



Rabbinic word

With the beginning of 2024, we will also open a new book in the synagogues: As part of the weekly Torah readings, we will begin to read the Second Book of Moses/Shemot. After the stories of the First Book of Moses/Breschit about the creation of the world and humanity, about fratricide and the focus on Abraham and his descendants with all their serious conflicts, the national history of Israel now comes into focus. Already in these weeks of dark January we have a foretaste of the Seder, the first evening of Passover, when we relive the exodus from Egypt with stories and songs. The four glasses of wine or grape juice that we drink during the Seder are based on the four verbs with which God promises salvation to the subjugated people of Israel (Ex 6:6-7):



“I will bring you out of the bondage of Egypt and deliver you (...)
I will redeem you (...) and adopt you as a people and will be your God.”

But the people cannot hear this message, as it is said: “because of faintheartedness and hard work” (Ex 6:9). They are so busy with their daily survival that they have no sense of big promises and the announcement of a deliverance that will take a long time. The Hebrew term “Kozer Ruach,” often translated as “pusillanimity,” literally means “shortness of breath.” Someone cannot take a deep breath, sit up and look ahead. Repression opens up a hopeless circle: it leads to depression, a feeling of lack of prospects, and no help seems to be in sight. How will you ever be able to stand up again and breathe deeply?

The Exodus, the story of liberation from bondage is the fundamental myth of Judaism. We remember this not just once a year at Passover. Almost all Jewish holidays and many prayers and customs refer to it, because we always need the encouragement it contains. This year’s reading cycle, which began on the day of the terrible Hamas massacre, is inevitably influenced by these events. And so we are faced with the emergence from the distress right now, when we are in danger of sinking into pain and resignation, grieving for those who have been kidnapped, mourning the great loss of human life in Israel and Gaza, and we are unsettled by the vehemence of anti-Semitism. Our concerns about the war against Ukraine and the many other crises in the world have not yet been addressed. But in these weeks we are receiving a hint: it will not be the oppressors who have the last word in history, but the march towards freedom. We don’t have to wait for Passover to receive this message. However: Hope does not come about by itself; we also have to have the will for it. So may “Kozer Ruach”/shortness of breath have no power over us, and may we find the strength to emerge from the distress.

—Your Rabbi Ulrike Offenberg

Review of the month of December

Hanukkah

This year we lit Hanukkiot together in the community twice, on the second and third evenings of the festival. Before Kabbalat Shabbat, a number of community members came to the synagogue on Friday, December 8th to first light the lights and then sing Hanukkah songs. Rabbi Offenberg accompanied the singing on the guitar and Valera Fridman on the piano. With Sveta’s help, Liubov had prepared many delicacies: latkes, blintzes and sufganiyot, as well as salads and sandwiches. The following evening we first said goodbye to Shabbat with the Havdalah and then lit the third Hanukkah light. Afterwards, the stage belonged to the “Ginzburg Dynasty,” who spread great enthusiasm and happiness with their furious performance of klezmer music, jazz arrangements and Israeli songs. Just what we needed at this time.



Outlook for the month of January

New Year's party

On Sunday, January 14, 2024, the New Year 2024 will be welcomed in the parish hall. Music, food and drinks will create a happy atmosphere. If you would like to take part, please let the community office know and pay €5 for expenses.

Tu BiShvat

In the middle of winter we celebrate the New Year of the trees and hope that nature will now gather strength to soon delight us with buds and the first flowers. We will celebrate our Tu BiShvat Seder with lots of fruits, nuts, and four glasses of wine/grape juice on Friday, January 19th, following our Kabbalat Shabbat service.

Community barometer

The Community Barometer survey started for the second time in December: the largest and most comprehensive study to date on community life and the Jewish community in Germany. The survey is online and completely anonymous. All community members aged 16 and over as well as potential community members can take part. The Central Council of Jews in Germany would like to use the study to gain deeper insights into what Jews expect from their communities and from the umbrella organizations and what the Jewish community and Judaism mean to them. The results benefit the entire Jewish community! The questionnaires can be found in German, Russian and English here: <http://www.gemeindebarometer.de>

The first survey from 2019 made a lot of difference. We expect the second survey to provide even deeper insights into Jewish community life and insights into how the crises of recent years have affected the communities and how the Jewish community has dealt with these challenges. Furthermore, it is important to understand what the sense of security of Jews in Germany has been like since the terrible events of October 7th in Israel and the events since then. The largest possible number of participants increases the representation and thus the meaningfulness of the survey.

Donations — Tzedakah

We thank you for the donations received over the past few weeks for our community life and the synagogue. Our gratitude goes especially to the Dohme family.

May the donors be blessed for their generosity.



Condolence — Baruch Dayan HaEmet

On December 28th, our long-time parishioner Arkadi Zyryanov died at the ripe old age of 94. We mourn the loss of this person who was so kind to everyone and always radiated deep gratitude. Until a few months ago, he regularly attended church services and was a reliable member of our prayer community. After being widowed twice himself, he now leaves behind a daughter who lives in Russia. The funeral will take place on Friday, January 5, 2024, 11:15 a.m. at our Am Wehl community cemetery.

Yahrzeit in January

Larisa Shapiro	4. 1. 2019 / 22. Tevet 5783
Soya Varshavska	13. 1. 2021 / 29. Tevet 5781
Chaja-Rahel Kruchkovitch	January 19, 2003 / 26. Schwat 5763

May their memory be a blessing.



Shalom and a blessed year of health and peace in 2024!
Your community board

Program for January 2024 • Tewet–Shevat 5784

Office hours: Thursday and Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Telephone: 05151 / 925 625 Email: jgh@jghreform.org

Wednesday, January 3	6:00 p.m.	Limmud Rabbah, via Zoom
Friday, January 5	5:00 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat, followed by Kiddush
Saturday, January 6	10:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.	Shacharit Shabbat “Shemot,” Kiddush and Shiur Youth Kehillah
Tuesday, January 9	4:00 p.m.	Bar Mitzvah class, via Zoom
Wednesday, January 10	4:00 p.m. 6:00 p.m.	Bat Mitzvah class, via Zoom Limmud Rabbah, via Zoom
Friday, January 12	2:55 p.m.	“Shabbat Shalom,” NDR Info, Hameln 99.9 MHz, Torah interpretation by Rabbi Offenberg
Sunday, January 14	3:00 p.m.	New Year's reception
Tuesday, January 16	4:00 p.m.	Bar Mitzvah class, via Zoom
Wednesday, January 17	4:00 p.m. 6:00 p.m.	Bat Mitzvah class, via Zoom Limmud Rabbah, via Zoom
Thursday, January 18	6 p.m.	Digital Bible Dialogue. Prof. Dr. Klaus Grünwaldt and Rabbi Offenberg talk about the First Book of Samuel. This time: 1st Saturday 8th
Friday, January 19	5:00 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat, followed by Tu BiShvat Seder
Saturday, January 20	10:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.	Shacharit Shabbat “Bo”, Kiddush and Shiur Youth Kehillah
Tuesday, January 23	4:00 p.m.	Bar Mitzvah class, via Zoom
Wednesday, January 24	4:00 p.m. 6:00 p.m.	Bat Mitzvah class, via Zoom Limmud Rabbah, via Zoom
Tuesday, January 30	4:00 p.m.	Bar Mitzvah class, via Zoom
Wednesday, January 31	4:00 p.m. 6:00 p.m.	Bat Mitzvah class, via Zoom Limmud Rabbah, via Zoom

Regular courses via Zoom:

Tuesdays, 4 p.m.: Bar Mitzvah classes
Wednesdays, 4 p.m.: Bat Mitzvah class
Wednesdays, 6 p.m.: Limmud Rabbah

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Jewish Community of Hamelin

Member of the JLEV (Jewish Liberal-Egalitarian Organization), the World Union of Progressive Judaism, and the Central Council of Jews of Germany

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