

Ha Shavuah B' Sha'arey Israel

May 7 - 14, 2009

13 - 20 Iyar, 5769

Candle lighting time 8:03 p.m.
Friday May 8

Happy Mother's Day!



Friday Evening Kabbalat Shabbat Services begin at 6:15 p.m.
Saturday morning Shabbat Services begin at 9:30 a.m.

Parashat Emor (Torah commentary on pg. 2)
Annual: Leviticus 21:1 - 24:23 (Etz Hayim, p. 717)
Triennial: Leviticus 22:17 - 23:22 (Etz Hayim, p. 722)
Haftarah: Ezekiel 44:15 - 31 (Etz Hayim, p. 735)



We wish a Happy Birthday this week to:

Theresa Rosengart, Carol Kaplan, Brenda Turetsky, Ricky Katz, Alex Koplín and Alan Kirsh

and a Happy Anniversary to:

Sheila & David Elkon

This week we remember the Yahrzeit of:

Freida Goodrich, Annie Karesh, Samuel Schwaber, Philip Carter, Mae Z. Robinson, Michael Goodrich, Louis Schwartz, Arthur Reifler, Sam Goodrich, Isadore Goldstein, Lena Slotchiver, Mary Divinsky, Ann Goldman, Berl Rubel and David Van Ollefen

This week's Sunday School principal is Brian Crabtree



**Plan to join us for the Teen Class Shabbat
And confirmation of Molly Bayme, Josh Cohen,
Matthew Schwartz and Ellen Ziesenhene**

Friday May 22

Make your reservations now for dinner



**Ellen and Joe Finkelstein invite you to join them for the
simcha of their son Will Finkelstein's Bar Mitzvah**

Friday May 29 6:15 p.m.

Saturday May 30 - 9:00 a.m. *

*Shabbat morning services will begin at 9:0 because it is Shavuot



Tuesday evening, May 12, at 7:00 PM, local Christian groups including Marketplace Men and the Northway Baptist Church will hold an Israel Independence Day Celebration at the Northway Baptist Church located at 5915 Zebulon Road

Special Guest: Ronnie Porat, Res. Israel Special Emissary - Jewish National Fund



Annual Congregational Meeting

Sunday May 31 – 4:00 p.m.

Last day of Sunday School
Awards * swimming * games * picnic
Sunday May 17 10:30 - 12:30
at the Cohen's home
102 Howard Oaks Dr.



MAZEL TOY TO OUR COLLEGE GRADUATES!!



Jacob Elkon ([University of Michigan](#)) and Ben Katz ([University of Georgia](#))

Don't forget the CSI Gift Shop for all your gift needs.
weddings graduations* housewarming gifts* *birthdays*
anniversaries * B'nai Mitzvahs



Parashat Emor

This week's commentary was written by Rabbi Batsheva Appel Director of Rabbinic Services, ISJL

Learning people's names is not easy for anyone. I have a good short term memory for names and I have tried to hone that skill to help in my work as a rabbi, particularly in my teaching. Part of learning names is learning how someone prefers to be called, and I have found that there are two groups of people: those who are very strict about what you call them and those who don't really care as long as you don't call them "late-for-supper."

God is in both camps. There are many different names for God that we can use, from the formal *Adonai* to the Rock to the Creator to the Holy One to the less formal *Hashem*, "the Name," and this list represents just a few possibilities. But there is also strictness in how God is to be addressed. There are two different ways that the treatment of God's name comes up in Parashat Emor, this week's Torah portion. We are warned not to profane God's name by our actions and we are warned not to desecrate God's name by our words.

You shall faithfully observe My commandments: I am the Lord. You shall not profane My holy name, that I may be sanctified in the midst of the Israelite people - I the Lord who sanctify you, I who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God, I the Lord. [Leviticus 22:31-33]

We can profane or sanctify God's name by our actions. The negative prohibition against profaning God's Name and the positive injunction to sanctify the Name of God, by how we act, by how we observe the *mitzvot*, are derived from these verses. The laws are addressed to the priests, commanding them to be faithful in all of the rituals that God expects from them. But it also applies to us, as Hertz notes in his commentary: "Although spoken in reference to the priests as the appointed guardians of the Sanctuary, this commandment, both in its positive and negative forms, was early applied to the whole of Israel." According to Plaut, this can be summed up as "Jews must so live and act as to win for their God the respect of all people." The definition of our actions extends beyond the rituals of Judaism to how we act with each other in our communities and how we act in the world to make it a better place. By our actions, whether it is Jewish ritual or social justice or our interactions as community, we have the possibility to sanctify God's name.

We can also profane or sanctify God's name by our words, although only the prohibition is illustrated in this week's Torah portion. In Leviticus 24 is the story of a man who commits blasphemy, but the details of exactly what he said are unclear. Rabbi Harold Kushner comments in *Etz Hayim*, "This is a puzzling incident. Did the blasphemer curse God, curse someone else using the name of God, or simply pronounce God's name without due reverence?" Early rabbinic interpretation of the incident seems to indicate that the offense is cursing or reviling God's name. Later interpretation equates blasphemy with pronouncing the most sacred names of God in inappropriate ways. Blasphemy was seen to be a capital crime and such a severe offense that witnesses were not to use the actual words they heard when testifying. At the conclusion of the trial, in order that the sentence could be passed, the court was to be cleared, the witnesses were to say what they heard, and the judges were to rend their garments on hearing the testimony, in the same manner that those who mourn tear their clothes.

Were people actually executed for saying God's name improperly? Rabbi Louis Jacobs suggests: "The whole subject is more than a little obscure so far as Jewish law is concerned and there is hardly any evidence that trials for blasphemy took place among Jews in post-biblical times." That blasphemy was considered a crime punished by death indicates the severity of the crime. Robert Alter, in his translation of the Torah, states that blasphemy would have been "understood to be a threat to the community itself." Nehama Leibowitz sees more than the community as being threatened. "Blasphemy is a debasement of human dignity, the erasure of the Divine image in man." The reaction to such a grave offense would require the ripping of some clothing.

If we still practiced the tearing of garments on hearing the improper use of the name of God, we would be walking around in tatters. Think of how many times we say "Oh, my God" in conversation. If we add in all of the times people include OMG, "Oh, my God" in text messages, instant messages, and emails, there wouldn't be much left to tear, let alone to wear. Saying God's name casually does not bring us closer to God, it devalues God's name and sets us farther apart from the Holy One. God does not come into our lives through all of the times that we say the words "Oh, my God" unthinkingly. God comes into our lives through prayer*, worship, and study, in other words, those times that we intentionally say God's name while preserving the sacredness of the Name.

Many of us long to draw closer to God, to have the sense of God's presence in our lives. We can cultivate that sense of presence by how we treat God's name. When we act in a way that celebrates God, through ritual, through our actions for social justice and through our actions in community, we sanctify God's name. When we speak in a way that celebrates

God, by saying God's name intentionally in our words of prayer, worship, and study, whether individually or as a community, we sanctify God's name.

Hallelujah.

* Prayer is not limited to the words in books set down by others. "Oh, my God" can be a prayer, if that is the intention of the one who is saying the words.

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**For other commentaries on this week's Torah portion check out these sites:**

[Aish.com](http://Aish.com)

[AJU](http://AJU)

[JTS](http://JTS)

[MyJewishLearning.com](http://MyJewishLearning.com)

[USCJ Torah Sparks](http://USCJ Torah Sparks)

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Interested in participating more in Shabbat service?

Lead a portion of services

Read Torah

Chant the Haftarah

Call Rabbi Bat-Or and she will help you make it happen.

Congregation Sha'arey Israel make a little extra money

1. visit www.goodsearch.com for your online searches. This won't cost you anything but CSI makes a penny each time to search
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Quick links:

[CSI Macon Online](#)

[United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism \(USCJ\)](#)

[JTS Podcast - this week's Parsha](#)

[Audio Siddur](#)

[Global Jewish News Service](#)

[Israeli News Broadcast – in English](#)

[Crash Course in Jewish History](#)

[The Jewish Ethicist](#)

[The Jewish Women's Archive](#)

[Hadassah](#)

[Synagogue 3000](#)

[Learn through USCJ online](#)

[AJU - Walking with God series](#)

[The William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum](#)

For the children (or the young at heart):

[Torah Portion Coloring Pages](#)

[Babaganews Torah Parasha of the week movie](#)