



KESHER ISRAEL - 100 YEARS
A C E N T E N N I A L C E L E B R A T I O N

**ORTHODOX JUDAISM:
WHAT IT WAS, WHAT IT IS**

BY RABBI DR. BARRY FREUNDEL

**MONDAY EVENING
SEPTEMBER 13, 2010
7:30PM**

*This program is made possible
through the generosity of Alfred and Lynn Altschul*

KESHER ISRAEL: A HISTORY

In the winter of 1910, six merchants living in Georgetown, met to discuss the “possibility of forming a Hebrew society for worship and other communal activities.” Joseph Bremmer, Joseph Scher, Max Whitkin, L. Brenner, Mr. Rakysen, and Mr. Gamzy, all Eastern European immigrants, founded the Georgetown Hebrew Benevolent Society, based out of the home of Harris Levy on 28th and M Streets, NW, with “about 25 persons.” On March 16, their registration application to the DC Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs as a domestic non-profit corporation was approved. Their first president was a man named Abe Mostow. We don’t know much about Mr. Mostow and the other founding families, but we do know that thanks to their efforts, we enjoy a wonderful Modern Orthodox shul and can celebrate the seeds of community that they planted a century ago.

That autumn, for their first High Holidays together, they moved to 3062 M Street, NW, a larger space located above a storefront. They borrowed a *sefer Torah*, hired a cantor, sold tickets for \$3 each, and began holding religious services. Over time, their numbers increased, and “out of a small *khevre* grew a large *farein*”—from a small group of 25 people, they became united as one community. In 1915, the leaders of the community purchased a small house at 2801 N Street NW, converted it into a shul, and renamed themselves “Keshet Israel Congregation.” Over time, they outgrew the small house and the need to expand became apparent.

With a membership of 150 people, and a Ladies Auxiliary that raised \$10,000 (a lot of money in those days!) for the building, the cornerstone of the new building was laid on February 1, 1931, and a new chapter began to unfold. On September 6, just in time for *Rosh Hashanah*, the new **Keshet Israel Synagogue of Georgetown** formally opened its doors....

ABOUT THE CENTENNIAL

*To mark the special occasion of our Centennial Celebration, and to enhance the intellectual and spiritual life of our community in Washington D.C., Keshet Israel is hosting a year-long salute called “**Keshet100: Celebration and Reflection.**”*

We will honor the happiness of this occasion with a rich program of study and conversation. The full Keshet100 calendar of events will be highlighted by regular lectures and discussions that will be in keeping with the intellectual intensity and religious liveliness of our great institution. This Centennial will be used as an opportunity to introduce the community to a deep and sustained look at the issues and ideas that confront the future of Orthodoxy, and of Judaism itself.

TONIGHT’S PROGRAM

Keshet Israel’s rabbinic leader, Rabbi Dr. Barry Freundel, kicks-off the salute tonight with a discussion on the current state of Modern Orthodoxy and the challenges it faces. This lecture leads into the centerpiece of our educational programming, a four-part series called “**Orthodoxy at a Turning Point: A National Conversation.**” These panel discussions, which will take place over the course of the anniversary year, will explore the major themes and pressures surrounding Orthodoxy—the historical, social, textual, and halakhic dimension of what we live and practice.

Rabbi Dr. Barry Freundel received his smicha from Yeshiva University and his doctorate from Baltimore Hebrew University where he serves as an Assistant Professor of Rabbinics. He has also served as an Adjunct Instructor at the University of Maryland, an Adjunct Professor of Law at Georgetown University, and a Consultant to the Ethics Review Board of the National Institute of Aging of the National Institutes of Health. Rabbi Freundel is also head of the conversion committee of the Rabbinical Council of America and is Vice-President of the Vaad of Washington. He is the author of *Contemporary Orthodox Judaism’s Response to Modernity* by KTAV in 2003 and of the forthcoming book, *Why We Pray What We Pray: The Remarkable History of Jewish Prayer.*

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

- Oct 10, 2010** *Orthodoxy at a Turning Point: A National Conversation
Panel #1: Orthodoxy and Innovation*
- Nov 7, 2010** *Orthodoxy at a Turning Point: A National Conversation
Panel #2: Women and the Future of Judaism*
- Dec 11, 2010** *Kesher Israel Celebrates! A Night in Monte Carlo*
- Dec 12, 2010** *Tzvi Daremblum Memorial Lecture:
Jonathan Safran Foer and Leon Wieseltier in Conversation*
- Feb 2011** *Orthodoxy at a Turning Point: A National Conversation
Panel #3: Spirituality and the Future of Institutions*
- Mar 13, 2011** *Kesher Israel Celebrates! A Gala Dinner*
- May 15, 2011** *Israel and the Jewish Soul:
A Discussion of the Place of Israel in our Lives and our
Beliefs with Elie Wiesel*
- June 2011** *Orthodoxy at a Turning Point: A National Conversation
Panel #4: The Denominations – the Way We Believe Now*
-And this is just the beginning*

Kesher Israel: The Georgetown Synagogue

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