

Congregation Sha'arey Ha-Yam

Newsletter for JULY 2012

www.shaarehayam.org

Message from the Rabbi:

The holiday of *Tisha b'Av* (literally, "the 9th of Av") will be observed this year on July 28-29. *Tisha b'Av* commemorates the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem as well as other calamities in Jewish history. The first such destruction – by the Babylonians – occurred in 586 BCE. The Temple was rebuilt, only to be destroyed, this time by the Romans, in 70 CE. All that remains today is what's known as the Western Wall, a part of what was once an outer retaining wall that surrounded the Temple itself, as well as sections of other structures on the southern exposure. Those of you who have visited Israel are, no doubt, familiar with what I'm describing.

The destruction of the Temples presented our sages with a tremendous dilemma. God had made a promise to Abraham and his descendants to bring them to their own land where they would be a sovereign nation, carrying out and proclaiming God's will as understood in the commandments in the Torah. If this was God's promise, how could it have been undone? How to understand the expulsion of the Jewish people from their land and their subsequent dispersion throughout the world? Our rabbis found it inconceivable that God would allow the covenant to be revoked, and so they searched for an explanation that could allow them to continue to understand God's promises – and God Himself - as uncompromising and eternal. And they found one. The cause of the expulsion, they reasoned, was *not* due to any unfaithfulness on God's part. Rather, it was the fault of the people themselves who, as a result of **internal** strife, had made themselves unworthy of the privilege of living in the Holy Land. The sages called this *sinat chinam*, "baseless hatred." This terrible quality, they said, had led to the completely understandable and appropriate punishment they received - destruction and banishment. Ever since, Jewish spiritual leaders have counseled their people to maintain cordial and mutually respectful relations with their fellow Jews. "Look where *sinat chinam* can lead," they taught. "Intracommunal hatred can result only in our own undoing."

Sadly, this advice is too often ignored in the Jewish world. The level of discourse has coarsened, both in Israel and elsewhere. Terrible accusations and insults are hurled from community to community, leader to leader. Many issues currently divide us, and one of the most contentious is the matter of equal rights for gay and lesbian Jews in general and marriage equality in particular. The real question is how we manage the significant differences of opinion that divide us.

In May I gave a sermon in favor of marriage equality, drawing my argument from Jewish texts and values. Shortly after, the editor of *The Jewish Journal* invited me to write an essay on a topic of my choice. So,

after a few minor edits, I submitted the sermon I'd recently given; it was printed in mid-June. I've received a number of responses from readers, and I thought you might be interested in hearing a few of them.

The first one read: "I read Rabbi Geringer's article titled Marriage Equality and was very impressed with her interpretations and ideas. As a parent of a gay daughter and a member of PFLAG ["Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays"] of Ocean County, I wanted to thank her for her beautiful article and hope one Friday night to attend a service of hers." Similarly, another read, in part, "I recently read your commentary...and felt the need to write to you and tell you how much I respect you and your ideas. I am a 74 year-old widow...In my opinion, any rabbi is a teacher and assumes...responsibility to teach...So thank you for choosing to give your opinion on a topic which I believe deserved to be dealt with ...so that all people can have an equal chance at love, equality and happiness."

Then there was this, from a gentleman in Lakewood. (Note that although the article clearly identified me as a rabbi, this writer does not afford me that courtesy, referring to me instead as either "Ms. Geringer," or just "Geringer."):

"It is certainly admirable and even a great Mitzvah to practice love and tolerance for each and every Jew. But there are limits. Ms. Geringer's "Marriage Equality" article exceeded any conceivable limit. Editors and readers of a more liberal bent will be tempted to accuse me of hatred or intolerance. They may even say I am advocating the death penalty for homosexuals as set forth in Leviticus. But my view is based on the one thing that makes us all Jewish: the Torah. When Geringer takes the Torah's clear prescriptions against same gender marriage and sexual practices and turns them around to teach the opposite, she debases and corrupts what it is to keep the Torah as our covenant with G-d and with each other. As for the death penalty or any other form punishment, I wish no one any harm at all. I only wish that we could all have due respect for the teachings of the Torah. The Torah is not modeling clay to be shaped to conform to current attitudes. On the contrary, it is the timeless word of the Creator of all things, who, in His infinite wisdom and loving-kindness gave us instructions for living healthy spiritual, moral and physical lives. Please take me off your mailing list for the Jewish Journal."

So there you have it. No doubt, each side of this issue hopes to be able, one day, to convince the other. Will it happen? Probably we hope so with equal fervor. In the meantime, our challenge is to address one another civilly, despite what are sometimes profound differences between us. Other than refusing to accord me my title, my critic used language that was restrained; I've seen much, much worse. I don't know if *sinat chinam* was truly the reason for the Temple's destruction but I do believe that character assassination, blatant disrespect, threats and intimidation hurled from one part of the Jewish world to another diminish us in ways that may have a profound impact now and in the future.

Rabbi Kim S. Geringer

President's Message:

I found the following story online and was so impressed, I thought I would pass it on to you. We, as Jews, are always the first in the world to do things. Rabbi Alysa Stanton was ordained June 6 in Cincinnati where she graduated from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, as mainstream Judaism's first black woman rabbi. She will become the rabbi at Congregation Bayt Shalom in Greenville, N.C., a 53-family congregation affiliated with both the Conservative and Reform movements, on August 1.

Scholars believe Stanton will be the first black clergy woman in the history of a religion that traces its roots back thousands of years to Old Testament patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The Reform and Conservative movements of Judaism first began ordaining women in the 1970s and 1980s. But no black woman has been ordained until now.

Stanton said she was attracted to the culture, creed and social justice work of Judaism. "It involves more than worship," she said. "It's a way of life." In 1987, she converted, becoming one of the few black members of Denver's largest synagogue, Temple Emanuel, where she taught religion and was a cantor. With academic degrees in psychology and counseling from Colorado State University in Denver, Stanton worked as a psychotherapist before enrolling in Hebrew Union College in 2002. She studied in Israel her first year.

"I was their first choice," she said. "They were my first choice." The irony of a black woman presiding over a white congregation in the deep south is not lost on Rabbi Alysa Stanton. "God has a sense of humor," she said.

We send to Rabbi Stanton our sincere congratulations.

As to the local news, the Executive Board has approved the use of Nancy Katz to design and manufacture the modernistic styles of Torah covers and Ark curtain as selected by a vote of the members at the last congregation meeting. The Long Beach Island Foundation (LBIF) has made their facilities available for this wonderful endeavor. The painting dates of Monday, August 6th and Tuesday, August 7th from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM will be the two dates available for the choosing of a style and the application of the paints. This is a wonderful way for you, our members, to participate in and make a donation to your congregation. If the weather is good, we will be able to use an outdoor space. If not, we will be limited to a maximum of 15 people at a time. Further information concerning the carrying out of this project will be forthcoming.

May you have a happy summer,

Aaron Shapiro, President

Get Well Wishes to:

Rita Gold, Joel Polter, Gary Daley, Terry Silverman, Beatrice Roth and Joseph Breese.

Mazel Tov to:

Philip and Laura Miller upon the Bat Mitzvah of Rachel Anne Miller

Following is a list of the committees and the names of the volunteers for each one:

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Chair/Members</i>
MEMBERSHIP	Cyndy Friedland
RITUAL	Volunteers needed, Hal Polon. (Music: Philip Altland, Stan Jackson) (Greeter: Rose Jackson)
FUNDRAISING	Dayna Otto, Syble Bleiweis, Madelyn Dunn, Bari Cohen, Gina Cohen, Rena Kreisler, Cyndy Friedland, Rhonda Daley
SUNSHINE	Syble Bleiweis, Arlene Armstrong, Harriet Cohen
HOSPITALITY	Volunteers needed, Arlene Armstrong, Ruth Schlyen
RELIGIOUS SCHOOL	Cyndy Friedland, Phil Miller
PUBLICITY	Aaron Shapiro
YHRZEITS	Aaron Shapiro
NEWSLETTER	Rosalie Donadio, Hope Gardiner
ONEG & DINNERS	Madelyn Dunn, Philomena Jonas, Sheila Erlich, Pat Barndt, Wendi Higgins

Contact **Aaron at 242-2390** or email at shap1010@comcast.net if you wish to become a member of one of these committees. We need your expertise to keep our congregation moving forward. All our committees need volunteers.

ADULT EDUCATION....

Iris Harari, our new Hebrew Teacher, is available to start Adult Education Classes for us. We need to know what you are interested in; Hebrew 101, basics and some conversational Hebrew, Life in Israel, What it was like to be in the Yom Kippur War, and whatever you would like to learn about! Please email Cyndy Friedland at Cfriedland119@comcast.net with your wish list. There will be a fee for the course, and we will also open these classes to non-members.

HEBREW 101 UPDATE:

Iris Harari is leading our adult students through our Hebrew 101 course. The curriculum consists of learning the Hebrew alphabet and recitation of prayers used in our Services: for Shabbat and High Holidays. We are thrilled that so many are participating in the first offering of this class. If interest is continued (please respond to me if you are interested), another class will be offered in the fall.

Contact and/or email Cyndy at cfriedland119@comcast.net or call 609-698-4459 regarding participation. There will be a charge for the class to be determined.

Cyndy Friedland, Director, Hebrew School

Yahrzeit July 2012

July 1	Rose Lewis-Gross	Mother of Sam Lewis
July 3	Sarah Platman	Mother of Thelma Polon
July 9	Sarah Halpert	Mother of Marlene Feldhuhn
July 16	Nathan Sales	Father of Maralyn Ricciardi
July 19	Dorothy Heineman	Mother of Syble Bleiweis
July 27	Gladys Coken	Mother of Phil Cohen

URGENT NOTICE

PLEASE NOTE: To have the name of your loved one listed in *The Bulletin* and announced at Services by the Rabbi on the anniversary of their Yahrzeit, contact Aaron Shapiro at 17 Sea Girt Lane, Waretown, NJ 08758 or call **(609) 242-2390**. The list must be updated; even if you have sent in a name/names, response is necessary in order to insure that this process is up to date and that your Yahrzeit will be announced.

Please email Sue Shapiro at shap1010@comcast.net with birthday and anniversary information.

July Birthdays

04	Rachel Miller
04	Thelma Polon
07	Craig Cohen
18	Karen Kolb
24	Alex Majewski
27	Rita Gold

Belated birthday wishes to Arlene Armstrong, June 15.

July Anniversaries

none

JULY NEWS FROM THE FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE:

*We are once again doing a fundraiser with honey for Rosh Hashanah. The cost is \$10.00 per bottle. The company does all the packing and shipping. Participants need to provide names and mailing addresses for the people they are sending honey to. The absolute deadline to order is Friday, August 3rd. See Madelyn at services or contact her at **609-660-1614** or email justmemad@aol.com.*

Oneg Sponsorship: Do you or your family have a simcha to share with our congregation? What better way to celebrate than sponsoring an Oneg! We offer several levels that can be sponsored, \$50, \$75, and \$100. Our Onegs include wine, juice, challah and other desserts. The upper levels include fruit and extras to enhance the Oneg. Kindly contact **Madelyn Dunn at 609-660-1614** to reserve your date.

Help Wanted! Congregation Sha'arey Ha-Yam has beautiful logo T-shirts available in all sizes for only \$10.00 apiece. "Recipes to Remember" our very own cookbook is a 3-ring binder with an included easel for free-standing on a countertop. Each cookbook is filled with over 180 recipes with lots of tips, hints and suggestions. The cookbook sells for \$18.00 and makes an excellent gift for friends or family, and is a wonderful keepsake as well. T-shirts and cookbooks are always available at services.

2012 SCHEDULE OF SERVICE 7:30 PM (DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE).

PLEASE NOTE THAT SERVICE DATES HAVE BEEN CHANGED FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST.

July 13	September 26 Yom Kippur; Break the Fast
July 27	October 2 (erect Sukkah on Tuesday)
August 3 (NEW DATE)	October 5
August 17 (NEW DATE)	October 19
September 7	November 2
September 16 Erev Rosh Hashanah	November 16
September 17 Rosh Hashanah	December 14 Hanukkah
September 25 Erev Yom Kippur	December 28

Book Review

The Bride from Odessa by Edgardo Cozarinsky

Set in Buenos Aires, Lisbon, Vienna, Budapest and Odessa. Both before and after WWI, the eleven haunting stories in “The Bride from Odessa” belong to a great Argentine cosmopolitan tradition: they tell of the uprooted exile who settles down in a strange but proud land and looks back nostalgically to the Europe of his ancestral memory. In stories that change both in time and continents Edgardo Cozarinsky delves into the hearts of characters who struggle to distance themselves from the past while they find themselves drawn irrevocably back into it. Here is the tale of an ambitious young Jew, about to marry and embark for a new life in Argentina, who is accosted by an unknown woman who departs with him for Buenos Aires; that of a pianist in a Buenos Aires nightclub who finds himself pulled back to the Germany of 1937; the story of an Argentine-American Jew who travels to Lisbon to unravel the threads of his grandparents’ wartime affair; and of an elderly man and woman who meet, with fatal consequences, years after one had betrayed the other. Provocative and mysterious, *The Bridge from Odessa* is a secret landscape, populated by writers, lovers, scholars, artists and dreamers, from one of the most compelling new voices in fiction.

This collection of stories is excellently written, addicting to read, and takes you on a ride across several continents in its exploration of Jewish migration during and following World War 2. Its range of subject matter is impressive -- the book has stories set in different time periods & places, each with different and unique goals. Cozarinsky's style is metropolitan and compelling and the use of style to convey points is well done -- for example he uses excerpts of letters and other historical documents to call into question the truthfulness of memory. The stories are a quick read but made me want to read more, and I am eager to return to the book to catch all the details I missed the first time through.