

CONGREGATION AGUDATH JACOB

June Iyar/Sivan 5779
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From the Desk of



Rabbi Ben-Zion Lanxner

SHAVUOT

“It Comes Easy for You Rabbi, You Were Born Religious”

Is that true?

It's an argument I hear all the time. People will approach me at weddings and after funerals, they'll stop me on the street and corner me in the supermarket, and attempt to explain to me exactly why they can't accept more Judaism into their lives: “because they just weren't born into it” is the common answer.

Their parents didn't practice, they didn't attend a Jewish day school or weren't paying attention during afternoon Religious School classes. They can't read Hebrew fluently, they've never felt comfortable in shul, and they're sorry, but they feel that it's definitely too late to start now.

There have been tens of thousands of *ba'alei teshuvah* over the last few decades—men and women who weren't born into religious families but who have chosen to become Torah-observant Jews. We all have the free choice to change and the ability to succeed. Admittedly, it might be harder to pick up a new language and to adopt new rituals at a relatively advanced

age, but it definitely can be done, if only one wants it enough.

No matter what we've been doing till now, we can and must do better in the future. The training we've received to date and the legacy we inherited from our parents and teachers are useful only if we utilize them to better ourselves in the future.

We were all born holy, with a pure and Holy soul, as we say in our morning prayers “ - אל- הי,נשמה שנתת בי טהורה היא “

“My G-d, the soul You have placed within me is pure” and, at the same time, we still must all improve further and go forward one Mitzvah at a time.

On Shavuot, **we all become *ba'alei teshuvah*** and we all promise to convert. It makes no difference where we've come from; the real question is, where are we heading?

Perhaps even more extraordinary than *ba'alei teshuvah* are *geirim*, converts, who weren't born Jewish and yet have taken the audacious step of transforming their lives and casting their

lot in with ours. We welcome them aboard, and we admire their courage, their passion and their love for the G-d of Israel, His Torah and His People, the Jewish Nation.

G-d is speaking to all of us, all the time. We only have to listen..." **Hear Oh Israel, Sh'ma Israel**" and be the witnesses to the rest of the world, that **Ado-nai Echad, He is One**.

If you think about it, Shavuot is the festival where we celebrate this capacity to adopt Judaism and commit oneself to G-d. The men and women clustered around Mt. Sinai didn't really know what they were getting into, but they were willing to find out.

Right then and there, they chose G-d and promised to spend the rest of their lives changing, learning and practicing until they got it right. It's not easy, but it's worth it.

Let me tell you a real story that just happened to me as I was writing this article and had to make a break to talk to someone who came to my office in need of advice. After a short while, he left and I went back to my article. That someone I just had a talk with was a student in my conversion class, and what he said to me was invigorating: after all he is been observing, learning and questioning, he said to me that the rewards from becoming a Jew are so great and overwhelming that he truly can't wait until he finalizes his conversion process with the Beit Din and Mikvah. He is so anxious to be reborn with a Jewish soul.....You can't imagine the satisfaction a Rabbi gets from undertaking this beautiful Mitzvah to bring those souls, who were actually at Sinai at the Giving of the Torah, to be reincarnated into new Jews, is something very hard to describe....but, believe me, it's very real.

When Moses climbed the mountain to receive G-d's commands to His new nation, G-d instructed him to "say to the House of Jacob and tell the Children of Israel." **כה תאמר לבית יעקב ותדבר לבית ישראל**

Biblical commentators point out that the variant expressions "**the House of Jacob**" and "**the Children of Israel**" are a reflection of the different types of people whom Moses was addressing.

Jacob and **Israel** are both names of our forefather Jacob. **Jacob** was the name that he was given at birth, and reflects his identity as an innately holy Jew, born to spiritually pure parents. **Israel** is the name that he received when, as an adult, he demonstrated the courage and maturity to struggle against adversity and independently chose to transform himself.

The "**House of Jacob**" is a reference to our birthplace. We don't get to pick our parents, and we have done nothing to deserve the treasures into which we're born. The "**Children of Israel**," by contrast, describes us as the adults we have become, who choose our own paths in life and deserve the rewards that we have personally earned. G-d was instructing Moses to speak on both levels and tailor his message to every stage in the journey through life.

When we gather in the synagogue on Shavuot to hear the Ten Commandments and receive the Torah anew, let us be truly grateful for the gifts we've received in the past, and let us promise to transform ourselves into the people that G-d wishes us to become—and thus earn the reward that He is confident we deserve, to be a "Kingdom of priests and a Holy Nation".

So that we can truly accomplish our one and only mission on this earth: To be a Light to the Nations of the World: Or Lagoyim. Am Israel Chai!

Chag Shavu'ot Same'ach! Happy Festival of Shavu'ot!

Rabbi Ben-Zion Lanener

Some Interesting Traditions & Customs for Shavu'ot

It is customary to decorate the synagogues and home with greens, in remembrance of the miracle, where although in a desert, Mt Sinai was blooming and covered with greenery.

Tikun Leil Shavu'ot

It is customary to remain awake through the night for study of Torah and the reading of the Tikun-for-the-Night-of-Shavuot. Shavu'ot celebrates the day when G-d gave us the Torah on Mount Sinai. By studying all night, we show our love and enthusiasm for this precious gift.

Another explanation for staying up all night is that the Jews at Mount Sinai over-slept on that historic Shavuot morning! G-d had to "wake them up" to teach them the Torah (sound familiar?). We rectify this by staying up all night, to ensure that we won't sleep late on this day.

Staying up all night is not a halacha nor a Jewish law, but rather a custom for those who feel they are physically up to it.

Reasons for eating Milk foods on Shavu'ot

There is a beautiful tradition that highlights the theme of milk and honey on Shavu'ot, by sweetening the dairy foods and challah bread with honey from bees, dates or figs. This is because the Torah is compared to the fulfilling and enriching quality of milk, and to the sweet and pleasurable quality of honey, as in the verse metaphorically referring to G-d's giving of the Torah: "Honey flows from Your lips, honey and milk from under Your tongue" (Song of Songs 4:11).

Until the giving of the Torah, the Jews were permitted to eat meat of animals which were not kosher as well as meat of animals that had not been slaughtered in accord with the laws of shechitah (kosher slaughtering). After the giving of the Torah, shechitah and the laws of forbidden foods were prescribed for them. Since all their utensils and dishes thereby became prohibited and they were unable to make them kosher, they could only eat milk foods.

The Numerical value of the Hebrew letters which constitute the Hebrew for Milk, **chalav**, חלב add up to forty, corresponding to the forty days spent by Moses on Mount Sinai'.

Matan Torah -The Giving of the Torah

Why the Torah was Given in the Wilderness

And they encamped in the wilderness (Exodus 19). The Torah was given freely, publicly, in an ownerless place. For if it had been given in the Land of Israel, the nations of the world would say that they have no portion in it. Therefore, the Torah was given in this manner, so that whoever wishes to accept it may come and accept it.

'I Am the Lord Your G-d'

Why were the Ten Commandments said in singular? To teach us that each and every Israelite should say: The Ten Commandments were given for my sake and I am obligated to fulfill them.

Why we read the Megillat Ruth on Shavu'ot

David HaMelech, King David was born on Shavu'ot. The Scroll of Ruth concludes with David's lineage.

Ruth is read Shavu'ot because the timing of its events occurred at the beginning of the barley harvest, and this period is also the time of Shavu'ot. Shavu'ot is known as the Harvest Festival.

The reading of Ruth on Shavu'ot is also a reminder of the stand at Mt. Sinai, when the people of Israel received a total of six hundred and thirteen mitzvot - six hundred and six mitzvot in addition to the seven previous Noachide Laws. From her very birth, Ruth was worthy of accepting upon herself the yoke of mitzvot; and the very letters of her name bear witness to it. The letters for Ruth add up to six hundred and six which together with the seven Noachide Laws add up to six hundred and thirteen.

Our fathers had the status of converts when they accepted the Torah (in order to enter the covenant, they were required to undergo circumcision and immersion as is the case with converts). In honor of Ruth who was a convert and became the mother of Israel's royal family, we say, 'When we received the Torah, we were all converts.

Megillat Ruth was written by the Prophet Samuel, to indicate the genealogy of King David for Ruth the Moabite. The story of Ruth is read at the time of the giving of the Torah so that we might know that the written Torah and the Oral Torah, are together one Torah, and one is not Possible without the other. For David, the anointed of G-d unto all generations, was descended from a Moabite woman, and his legitimacy depended on the Oral Torah - which declared that only a Moabite man was prohibited from entering the fold of Israel - but not a Moabite woman. On the foundations of the House of David, the whole people of Israel are supported. All this could only come about through the authority of the Oral Torah.

June Service Schedule

<p><u>Friday, May 31</u> Kabbalat Shabbat 6:00 p.m. Candle Lighting 8:10 p.m.</p> <p><u>Saturday, June 1</u> Shacharit 9:30 a.m. Shabbat Ends 9:10 p.m.</p> <p><u>Friday, June 7</u> Kabbalat Shabbat 6:00 p.m. Candle Lighting 8:14 p.m.</p> <p><u>Saturday, June 8</u> Shacharit 9:30 a.m. Shabbat Ends 9:14 p.m.</p> <p><u>Monday, June 10</u> Shavuot Service 9:30 a.m. Yizkor Service 11:00 a.m.</p>	<p><u>Friday, June 14</u> Kabbalat Shabbat 6:00 p.m. Candle Lighting 8:17 p.m.</p> <p><u>Saturday, June 15</u> Shacharit 9:30 a.m. Shabbat Ends 9:17 p.m.</p> <p><u>Friday, June 21</u> Kabbalat Shabbat 6:00 p.m. Candle Lighting 8:19 p.m.</p> <p><u>Saturday, June 22</u> Shacharit 9:30 a.m. Shabbat Ends 9:19 p.m.</p> <p><u>Friday, June 28</u> Kabbalat Shabbat 6:00 p.m. Candle Lighting 8:20 p.m.</p> <p><u>Saturday, June 29</u> Shacharit 9:30 p.m. Shabbat Ends 9:20 p.m.</p>
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HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

<p><u>June 1</u> Harvey Spark Rifka Hacker</p> <p><u>June 4</u> Yhoshua Via</p>	<p><u>June 7</u> Paula Farmer</p> <p><u>June 8</u> Martin Schwartz Schmuel Via</p> <p><u>June 11</u> Judith Wolstein</p>	<p><u>June 17</u> Ray Via</p> <p><u>June 27</u> Hanna Vaughan</p>
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HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

June 20



Mr. & Mrs. Rick Bauer

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
JAKE BAUER



from Barbara Wolpo

Thank You!

Special Donations:

Robert & Gayle Monta
Leonard Englander
Florence Hersh

Rabbi Discretionary Fund:

Melvin Lipsitz

May Food Sponsors:

Joseph Settle
Rabbi Lanxner
Jim & Morasha Stuckey
Javis Howeth
Programs Committee

Shabbat Donations:

May 4

Miguel Perez
Joseph Settle
Jim & Morasha
Stuckey

May 11

Inez Bonneville
Judy Hersh
Joseph Settle
Jim & Morasha
Stuckey

May 18

Judy Hersh
James & Gabrielle
Howle
Joseph Settle
Jim & Morasha
Stuckey



Refuah Shleimah!

Naman Lipinsky
Lois Goldberg
from
Florence Hersh

Mazel Tov

Naman Lipinsky

from Florence Hersh
for 2 new great grandchildren

Aislinn Brooks

for graduating from Harmony School of Innovation. Aislinn will be attending University of North Texas in the fall to study theater education. She also plans to be a counselor at CYJ.

Rifka Hacker

for graduating from Midway High School. Rifka plans to attend The Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City in the fall to earn her bachelor's degree. Rifka hopes to move on from there to a fashion business career with some of the top tier designers and fashion boutiques in either Tel Aviv, New York, or Los Angeles.

In Loving Memory



Leona Faye Stuckey

Jim & Morasha
Stuckey

Murray Hersh

Florence Hersh

Hyman Novy

David Novy

Barnett Sachs

David Novy

Richard Lamar

Brinkley

Dianne deMoville

Rebecca Brickman

Bobbye Brickman

Rhua Settle

Joseph Settle

Ruth Bell

Ken & Lois Germain

Deana Stupak

Barbara Wolpo

Leon & Connie

Salvayon

Dana & Scott Jones

Abbye & Susan Silver

Minnie Rubel

Melvin Lipsitz

In honor of Lori Gilbert-Kaye an ultimate Eshet Chayil

May her memory be a blessing to us all

Jim & Morasha Stuckey

HOW TO OBSERVE THE YAHRZEIT

It is traditional to kindle a Yahrzeit Candle in the home on the evening Yahrzeit begins. It should remain lighted until sunset the next day. Possible prayer before lighting a Yahrzeit candle: Eternal God, I/we light this candle in memory of (name) _____, my/our beloved (relationship) _____. The light of the flame rekindles all the warm memories of the moment we shared together and reassures me /us that a piece of his/her soul dwells in my/our heart(s) forever. May his/her soul be bound up with the bonds of eternal life. Amen. Candles are available at the Gift Shop. Every effort should be made to say Kaddish at congregational services. It is meritorious to perform some Mitzvah or to contribute to the synagogue in commemoration of the deceased.

Kaddish will be read on June 7

<i>Sivan 4</i>	<i>Morris Brickman</i> <i>Max Harris</i> <i>Frances Lebowitz</i>
<i>Sivan 5</i>	<i>Ervin Graubard</i> <i>Abe Schwartz</i> <i>Esther Zackin</i> <i>Hazel Warnstaff</i> <i>Audrey Mendelson</i>
<i>Sivan 6</i>	<i>Rosa Keen</i> <i>Jake Kirschner</i> <i>Sarah Stein</i>
<i>Sivan 7</i>	<i>Mary Meinstein</i> <i>Golda Faigle Wizig</i> <i>Betty Birnbach</i> <i>Hector Lago</i>
<i>Sivan 9</i>	<i>Sol Cohen</i> <i>Jolan Halpern</i> <i>Frank Sifuentes</i> <i>David Stein</i> <i>Barbara Andrews</i>
<i>Sivan 10</i>	<i>Mrs. A. Adelman</i>

Kaddish will be read on June 14

<i>Sivan 11</i>	<i>Klaire Schwarz</i>
<i>Sivan 12</i>	<i>Yehashaua Nechemiah ben</i> <i>Gershon</i> <i>Nathan Gurwitz</i> <i>Max Zelen</i>
<i>Sivan 13</i>	<i>Esther Neuwirth</i> <i>Jennie Novich</i>
<i>Sivan 15</i>	<i>Israel Berkman</i> <i>Shirley Gardner</i>
<i>Sivan 16</i>	<i>Willie Rosen</i>
<i>Sivan 17</i>	<i>Jonas Jacobs</i> <i>Jacqueline Leeds</i> <i>J.M. Rosenberg</i> <i>Sylvia Chernoff</i>

Kaddish will be read on June 21

<i>Sivan 18</i>	<i>Louis Fred</i> <i>Pearl Goodman</i> <i>Rose Todd</i>
<i>Sivan 19</i>	<i>Howard Hoppenstein</i> <i>Phil Smith</i> <i>Zelda Taub</i>
<i>Sivan 20</i>	<i>Rabbi Isaac Caplan</i>
<i>Sivan 21</i>	<i>Edward Fred</i> <i>Hannah Moser</i> <i>Selma Schulman</i> <i>Henry Spelke</i> <i>David Hoppenstein</i> <i>S. Barnett Sachs</i>
<i>Sivan 22</i>	<i>Morris Goodman</i> <i>Dorothy Gulman</i> <i>Harry Rubel</i>
<i>Sivan 23</i>	<i>Celia Cohen</i> <i>Louis Levy</i>
<i>Sivan 24</i>	<i>Isadore Budin</i> <i>Mrs. Bessie Taub</i>

Kaddish will be read on June 28

<i>Sivan 25</i>	<i>Alvin Adelman</i> <i>Edith Schwartz</i>
<i>Sivan 26</i>	<i>Harry H. Schwarz</i>
<i>Sivan 27</i>	<i>Jack Chodorow</i> <i>Barney R. Goldberg</i> <i>Milton Harelik</i> <i>Sol Herzlich</i> <i>Bernard Wolstein</i> <i>Julius Caesar Genecov</i> <i>Nathan Julius Genecov</i>
<i>Sivan 28</i>	<i>Mrs. Nathan Zidman</i>
<i>Sivan 29</i>	<i>Mary Bertha Englander</i> <i>Fannie Fogel</i> <i>Herman Rich</i>
<i>Sivan 30</i>	<i>Morris Novy</i> <i>Abe Weitzman</i> <i>Hilda Ruttenberg</i> <i>A.J. Farmer</i>

June 2019

27 Iyar 5779 - 27 Sivan 5779

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

							1 4:54AM/7:52PM §8:37PM Shacharit 9:30 a.m. 27 Iyar/42 L'Omer Bechoros 45
2 4:54AM/7:53PM §8:38PM Yom Yerushalayim Minyan 9:30 a.m. Viewing of "Above and Beyond" 11:00 a.m. 28 Iyar/43 L'Omer Bechoros 46	3 4:53AM/7:54PM 29 Iyar/44 L'Omer Bechoros 47	4 4:53AM/7:54PM Rosh Hodesh 1 Sivan/45 L'Omer Bechoros 48	5 4:52AM/7:55PM 2 Sivan/46 L'Omer Bechoros 49	6 4:52AM/7:56PM 3 Sivan/47 L'Omer Bechoros 50	7 4:52AM/7:56PM ij7:38PM Kabbalat Shabbat 6:00 p.m. 4 Sivan/48 L'Omer Bechoros 51	8 4:52AM/7:57PM §8:42PM/ij8:42PM Erev Shavuot Shacharit 9:30 a.m. 5 Sivan/49 L'Omer Bechoros 52	
9 4:52AM/7:58PM §8:43PM/ij8:43PM Shavuot 6 Sivan Bechoros 53	10 4:51AM/7:58PM §8:43PM Shavuot II (Yizkor) Service 9:30 a.m. Yizkor 11:00 a.m. 7 Sivan Bechoros 54	11 4:51AM/7:59PM 8 Sivan Bechoros 55	12 4:51AM/7:59PM 9 Sivan Bechoros 56	13 4:51AM/8:00PM 10 Sivan Bechoros 57	14 4:51AM/8:00PM ij7:42PM Kabbalat Shabbat 6:00 p.m. 11 Sivan Bechoros 58	15 4:51AM/8:01PM §8:46PM Shacharit 9:30 a.m. 12 Sivan Bechoros 59	
16 4:51AM/8:01PM Minyan & Classes 9:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. 13 Sivan Bechoros 60	17 4:51AM/8:01PM 14 Sivan Bechoros 61	18 4:51AM/8:02PM 15 Sivan Arachin 2	19 4:51AM/8:02PM 16 Sivan Arachin 3	20 4:52AM/8:02PM 17 Sivan Arachin 4	21 4:52AM/8:03PM ij7:45PM Kabbalat Shabbat 6:00 p.m. 18 Sivan Arachin 5	22 4:52AM/8:03PM §8:48PM Shacharit 9:30 a.m. 19 Sivan Arachin 6	
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30 4:55AM/8:03PM Minyan & Classes 9:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. 27 Sivan Arachin 14							