

Ha Shavuah B' Sha'arey Israel

June 11 – June 18, 2009

19 Sivan – 26 Sivan 5769



Candle lighting time 8:25 pm
Friday June 12

Friday Evening Kabbalat Shabbat Services begin at 6:15 pm
Saturday morning Shabbat Services begin at 9:30 am

PARASHAT B'HA'ALOTEKHA (Commentary on Page 2)

Annual: Numbers 8:1 – 12:16 (Etz Hayim, p. 816)
Triennial: Numbers 9:15 – 10:34 (Etz Hayim, p. 821)
Haftarah: Zekhariah 2:14 – 4:7 (Etz Hayim, p. 837)

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**Mazel Tov!** to Elliot Stein, grandson of Sivia Lipson, on his graduation from High School.

### We wish a Happy Birthday this week to:

Ina Chanin, Eva Cogar, Tracey Schwartz, Sydney Jackson, Sadie Gerson, Ellen Goodrich, Renee Schwartz, Ashlyn Bernstein, Doug Katz, Stuart Schwartz and Anslie Perkel

### This week we remember the Yahrzeit of:

Linda Lamb, Annie Becker Marshall, Max Nathan, Hermina Stern Spielberger, Hyman David Kaplan, Mark Zarks, Dorothy Mark Pross, Shelby Starner, Fannie Zailen Mark, Zelig Wolf, George Brahn, Oscar Klein, Max Turner, Samuel Pollock

## **It's CSI Yearbook Time!**

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Do you want your personal ad to be the same  
as last year? How about your business ad?  
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birthday or anniversary?**

**To make any changes for the 2009-2010 Directory  
you must call Beth Cohen at 474-1221 by July 1<sup>st</sup>.**

**Thank you for your support and cooperation.**



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We are missing quite a few books from the Library.



So check around your homes to see if you have any
and then please return them. Thank you!!

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**Please continue to send in your surveys, and remember  
each adult member of the congregation can send one in.**

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Mark your calendars ~
Tisha B'Av Service
Wednesday - July 29 – 8:00 PM

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**Parashat B'ha'alotekha**

*Commentary this week is by Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson who is Vice-President of the University of Judaism in Los Angeles and Dean of its Ziegler School of Rabbinical Studies. He served as a congregational rabbi in Southern California for ten years. Rabbi Artson is the author of "The Bedside Torah" and co-author of a children's book, "I Have Some Questions about God".*

**Trying To Remember The Reason I Forgot** - Being constantly engaged in learning allows us to guard against the pervasive forgetfulness around us.

The human mind presents us with both a marvel and a mystery. Capable of mastering a remarkable range of complex tasks, of remembering obscure experiences or facts, that same organ will also forget an important appointment, an acquaintance's name, or the contents of this morning's breakfast. Simultaneously able to outperform a computer in our manipulation of data into concepts, each of us also faces the unpleasant reality that we continually forget information we desperately desire or need.

Anyone who has reviewed notes taken in college or remarks scribbled in the margins of books read years ago has admitted to the enormity of what is routinely forgotten. It is not uncommon for authors to report rereading their own writing after the passage of several years with the uncomfortable sense that they are no longer the masters of what those essays or books contain.

Today's Torah portion hints at this problem, and the rabbinic tradition suggests a remarkable reason for such frustrating lapses of memory. In our portion, Moses "told the people of Israel that they should keep the Passover." Nothing surprising here, Moses often tells the Jewish people what they should or should not be doing.

But the midrash Sifrei Ba-Midbar objects that, in this case, the information he conveys is redundant. Didn't the Torah already relate in the Book of Leviticus that "Moses declared the festival seasons of the Lord to the people of Israel?" So why does he have to repeat himself now?

Sifrei goes on by answering its own question. "This teaches that he heard the passage of the festival seasons at Sinai and stated it to Israel, and then went and repeated it to them when the time had actually arrived to keep the rules ... He stated to the people the laws for Passover at Passover, the laws for Shavuot at Shavuot, and the laws for Sukkot at that season."

Why does Moses repeat the same injunction twice? Because he knows just how forgetful people can be. Recognizing that even the most intelligent, learned, and scholarly people forget much of what they learn, Moses knew that the Jews would have to be reminded of the appropriate *mitzvot* (commandments) just before the time of their observance.

Keen student of the human heart that he was, Moses knew that learning is ever renewed, or it is lost. Learning is not a possession, something to have. It is a process of growth and ingestion that is a permanent accompaniment to human life. Mistakenly viewing learning as conquest leads to the gradual loss of competence in a professional field--that is why so many professions require continuing education to be able to remain active, why professors and Rabbis need regular opportunities to renew themselves through study, even sabbaticals. Knowledge and wisdom do not merely grow stale. They dissipate if not made fresh each day.

Midrash Kohelet Rabbah understood that point, insisting that, "It is for our own good that we learn Torah and forget it; because if we studied Torah and never forgot it, the people would struggle with learning it for two or three years, resume ordinary work, and never pay further attention to it. But since we study Torah and forget it, we don't abandon its study."

Here, the Rabbis make a virtue out of what might otherwise look like a universal shortcoming of human life. Even what we cherish, even what we spend hours poring over, trickles through the sieves of our minds, ultimately lost to us.

The corollary of this forgetfulness is the imperative to make learning a life-long process. Keeping a Jewish book by the side of the bed, enrolling in an adult-study program at the synagogue, seminary or university, learning Hebrew through cassettes, courses and books, all of these are ways not only of keeping our minds supple and our knowledge growing, but in fact provide the only possible antidote to the pervasive forgetfulness around us.

One of the laws of thermodynamics is the principle of entropy--that everything returns to chaos eventually. In the world of biology and physics, only the investment of new energy can counter the inevitable spread of disorder. True of the world of spirit as well, Judaism has made a cardinal *mitzvah* out of Talmud Torah, Jewish learning. Jews in study together, the Mishnah teaches us, experience in the process the presence of God. So go ahead; learn a little.

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

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

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

[JTS](http://JTS)

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

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

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](http://www.uscj.org/images/4957_NextStep_SU09_3.pdf)

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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.

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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](http://www.goodsearch.com) for your online searches. This won't cost you anything but CSI makes a penny each time you search.

every time you



CSI earns



2. for all your online shopping needs go to [csimacon.org](http://csimacon.org) and click on our Amazon.com link.

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Quick links:

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[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](#)