
the Shofar



Etz Chayim Conservative Synagogue's Monthly Newsletter

MAY, 2021

IYYAR/SIVAN, 5781

Due to Covid, services are not being held in the Synagogue. For information on joining virtual services and events, please see our website.

<http://www.etzchayim-hsv.org>

FROM THE RABBI

SHAVUOT

Echoing chapter 1 of the Book of Joshua, we recite the daily prayer that we “constantly meditate on the Torah, as these words represent the meaning and the value of our lives.” Well, God's mandate to the Jewish people, as transmitted to the biblical conqueror who was Moses' successor, is more of an ideal than a practical reality. Let's be honest: We don't really meditate on the Torah all day long, and it seems to me that we don't look exclusively to the Torah in order to frame our values.

Nonetheless, the holiday of Shavuot reminds us that “Without Torah there is no Judaism.” Our ancestors could have wound up being just another tribe in ancient wilderness. Of Moses and Aaron, of Miriam and then of Joshua, it could have been said that they came, they flourished briefly, and then they disappeared. Why not? It happened to the Moabites, the Hivvites, the Girgashites, the Jebusites. You can look it up. History speaks of many tribes that were there, and then they were gone.

The career of the Jewish people has been completely opposite. Somehow, our people who stood 3,300 years ago in uncomprehending awe around a little mountain called Sinai are still alive and well. In fact, we are a significant force throughout the world, even though the world has managed to keep our population at minuscule numbers. If the mystery and destiny of the Jewish people isn't owing to Torah — what then does explain that mystery and destiny?

This year Shavuot begins Sunday evening May 16, and continues Monday and Tuesday, May 17 and 18. I'll see you on Zoom Tuesday morning, starting at 9:45, for Yom Tov service including Yizkor. I look forward to celebrating with you as we Jewish people re-engage with the Torah. It is, after all, our “Etz Chayim,” our Tree of Life.

Sincerely,

Stephen Listfield

SISTERHOOD

Hi all,

Last month we had a Sisterhood Meeting as well as our Virtual Talent Show. I'm so sorry I wasn't able to attend, but Manya said she was so impressed and entertained with the talent and skills shown off! Regarding the meeting agenda, the Sisterhood voted to donate our funds to help with the cost of the roof repair as well as to donate funds to help with the cost of the children's playroom repair, as needed.

An upcoming Sisterhood event that we have planned in the near future (date to be determined soon) is a Community Yard Sale! We invite ALL the Etz Chayim community to donate items for this event that will be hosted outside and to our local community. As you do Spring Cleaning around your house, please hold on to items that you would like to donate for our cause. The only restrictions on donated items are: 1) good condition, and 2) NO clothing items. Very soon we will be accepting donations to store at the Synagogue, details to follow.

Thanks to all of our Board members for always working hard to keep our Sisterhood and Synagogue thriving. Thanks to our Sisterhood members for participating in our events and providing your support. As SH president I am so appreciative of all of you!

Sincerely,

Amy

DONATIONS

Sacks Family Fund

From: Alan & Susan Sacks
In Loving Memory of the Yahrzeit of Joe Sacks

General Fund

From: Anonymous
In Honor of Passover

From: James Maxwell & Associates Roofing
Thanks to the synagogue for your business.

From: Diana & Howard Polin
For Zoom expenses

From: Ron Goldberg

Rabbi Fund

From: Lucy Fisher

From: Max & Millie Rosenthal



A Creative Mount Sinai Experience

Join us as we explore "what happened at mount Sinai" through Jewish Torah, Midrash, and discussion, reflecting on and expressing YOUR experience at Sinai into a six-word phrase or groovy t-shirt design!

Thursday, May 13, 2021 at 7-8 pm CST (8-9 EST)

Register for this FREE program and receive the Zoom link and information.
<https://forms.gle/uJbrnTDSTB8cUuVu9>

Sponsored by Limmud Southeast and grant recipient Shoshanna Rosenthal
No background in art, writing or Jewish text is necessary - Just an open mind and playful spirit.



YARD SALE COMING UP SOON!

Keep your eye out for details about a Sisterhood sponsored Yard Sale coming up in the near future. It will be held outdoors,

and it'll be open to the public. Please save items (except clothing) in good condition to donate for the sale.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- May 01 Havdalah followed by Rabbi Listfield Gathering, 7:15 PM
- May 07 Rabbi Listfield leads Zoom Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 7:15 PM
- May 17, 18 Shavuot
- May 18 Rabbi Listfield leads Zoom Shavuot Torah & Yizkor Services, 9:45 AM
- May 25 Rabbi Gathering, 6:45 PM

BIRTHDAYS

- May 04 Caiden Johnson
- May 04 Sandra Anderson
- May 05 Jonathan Persons
- May 08 Diana Polin
- May 15 Sandra Wiederecht
- May 18 Eric Jackson
- May 20 Glenn Polin
- May 21 Amy Mauldin
- May 21 Susan Cooke
- May 22 Gina Yalowitz
- May 23 Jordan Hall
- May 25 Larry Levitt
- May 28 Jeff Yalowitz
- May 29 Joe Johnson
- May 30 Jon Berger
- May 31 Brenda Liles
- May 31 Sarah Sacks

ANNIVERSARIES

- May 20 Shayna & Joe Johnson
- May 24 Lauren & Steve Goodman

Yahrzeits**

- May 01 Iyyar 19 Anna Polin*
- May 01 Iyyar 19 Alex E. Streit*

- May 02 Iyyar 20 Jack Greenberg
- May 03 Iyyar 21 Irwin M. Schindler
- May 03 Iyyar 21 Richard Harris
- May 05 Iyyar 23 Aaron Rodkin*
- May 06 Iyyar 24 Betty Kamisher*
- May 13 Sivan 02 Adolph Karmioli*
- May 13 Sivan 02 Aaron M. Novick
- May 15 Sivan 04 Rose Sacks*
- May 18 Sivan 07 Rose Rosenthal*
- May 18 Sivan 07 Irving Sainker*
- May 21 Sivan 10 Molly Meyer
- May 22 Sivan 11 Boyce White
- May 26 Sivan 15 Harry Kaufman*
- May 27 Sivan 16 Myrna Klazmer
- May 28 Sivan 17 Harriet B. Schlein*
- May 31 Sivan 20 Julius Strimling*
- Jun 05 Sivan 25 Goldie N. Brown
- Jun 05 Sivan 25 Stanley Weiss

* **Plaque**

****Light Memorial candle sunset of previous evening**

MOTHER'S DAY OFFERING (WHAT A BARGAIN FOR MAMA!)

By Ted Roberts, (1930-2020), the *Scribbler on the Roof*



Every culture treats its mothers differently. If you had the time (about two years) a careful analysis of the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic holy books would reveal a significant difference in their treatment of women – especially “mother.”

Let me admit that I haven't gotten around to the research yet, but I will soon and I'll let you know if I'm wrong. I promise. My contention is that our Chumash takes a most enlightened view of the Jewish mother. What pit would our history fall in without Sarah, Rachel, and Ruth? Recall that Ruth the Moabite is in the lineage of the Mossiach –

David's grandmother – though she's a Moabite. The tent of Israel is a large one.

But my point is that in a time when women were considered breeders and cooks, the G-d of Israel recognized them as equal to men – at least spiritually. They are movers and shakers in our history – witness the wives of our patriarchs, who with a little planning, shape dynasties for their sons.

What if Sarah had not handed Hagar her walking papers? What if Rachel the Reckless had favored Esau over her sweet Jacob? And of five-star importance, what if Zipporah had not saved Moses from a wrathful G-d (*Exodus 4:25*)?

Or what if Ruth had told Boaz he was much too overweight? No marriage, no Jesse, no David. Maybe no hope for the Mossiach, who will raise the dead and bless the world with universal peace.

What if my mother had not inspired me with weekly trips to the library? I'd be laying bricks in the cold outdoors instead of sprawled comfortably in my den writing Jewish stories. But all kidding aside, it's amazing how in a primitive age where women were demeaned the Chumash recognizes the power of mother.

Consider, it's the most lopsided balance in human relationships. Mama gives all, including the nutrients of her own body. Baby gives nothing except a few gurgly, uninterpretable noises. And even as the infant turns into a child, mama is still the provider and gets nothing in return. You say "love." That's her payment? Not always.

As the world turns, it's remarkable that more women don't regret this egregious bargain. We see it in a worldwide phenomenon. You owe her; she gave you life.

Another thing: Nobody loves you like your mama. Mine, who's now in Heaven, frequently boasted about her son – me. "He

performed so spectacularly at his Bar Mitzvah that the crowd loudly clapped, then hoisted him on their shoulders and paraded him around the synagogue like a Torah. . ." Her favorite story. I don't remember the details, but I suspect exaggeration.

Science has yet to – and may never – discover the magic elixir that the Creator has injected into the female body resulting in the Yiddishe mama. Mysteriously, in most cases she craves motherhood. There are exceptions, of course. It's amazing to me that more potential mamas don't turn their back on the only relationship where one takes and the other gives. She's the giver, of course.

But don't despair; Mother's Day is coming. Hurray for Mom. I've already reminded the three to whom my wife gave life, that they better come up with some appropriate rewards and I mean more than lunch or a rose. After all, childbearing is the immortality of the soul.