



November 2010



## **Congregation Ohel Avraham at the Leo Baeck Education Center – Haifa, Israel**

**About Ohel Avraham:** the synagogue and spiritual community of the Leo Baeck Education Center located in Haifa, Israel. Our synagogue is an integral part of the Leo Baeck campus that includes schools from K to 12, a community center which serves all of multicultural western Haifa, and a sports facility.

While formally a member of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, **Ohel Avraham** serves primarily the more secular-leaning Jewish Israeli community who form the greater part of the Jewish population of Haifa. The sad fact of the matter is that although we live in the third Jewish Commonwealth, the vast majority of secular Israelis at best hold Jewish tradition in disregard and feel little connection to their Jewish identity.

**Ohel Avraham** members consist primarily of secular Israelis who have found their Jewish spiritual home through the synagogue's outreach programs on the Leo Baeck campus and throughout greater Haifa.

**Ohel Avraham** provides a platform for its members and the community at large to explore and connect with their Jewish identity while conducting their modern Israeli lifestyle.

Many **Ohel Avraham** families have found their way to our doors to quench their thirst for holiness, meaning in life and connection to Jewish tradition, so paradoxically difficult to find in the modern Jewish state.

**Mission statement:** Ohel Avraham's Jewish worldview connects us to humanity through four key values: Emet (Truth), Chesed (Grace/Mercy), Tzedek (Justice) and Shalom (Peace/Completeness). Ohel Avraham implements these values through its unique framework, based on an egalitarianism pluralistic approach, which invites men and women from different backgrounds to Ohel Avraham to learn and to develop their Jewish identity, while revealing and celebrating each participant's personal and cultural assets. Our congregation feels obligated to instill in our community habits that exemplify the basic values of our vision through involvement in Social Justice and Tikkun Olam - home and synagogue ritual practice that emphasis these values.

**Current Programming:** Ohel Avraham's flagship project is our Kabbalat Shabbat, a weekly celebration of song and prayer. Attendance ranges from 50 to 60 members including adults, youth and children plus additional groups of students, parents and visitors. At Kabbalat our Rabbi and lay leaders conduct services, give *drashot* and run parallel activities for our young people. In addition, Ohel Avraham holds events that combine Jewish and Israeli traditions. These include: a weekly Beit Midrash study session, food drives for Haifa hungry, Bar/Bat Mitzvah programs for children from all walks of life, celebration of life cycle events including birthdays, weddings and anniversaries, Shabbat morning nature hikes that connect the land of Israel to the Jewish people, Shabbat Rosh Chodesh lectures, the hosting of visitors from other countries and other parts of Israel, educational programs, and our Ohel Sarah women's activities. Our Choir and drama group practice weekly and perform for the congregation and community. Community member, Ms. Orit Pearlman, a highly respected professional singer and cantor, shares her talents at community events. Ohel Avraham is renowned for its diverse musical and creative spirit.



## ***Present and Future: New and Expanding Initiatives***

**Programs for women and girls:** Formally a member of WRJ Ohel Avraham is preparing for International Women's Day through a Torah Reading Course for women. Our Mother and Daughter Bat Mitzvah Program has expanded to six groups which are studying with our Rabbi and educational staff in preparation for their class Bat Mitzvah ceremony. A new connection has been established this year between a center for Ethiopian Jewish immigrant girls in distress and our women who will be visiting the girls and enriching their year with Jewish ceremonies, meals, trips and programs.

**Education:** this year Ohel Avraham is working with **90 teachers and 25 classrooms** filled with Israeli Jewish secular children with a view to enriching the Jewish content of their teaching and learning. Although all lessons are taught in Hebrew, the Bible is studied as a historical text and Jewish holidays are marked in a cultural framework. As a result, many Israeli children lack a basic connection to their Jewish past. Ohel Avraham is filling this void with a modern, liberal and interactive approach.

**Israel and the Diaspora:** As Israelis, we are proud to be living in the historical home of the Jewish people. As part of the greater Jewish family we believe that everyone, regardless of location, has an essential role to play in our shared Peoplehood. To create platforms for shared Peoplehood we invite Jews from around the world to share in the following activities:

**\*Song and pray: learn and incorporate into our prayers liturgy from other communities.**

**\*Holidays: learn and adopt Israeli Jewish holiday traditions and share yours with us.**

**\*Text: study text in parallel, meet in reality or virtually to share insights**

**\*Let us teach you some Hebrew**

### **How Can We Connect?**

Supporting us, means supporting Progressive Jewish values in Israel. We need your help to promote an Israeli Jewish agenda that reflects the Jewish value of **Tikkun Olam** - making the world a better place and making Israel a place that we can all be proud of. You **can become an Overseas Member of Ohel Avraham** by sending \$180, designated for Ohel Avraham, through the World Union of Progressive Judaism. The cost of a **Congregational Membership** is \$1,800.

### **What will your membership provide?**

- Your spiritual home in Israel
- Membership and services for Haifa residents who cannot afford our modest fees
- Outreach to Israelis in search of a spiritual home
- Projects and activities for Haifa's disadvantaged Jewish and non-Jewish residents
- Support for our **women's group, educational programs** and **growing connections between our communities** through meaningful, shared programs.

Most importantly, see Ohel Avraham as your home away from home for a beautiful Jewish experience; join us for prayers and activities at whenever **you and your family are in Israel**.

Contributions from the U.S. should be made payable to the World Union for Progressive Judaism and sent to: World Union for Progressive Judaism, 633 Third Avenue New York, NY 10017-6778, stating clearly that the funds are designated for Congregation Ohel Avraham at the Leo Baeck Education Center, Haifa.