meeting 6:30pm ZAKA Annual Gala Dinner	28 7:00pm Introduction to Judaism (Cycle 1) 8:15pm Hebrew Reading for Beginners	29			

March 2012 Adar / Nisan 5772						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2 7:00pm Shabbat Service & Dinner	3 10:00am Shabbat Morning Service and Bat Mitzvah of Niamh Neville
4 9:30am Shorashim	5	6 No Academy of Adult Learning classes	7 7:30pm Megillah Reading and Purim Schpiel	8	9 7:00pm Shabbat Service & Dinner	10 9:30am Torah Study
11 9:30am Shorashim (No Bagels & Binah) 10:00am One Congregation, One Book Check-in Session	12	13 7:00pm Introduction to Judaism (Cycle 2) 8:15pm Duties of the Heart (Cycle 2)	14 12:30pm Duties of the Heart (Cycle 2) - lunchtime edition	15	16 7:00pm Shabbat Service & Dinner	17 9:30am Torah Study
18 9:30am Shorashim	19	20 7:00pm Introduction to Judaism (Cycle 2) 8:15pm One Congregation, One Book Check-in Session (No Duties of the Heart class)	21 12:30pm Duties of the Heart (Cycle 2) - lunchtime edition	22 8:30pm Rosh Chodesh Group	23 6:00pm Early Family Shabbat Dinner 7:00pm Shabbat Service & Dinner	24 9:30am Torah Study
25 9:30am Shorashim	26 7:00pm ExCo Meeting	27 7:00pm Introduction to Judaism (Cycle 2) 8:15pm Duties of the Heart (Cycle 2)	28 12:30pm Duties of the Heart (Cycle 2) - lunchtime edition	29	30 7:00pm Shabbat Service & Dinner	31 9:30am Torah Study