

Ha Shavuah B' Sha'arey Israel

May 28 – June 4, 2009

5 Sivan – 12 Sivan 5769



Candle lighting time 8:18 pm
Friday
May 29

Friday Evening Kabbalat Shabbat Services begin at 6:15 pm
Saturday morning Shabbat Services begin at 9:00 am

Parashat Shavuot 2nd Day (Torah commentary on pg. 2)
Annual: Deuteronomy 14:22 – 16:17 (Etz Hayim, p. 1074)
Maftir : Numbers 28:26 - 31 (Etz Hayim, p. 932)
Haftarah: Habakuk 3:1 – 19 (Etz Hayim, p.1326)



Mazel Tov to Reeda & Doug Katz on the birth of their granddaughter.



We wish a Happy Birthday this week to:

Scott Bayme, Robert Donner, Gail Krapf and James Gaudet

and a Happy Anniversary to:

Anslie & Joshua Perkel, Stephanie & Paul Kross, Sharon & Bernie Baum

This week we remember the Yahrzeit of:

Louis Oscherwitz, Eli Lehman, Sol Schwartz, Diana Eisinger, Lee Carter, Rhonda Marlene Cohen, Ida Gordon Chanin, Henry Koplin, Annie S. Levy, Myar Nirenstein, Blanche Krugman Rosenberg, Harry Chanin, Samuel Schwartz

***Shavuot
Service Schedule***

Day 1:

Friday, May 29 - 9:00 am
6:15 pm

Day 2, Yizkor:

Saturday, May 30 - 9:00 am



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

**Friday May 29 6:15 pm
Saturday May 30 9:00 am***

*Shabbat morning services will begin at 9:00 am because it is Shavuot.



**Annual Congregational Meeting
Sunday May 31 - 4:00 pm**

Minutes from last year's meeting were mailed out last summer. If you cannot find your copy & would like us to email you another please contact Addie at the CSI office.

Don't forget the CSI Gift Shop for all your gift needs.

Weddings* *Graduations* *Housewarming Gifts

Birthdays* *Anniversaries* *B'nai Mitzvahs

We have a wedding registry for Leah Schallheim & Valiant Haller.

Free gift wrapping and local delivery.

Call Terri or Deborah to help you with your shopping needs.



Parashat Shavuot 2nd Day

Commentary by Rabbi Shraga Simmons, the senior editor of Aish.com and the director of JewishPathways.com. He is also regarded as an expert on media bias relating to the Middle East conflict, and was the founding editor of HonestReporting.com.

Shavuot (Exodus 19:1 - 20:23)

- Humility and Mt. Sinai -

The Midrash says allegorically that when God was preparing to give the Torah, all the mountains stepped forward and declared why they thought the Torah should be given on them.

"I am the highest mountain," said one. "No," said another, "I am the steepest mountain and therefore the Torah should be given on me." One by one, they all stated their claims. But in the end, God chose Mount Sinai - not because it was the tallest or the grandest (because it's not, as anyone who's toured the Sinai Desert will attest), but because, says the Midrash, it is the most humble.

TRUE CHARISMA

What is this notion of "humility" and what does it have to do with Torah?

First, let's clarify what humility is not. Humility does not mean a meek reluctance to speak up or be assertive. Humility is not slouching your shoulders and having low self-esteem. The Torah (Numbers 12:3) refers to Moses as "the most humble person who ever lived" - and yet he aggressively confronts Pharaoh, fights a war against Amalek, and stands up to castigate the Jewish people.

Judaism defines humility as "living with the reality that nothing matters except doing the right thing." That means the humble person is not dependent on the opinion of others. Because sometimes doing the right thing is popular (and consistent with one's ego needs), and sometimes it's not. But the humble person can set his ego aside, if need be, in order to consistently do the right thing.

In the secular world, the biggest personalities are usually the most arrogant. Imagine a movie star walking into a party: strutting, cocky, nose upturned. His mannerisms shout: "I am great and I don't need you or anybody else." The room is silent with awe. Charisma!

Judaism says this is counterfeit charisma. The arrogant person is not concerned about right and wrong. If necessary, he'll embarrass someone, lie, and even steal to suit his own ego needs.

- **"Arrogance"** = I'm all that counts.
- **"Humility"** = What's greater than me is what counts.

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STEPPING FORWARD, STEPPING BACK

Humility is the ability to be objective about one's own position vis-a-vis everyone else. If I am in the position to lead, then I should lead. And if not, I should defer. I must know where I stand, and not take undue liberties. If I am in the presence of someone more knowledgeable, I should think twice before speaking. There is nothing more annoying than an accountant standing in a roomful of doctors and pontificating on medical science.

Rabbi Simcha Bunim of Pshischa (19th century Europe) always carried two slips of paper - one in the right pocket and one in the left. On one paper was written the Talmudic statement, "The entire world was created just for me" (Sanhedrin 38a). On the other paper was written the words of Abraham, "I am but dust and ashes" (Genesis 18:27). In this way, he was reminded that there are times to step forward, and times to step back.

The higher a person becomes spiritually, the more humble he becomes. As we get closer to God, we become more realistic about our own limitations, vulnerability and mortality. We internalize the reality that every human's position is tenable and only God is eternal. Moses was called "the most humble" because when he stood before God he knew his place. Anything else precludes room for God to fit in. That's why the Talmud likens arrogance to idol worship; both push away the presence of God.

Rabbi Rafael of Barshad (19th century Europe) summed it up as follows: "When I get to heaven, they'll ask me, why didn't you learn more Torah? And I'll tell them that I'm slow-witted. Then they'll ask me, why didn't you do more kindness for others? And I'll tell them that I'm physically weak. Then they'll ask me, why didn't you give more Tzedakah? And I'll tell them that I didn't have enough money. But then they'll ask me: If you were so stupid, weak and poor, why were you so arrogant? And for that I won't have an answer."

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TOOLS FOR HUMILITY

So how do we achieve humility? The first thing a Jew does upon awakening in the morning is to say the "Modeh Ani" prayer: "I acknowledge You, God, for graciously returning my soul for yet another day. Thank you!"

Step One of humility is to put our relationship with God into perspective. We feel the "we," rather than the self-indulgent, negative energy. We emerge more relaxed, calm and flexible. And this in turn trickles down to all our interpersonal relationships: business partnership, marriage, community and nation-building.

More tools for gaining humility:

- Read eulogies. They're a good dose of humility. They help us get perspective on the true meaning of life. Try to write your own obituary. For what do you want to be remembered?
- Use humility to rise above arguments. You don't have to respond to every insult.
- Ask a close friend to give you criticism. As we more clearly see our own faults, we are less likely to be arrogant toward others.

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LET GO - AND LET GOD

A crucial step to humility is found in the opening verse of the Book of Numbers. "And God spoke to Moses in the Sinai Desert." The Sages ask a fundamental question: Why was the Torah given in a desert? Because a desert is empty.

What this means is that to acquire Torah - to receive God's wisdom - we must first be willing to open up space inside.

As we prepare for the Shavuot holiday and reliving the Sinai experience, the message for us is to know our place, make some space, and let the truth of God and His Torah enter deep inside.

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

Aish.com

[ISJL Taste of Torah](http://ISJL.TasteofTorah)

JTS

MyJewishLearning.com

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

Here is a link for the summer issue of the Next Step Newsletter from the USCJ. http://www.uscj.org/images/4957_NextStep_SU09_3.pdf

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.

There are still two easy ways for you to help
Congregation Sha'arey Israel can 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 you search.

2. for all your online shopping needs go to csimacon.org and click on our Amazon.com link.

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