



Flushing-Fresh Meadows Jewish Center
 193-10 Peck Avenue ✦ Flushing, New York 11365 (718) 357-5100

THE BULLETIN

May-June 2017
 Vol.15 No. 6

Iyar/Sivan 5777
 Rabbi Gerald M. Solomon
 Cantor Aaron Katz



Coming Events

Thursday, May 4
Yom Ha'atzma'ut
Celebrate Israel's Independence Day
Lunch at 12:30pm Cost: \$30 per person
Entertainment by Squeaky Clean

Thursday, May 18
Dr. Mia Clair, from Northwell Health
will speak about Memory Disorders.
Lunch at 12 Noon \$10 at the door.

Sunday, May 21
Breakfast from 9:45am to 10:30am
Paul Weinberg will speak about Anti-
Semitism Then and Now
from 10:30am to 12 Noon

Thursday, May 30
Erev Shavuot
Service at 6:00 pm followed by a Dairy
Dinner which will include blintzes and
cheesecake Cost \$30 per person
Services, dinner & Shavuot Torah Study
Conducted by Rabbi Gerald Solomon

Thursday, June 22
Dr. Cynthia Kaplan Shamash will
speak about the "Last Jew of Iraq"
Lunch at 12 Noon \$10 at the door.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR MAY AND JUNE 2017

Friday, May 5

Mincha/Maariv.....7:00PM
Candle Lighting Time.....7:37PM

Saturday, May 6

Parashat Acharei/Kedoshim
Shabbat Services.....9:00AM
Shabbat Ends.....8:47PM

Friday, May 12

Mincha/Maariv.....7:00AM
Candle Lighting Time.....7:44PM

Saturday, May 13

Parashat Emor
Shabbat Services.....9:00AM
Shabbat Ends.....8:54PM

Friday, May 19

Mincha/Maariv.....7:00PM
Candle Lighting Time.....7:51PM

Saturday, May 20

Parashiot Behar/Bechukotai
Shabbat Mevarchim Services.....9:00AM
Shabbat Ends.....9:01PM

Friday, May 26-Rosh Chodesh Sivan

Mincha/Maariv.....7:00PM
Candle Lighting Time.....7:57PM

Saturday, May 27

Parashat Bamidbar
Shabbat Services.....9:00AM
Shabbat Ends.....9:07PM

SHAVUOT

Tuesday, May 30 Erev Shavuot

Mincha/Maariv.....T.B.A.
Candle Lighting Time.....8:01PM

Wednesday, May 31

First Day Shavuot Festival Services...9:00AM
Minchaa/Maariv.....T.B.A.
Candle Lighting Time.....9:10PM

Monday, June 1
Second Day Shavuot
Festival



Friday, June 2

Mincha/Maariv.....7:00PM
Candle Lighting Time.....8:03PM

Saturday, June 3

Parashat Naso
Shabbat Services.....9:00AM
Shabbat Ends.....9:12PM

Friday, June 9

Mincha/Maariv.....7:00PM
Candle Lighting Time.....8:07PM

Saturday, June 10

Parashat B'haalotecha
Shabbat Services.....9:00AM
Shabbat Ends.....9:17PM

Friday, June 16

Mincha/Maariv.....7:00PM
Candle Lighting Time.....8:10PM

Saturday, June 1

Parashat Sh'lach
Shabbat Mevarchim Services.....9:00AM
Shabbat Ends.....9:20PM

Friday, June 23

Mincha/Maariv.....7:00PM
Candle Lighting Time.....8:12PM

Saturday, June 24

Parashat Korach
Shabbat Rosh Chodesh Tamuz
Shabbat Services.....9:00AM
Shabbat Ends.....9:21PM

Friday, June 30

Mincha/Maariv.....7:00PM
Candle Lighting Time.....8:12PM

Saturday, July 1



HERE'S THE NEWS

Thank You

To Zach and Joan Levine for sponsoring a Kiddish on Saturday March 4 in honor of their grandson Jared, who read the Haftorah on the third anniversary of his Bar Mitzvah and in honor of the Marriage of their grandson Shabsai

To Mordy and Matilda Cohen who sponsored a Kiddish Saturday, March 11 in memory of her mother Hilda Moses.

Get Well Soon

To Irene Dressner We hope to see her soon.
To Stuart Cohen who will be under-going therapy. We wish him all the best.
To Joel Goldstein. We wish him a speedy recovery.
To Robert Greenberg in rehab after being hit by a car we wish you a Refuah Shlayma

Condolences

To Rabbi Mordecai Efron on the passing of his beloved daughter Debbie. We also extend our condolences to her brothers Brian and Steve.



HOLOCAUST DAY MEMORIAL SERVICE

On April 23rd our community observed Yom HaShoah along with the Synagogues of Flushing-Fresh Meadows, Hillcrest, Hollis Hills Bayside, Israel Center of Cons. Judaism and The JC of Kew Gardens Hills. Before a filled sanctuary, a very dignified and meaningful ceremony was conducted. The clergy from each of the Shuls participated. Rabbi Solomon introduced the ceremony of lighting the 6 candles representing the six million, with our members, survivors Lucy Gutman and Rita Kurz lighting the first candle to honor the memory of those who were martyred in Plusta, Poland. The guest speaker, Irving Roth recounted his life growing up in Czechoslovakia, and how his young life changed when the Nazis took over. The afternoon concluded with a stirring rendition of Hatikvah led by Cantor Katz, Cantor Zim and Cantor Fuchs.

AN ODE TO A GUIDING STAR

I've learnt as days passed me,
FRETTING never soothes a load
And that worry much or little,
NEVER soothes an irksome road
For you know that somehow **ALWAYS**,
Doors are **OPENED**, ways are made
When we learn to live **in PATIENCE**,
After all the **TROUBLES** we faced.

Un-named Poet



Sisterhood Newsletter

Please note these dates because things may change since the last newsletter!

May 4..... Celebrate of Yom Ha'atzmaut with your FFMJC Family!

May 18..... Luncheon and program about Memory disorders with a Dr. from Northwell Health

May 25.....Book Club "Everything I Never Told You" by Celeste Ng

June 22.....Luncheon and program, with Dr. Cynthia Kaplan Shamash author of "The Strangers We Became", Lessons in Exile from One of Iraq's Last Jews

June 29.....Book Club book "The Muralist" by B .A. Shapiro

The Tuesday morning exercise program is looking for new members. Give it a try!! Just come to the Center at 11 AM and join in. It is easy, but extremely beneficial.

If anyone has heard an interesting speaker that you would like to suggest for a Sisterhood meeting please give us a call.

See you at our functions

Marilyn Brown 718 454-0447

Joan Levine 516 708-9517

Sisterhood Co-Presidents

TORAH FUND

Cards for all occasions are available for purchase and can be sent from the Center Office.

Call Marsha at (718) 357-5100.

Proceeds benefit the Jewish Theological Seminary

*Brooklyn Queens Long Island Region
Women's League for Conservative Judaism*

Requests the honor of your presence at the

Woman of Achievement Awards & Dinner Gala

Featuring an elaborate smorgasboard dinner, a special honoree celebration, a lavish Viennese table and spectacular raffles to benefit BQLI Region scholarship and education initiatives.

Thursday, June 8, 2017

14 Sivan 5777

at 5:45 PM

Registration opens at 5:15 PM

Shelter Rock Jewish Center

Roslyn, NY

We are very excited to announce that we are honoring our own **Matilda Cohen** at the "Woman of Achievement Awards & Dinner Gala" sponsored by the Brooklyn Queens Long Island Region of The Women's League for Conservative Judaism. We are hoping to have a good representation from our membership for a well de serving, hard worker.

To make a reservation and for further information as to cost and car pooling, please call Joan Levine at 516 708-9517, as soon as possible.



Rabbi's Message

YOM HAZIKARON - MAY 1, 2017

Every country has its day of remembrance, and Israel - whose creation and survival as a state has been marked by so many losses -decided to designate the day preceding Yom Ha'atzmaut, Independence Day, as its day of commemoration for the fallen. On this day, we recall and mark the pain of our recent and not so recent losses in public and in private.

The term "Yom Ha'Zikaron" originates in another name for Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, the holiest day of the Jewish year marked by repentance, fasting and prayer. As each individual reviews his or her own deeds, the community is engaged in an act of collective remembrance, hoping also to be inscribed for a good year in the year to come.

The Jewish people is a people of collective memory: "Remember the Act of Creation", "Remember the Exodus from Egypt". In each generation, we retain the memories and the link to those alive who carry them. Today, we are coming to the end of one era, when the generation who survived the Shoah (Holocaust) and saw the establishment of the Jewish state is disappearing. With them, will go the personal memory and these crucial events will become part of the collective memory, whose meaning will continue to be interpreted in the context of the continuity of Jewish life and community.

In Jewish thought, each life is a world of its own and considered to be of inestimable value: in modern Israel, the untimely death of one loved person is a tragedy which marks the entire community. Indeed, there is hardly a family or friendship unmarked by loss as the population is so small that the seemingly modest numbers for each war assume tremendous proportions. As much as an individual act, this is also a collective act, rather than a formal gathering.

The ceremonies are simple on the eve of Yom Ha'zikaron and are not forgotten as we conclude the day the following night and merge into the festivities of Yom Ha'atzmaut.

Originally and essentially designated to commemorate the loss of those men and women who fought and were killed in the IDF, Israel's armed forces, the day has now also been accepted as the appropriate moment to bring together families and friends and official recognition of all those who lost their lives under any form of attack, including acts of terror.

As we are thankful for our years of independence, we carry with us the memory of those who helped make it possible and those who fell in their innocence because this was their dream.

ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY - OBSERVED ON MAY 2, 2017

Every year on the fifth of Iyar, Israel celebrates Israeli Independence Day to commemorate the founding of the state of Israel in 1948. All over Israel there are parties and parades, and in the United States celebrations have included concerts, fairs, and film showings. Yom Ha'atzmaut comes after the close of Yom Ha'zikaron, which is a day of remembrance and mourning for those who died fighting for the state. After the somber candle-lightings, psalm recitations, and gravesite visits of Yom Ha'zikaron, the mood changes from sorrow to celebration with the onset of Yom Ha'atzmaut.

The religious establishment has developed and introduced liturgical rituals in recognition of Yom Ha'atzmaut. These include readings of Psalms 98 and 100 or Psalms 107, 97, and 98 and the chanting of Maariv in the evening.

Some congregations recite Hallel at night, and Shir Ha-ma'alot (Psalm 126) is sung to the melody of Hatikvah. A festive meal with singing and lighting of candles follows. The next day, some congregations read three aliyot from Deuteronomy 7:12-8:18, followed by a Haftorah of Isaiah 10:32-12:6. The prayer for the state is then recited. The traditional greeting of the day is *Moadim le-simhah* ("Have a happy festival") with a response of *Le-geulah sheleimah* ("Toward a complete redemption"). Yom Ha'atzmaut offers a rich opportunity for creating individualized services, particularly by drawing upon the Book of Psalms and the prophets, and general readings or meditations on the themes of Zion and Israel. Modern Israeli poets have also provided a great deal of wonderful material on the subject of Israel.

Yom Ha'atzmaut also offers ample opportunity to reflect on the meaning of the state of Israel and the concept of the return of the Jewish people to their homeland. The holiday raises important issues concerning the Diaspora and its relation to Israel; the significance of nationalism and how it should be practiced so that it does not represent a form of idolatry, as some critics have cautioned; and the kinds of symbolism that are meaningful and appropriate in acknowledgment and celebration of the state.



SEFIRAH

What are the Sefirah days?

During the Temple days, the Israelites brought an Omer (name of a measure) of barley to the Temple on the 2nd Day of Passover. The Jews celebrated the barley harvest with this offering of thanks. The Torah commands that we count the days beginning with the 2nd day of Passover until the 50th day (seven full weeks) when we celebrate the holiday of "Shavuot" (Pentecost, which means the 50th). These days are called Sefirah (counting of the Omer).

Why are the Sefirah days considered sad days?

During the Roman War with the Jews in Israel and during the Crusades of the 11th century in Europe, these days were especially troublesome and full of sorrow. Thousands of Jews were killed by the enemy. Another reason for mourning is said to be the sorrowful period in which many of Rabbi Akiva's pupils died as a result of an epidemic. We commemorate these days by refraining from joyous celebrations, such as weddings, concerts, etc.

LAG B'OMER - MAY 14, 2017

Lag B'OMER means "the 33rd day of the (counting of the) Omer. This day is observed as a day of rejoicing because on this day, the students of Rabbi Akiva did not die. We therefore are permitted on that day to take haircuts, listen to music, hold weddings, etc., because the signs of mourning which we have been observing are not necessary on this day of great happiness.

Lag B'omer, the 18th day of Iyar, also corresponds to the date of the death of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, one of the great sages from the era of the Mishna. Although the death of a great sage is usually not marked with rejoicing, but rather with sadness, we treat Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai differently. The Zohar in Parshas Ha'azinu tells us that on the day Rabbi Shimon passed away, a great light of endless joy filled the day because of the secret wisdom he revealed to his students. That secret wisdom was written down and recorded in the holy Zohar. The happiness on that day was to him and his students like that of a groom while standing under the canopy at his wedding.

On that day, the sun did not set until Rabbi Shimon had revealed all that he was permitted to. As soon as he was done, the sun set, and his soul returned to its Maker. Because of the happiness back then, we celebrate with happiness now, as well.

In Israel, people flock to the grave of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai in the city of Meron. There is dancing, singing, and bonfires are lit. Many people wait until their son is three before cutting his hair, and on the Lag B'Omer of his third year, they cut the boy's hair. There is also a custom that children play with bows ("keshet" in Hebrew) on Lag B'Omer. A reason given for this is that in all the days of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's life, a rainbow was never seen. A rainbow is a sign that the world was due for a flood of the proportion of that in Noach's time. In the merit of Rabbi Shimon, the world was never deserving of such punishment in his generation, and the appearance of a rainbow was never necessary. Therefore, children play with bows, which in Hebrew share the same word as rainbow.

YOM YERUSHALAYIM

WHAT IS YOM YERUSHALAYIM AND WHEN DO WE CELEBRATE IT?

Yom Yerushalayim, Jerusalem Day, also known as Jerusalem Unification Day falls on 28th of Iyar, this year corresponding to Wednesday, May 24th. It commemorates what is, in our era, without doubt, the most noble moment in the historic love between Jews and Jerusalem: the liberation of the Old City of Jerusalem and the reunification of all Jerusalem during the Six Day War, on the 28th of Iyar 5727.

SHAVUOT - MAY 31- JUNE 1, 2017

The Festival of Shavuot or "Weeks," is one of the Shalosh Regalim (Exodus 23:14); one of the three main pilgrimage festivals. It comes at the end of the seven-times-seven (a "week of weeks") cycle of the Omer, which begins on the second day of Pesach. This year Shavuot begins on Tuesday evening, May 30th. Candle lighting is 8:01P.M.

The Festival of Shavuot is somewhat unusual. Not only is it not assigned to a specific date, but there is no real explanation given in Torah as to the meaning of the day, nor how it is to be observed ritually. In Biblical times, the period of counting seven weeks marked the transition from the very first grain crop (barley) of early spring (at Pesach) to the beginning of the summer grain (wheat) harvest (at Shavuot). Thus names for Shavuot given in the Torah are Chag Ha-Katzir - the Festival of the Harvest - and Chag Ha-Bikkurim - the Festival of the First Fruits (Cf. Exodus 23:14-19;

Leviticus 23:9-22). The day is identified as a holy occasion to be observed as a Sabbath, and specific sacrificial offerings are to be brought to the Temple. But beyond that, there is no special ritual prescribed.

These agricultural origins of Shavuot probably sufficed for the agrarian society of ancient Israel while they lived in the promised land. But they didn't really allow for a meaningful holiday for Jews once they were outside the Land of Israel, where farming was on a different cycle and there was no Temple to which one could bring the seasonal offerings. In exile, Jews were left with a commanded festival with no apparent meaning. But tradition abhors a vacuum. So what inherent meaning could be found for Shavuot?

The meaning of Shavuot became apparent after considering the relationship of Shavuot with Pesach and Sukkot. All are Biblically ordained festivals. All have an agricultural connection, assigned to a specific harvest season. But Pesach and Sukkot both have historical associations as well. Pesach commemorates the Exodus and the liberation from Egyptian bondage. Sukkot, and the dwelling in the Sukkah, recall the Israelite's experience while wandering in the wilderness for 40 years. So, our sages opined that Shavuot must fit into this paradigm as well. But how? Well, 50 days after leaving Egypt, and before they set out to wander in the desert, the Israelites found themselves camped out at the base of Mt. Sinai, awaiting the revelation of God's teachings. And so, in this historical sequence, Shavuot naturally became associated with an extraordinary and significant event: the revelation of the Torah to Moses on Mt. Sinai. While Shavuot had no 'historical' event associated with it in the Torah, and the event of Revelation had no holiday to mark it, it was a perfect match. Conveniently, since Revelation and Shavuot both do not have an actual date in the Torah, the Rabbis were able to determine that Revelation coincides with Shavuot. The Rabbis had a vested interest in this transformation as well. They saw themselves as the legitimate heirs to the Temple and priestly leadership. Instead of sacrifices, Torah learning must be at the center. How could there not be a holiday to acknowledge the giving of the Torah?

The sages came to refer to Shavuot as **"Z'man Matan Toratenu"**- **"The Time of the Giving of our Torah."** As the anniversary of revelation, Shavuot evolved into a celebration of Torah. In the synagogue, the account of the revelation at Sinai and the Ten Commandments are read as part of the service. Among Ashkenazi Jews, a custom also developed associating the Megilat Ruth- the Book of Ruth with Shavuot. There are a number of links that make this an appropriate text. Particularly, the setting of the story is at the harvest time, and Ruth's conversion to Judaism is seen as analogous to the Israelite's acceptance of the covenant at Sinai. In addition, King David, who tradition teaches was born and died on Shavuot, is identified in the book as being descended from Ruth.

Another popular custom, which originated with the Jewish mystics in Safed in the sixteenth century, is the practice of

staying up all through the night of Shavuot studying Torah. This practice, called Tikkun Leil Shavuot is based on a Midrash that explains that the Israelites slept late on the morning of the revelation at Sinai, and thus almost missed the giving of Torah. By staying up all night, we atone for this lapse of our ancestors, and demonstrate our appreciation of revelation and our eagerness to recommit ourselves again and again to Torah.

Rituals and Customs

There is a custom on Shavuot to eat dairy foods, such as cheese blintzes. This custom is of uncertain origin; perhaps it is an ancient echo of the agricultural seasons when in the early summer the calves and kids would be old enough to wean, so there would be plenty of milk for the farmers. Another explanation suggests that Torah is like milk and honey (see Song of Songs 4:11). Another theory suggests that prior to the Revelation on Shavuot, the consumption of meat would have been inappropriate because of the laws of kashrut which were to be given in the Shavuot Revelation of the Torah.

There is a beautiful Sephardic custom of erecting a Chuppa (bridal canopy) over the lectern on which Torah is read on Shavuot and honoring recently married couples. The custom extends from the notion that Shavuot is like a wedding between God (the groom) and Israel (the bride), with Torah serving as the Ketubah- (marriage contract). Special Shavuot ketubot are also written and read.

Other customs include decorating the synagogue for Shavuot with flowers and green plants, again echoing the ancient holiday of the "first fruits," and "Confirmation," a relatively new ritual (only a hundred years or so) through which teenagers are given the opportunity to reaffirm their commitment to Jewish life and living.

It has often been asked why Shavuot is known as "The Season of the **Giving** of Our Torah," when perhaps it's more important for us as Jews to recall that not only did G-d give Torah to Israel, but that we freely accepted and committed ourselves to it. Shavuot, then, becomes not only Z'man Matan Toratenu - the time of the giving of our Torah, but also Z'man Kabbalat Toratenu - the time of the **accepting** of our Torah. The giving of Torah is an historical event, that happened just once. But the acceptance of Torah by individual Jews is a continual process that happens every day, anytime a Jew makes a decision based on Jewish values, wholeheartedly recites a Jewish prayer, or makes a conscious effort to better the world. Each and every experience of our lives provides us with a new context to learn and understand Torah and put it into action in our lives. This is referred to as progressive revelation. We were given Torah just once, thus allowing for this yearly anniversary of Shavuot. But we "accept" Torah continually, allowing us to live a renewed Jewish life every day.



MAY, 2017

IYAR-SIVAN, 5777

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 Iyar 5	2 6 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">On-going Low-impact Chair Exercise Tuesdays 11 to Noon</div>	3 Rabbi's Class "G-D, Jews &History 10:30-Noon	4 8	5 9  7:37PM.	6 10 Parashat Acharei/ Kedoshim Ends 8:47PM 8:47-8:47P.
7 11	8 12	9 13	10 14 Rabbi's Class "G-D, Jews &History 10:30-Noon	11 15	12 16  7:44P.M.	13 17 Parashat Emor Ends 8:54PM.
14 18	15 19	16 20	17 21	18 Sisterhood Luncheon & Program 12 Noon	19 23  7:51P.M.	20 24 Parashat Behar/ Bechukotai Ends 9:01PM
21 25	22 26	23 27	24 28	25 Sisterhood Book Club 10:30 AM	26 1 Sivan Rosh Chodesh 	27 2 Parashat Bamidbar Ends 9:07P.M.
28 3	29 4	30 Shavuot Dinner  8:01P.M	31 6 First Day of Shavuot  9:10P.M			

JUNE, 2017
SIVAN-TAMMUZ, 5777

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 Sivan 7 Second Day of Shavuot Yizkor 10:45 Festival Ends 9:11P.M	2 8  8:03P.M	3 9 Parashat Naso Ends: 9:12P.M.
4 10	5 11	6 12	7 13 Rabbi's Class "G-D, Jews &History 10:30-Noon	8 14	9 15  8:07P.M.	10 16 Parashat B'haalotecha Ends 9:17P.M.
11 17	12 18	13 19	14 20 Rabbi's Class "G-D, Jews &History 10:30-Noon	15 21	16 22  8:10P.M	17 23 Parashat Sh'lach Ends 9:20P.M.
18 24	19 25	20 26	21 27 Rabbi's Class "G-D, Jews &History 10:30-Noon	22 Sisterhood Meeting & luncheon 12 Noon	23 29  8:12P.M	24 Parashat Korach Rosh Chodesh Ends 9:21P.M.
25 <i>Tammuz 1</i> Rosh Cho- desh	26 2	27 3	28 4	29 Sisterhood Book Club 10:30 A.M.	30 6  8:12PM	

Address page