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May, 2009  
 7 Iyar - 8 Sivan 5769  
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Sisterhood co-Presidents:

Jo Gartenhaus and Sonya Garfinkel

## Gratitude, Condolences, and Congratulations

Thanks to Mark Lillianfeld and Jacques Sebban for planning and operating the first Hillel - Sons of Abraham Saturday kiddush. Chef Mark and sous-chef Jacques made good use of the moral support of Becky Lillianfeld to create an event that will certainly be repeated May 2 and that, we hope, will continue to strengthen the link between Sons of Abraham and Hillel in coming semesters.

Congratulations to Christine Krushen on her graduation from Bryn Mawr College (more news on our distinguished scholar and world traveler

appears on page 8.) Thanks to Sonia Barash for programming and hosting for an excellent presentation on Yom HaShoah done by Joyce Field. Continuing thanks to all those who maintain Friday and Saturday services.

## Yahrzeits

Name	Hebrew Date	English Date
Silver, Anne	Iyar 7	May 1
Brodsky, Harry	Iyar 12	May 6
Salzman, Jacob	Iyar 13	May 7
Horwich, Rose	Iyar 13	May 7
Berk, Jean	Iyar 17	May 11
Goodman, Dora	Iyar 20	May 14
Paul, Laivy L.	Iyar 21	May 15
McMurray, Paul	Iyar 24	May 18
Feinstein, Jacob	Iyar 26	May 20
Winski, Ab.	Sivan xx	May 25?
Levine, Harris	Sivan xx	May 25?
Goodman, Samuel	Sivan 4	May 27
Litman, Max	Sivan 4	May 27
Spector,		
Jacob Aaron	Sivan 5	May 28
Berger, Mose	Sivan 6	May 29
Salzman, Freida	Sivan 7	May 30
Goldstine, Leo	Sivan 7	May 30

Klatch, Louise		
Solomon	Sivan 8	May 31
Bass, Samuel	Sivan 10	June 2
Roger, Louis J.	Sivan 10	June 2
Altman, Maynard	Sivan 10	June 2

## Rabbi's Reflections

### Think About Silence

Think about silence. What comes to mind? Some might think about the presence of quiet, or the absence of noise, or even of sound. Others about a time we said something and wished we had not, "foot in mouth," or as in the Cheerios commercial where the wife asks her husband, "What else does the box say?" "The box says, 'Shut up, Steve!'" Still others about apathy, fear, or evil, the silence in the Simon and Garfunkel song, *The Sounds of Silence*, or the silence of walking down a deserted street late at night.

In Pirquei Avot, The Rabbis' Maxims (often, Ethics of the Fathers, which we read this time of year), silence has another function: Shim'on (Simeon) his (Rabban Gamli'el's) son said, "All my life I was raised among the scholars and I found that no virtue becomes a person more than silence; not study (midrash) but action (ma'aseh) is the chief thing; and verbosity brings on sin" (1:17). Silence can be a virtue, used as a positive force. There is a "pregnant silence," meaning, "a significant, meaningful silence." Imagine the song, Anatevka from Fiddler on the Roof without pauses. Supposedly Arthur Rubinstein, the famous pianist, said that the difference between great and lesser players is not in how they play the notes, but how they play the pauses. A great actor can communicate without words, think of Gene Wilder, or listening to Elie Wiesel, and watching his eyes.

Tales are told of Hasidic rabbis who conversed for hours without saying anything. Rabbi Menahem Mendel of Warka was known as the "silent tzaddiq," when praying he literally followed Psalm 65:2, "To You, silence is praise." He said that people possess a silent shout, that the real cry of prayer is worship within the heart, without uttering a sound. Silence is both an expression of kavvanah, intention and involvement, and of modesty. We see echoes of this in the `Amidah, what I call the Standing, Silent Devotional.

Silence can also be good advice, as in the expression, "Ignore him and he won't bother you." Silence can be a tactful way out of a difficult circumstance. When we are silent, we can concentrate on listening to the other person, not planning our response. After we hear the message, we might better weigh our words, discovering that we do not need to respond, and we might prevent sticky situations and say fewer hurtful words.

Silence is the rule of thumb for bikkur holim (visiting the ill) and nihum aveilim (comforting the mourners—see Pirquei Avot 4:23). When visiting the ill, the tradition says only family and close friends visit the first two days, all others wait until the third day. We do not want to cause additional pain and suffering by overburdening them with too many visitors (Yoreh De'ah 335:1). Nor are we to bear bad news or mourn in their presence (Ibid. 337) as we are not to depress the person and retard recovery.

Similarly, when visiting mourners, only relatives and close friends should visit before the burial to help with arrangements and during the first two days (except, of course, for services when they need a minyan to say Kaddish). Waiting until the third day gradually re-introduces them into the community, as well as spreading out the visits and making sure that the last days also have visitors as the reality begins to dawn on them. Moreover, we should not greet them socially when we visit and be

silent until they open the conversation. Indeed, mourners should not greet us or respond to our greetings for at least the first two days, if not all seven. People always ask me what they should say. Tradition relieves us of the burden and also directs our conversations towards their needs and wishes, and to talk about the deceased. Our mere presence is enough and we should not remind them of social conventions and etiquette when they should not worry about them (Ibid. 385). Before I was a rabbi, I once went to visit a woman in the hospital. They told me that she was not seeing anyone and recently told her husband to leave the room. To the staff's surprise, she eagerly told me to enter. I sat. Eventually she spoke. As I was about to leave, I asked her why me. She replied because I knew how to sit and say nothing and only speak about her wishes.

Another version of Shim'on's saying (Avot de Rabbi Nathan) adds Proverbs 10:19 Where there is much talking, there is no lack of transgressing; But one who curbs the tongue shows sense, and Proverbs 17:28 Even a fool, if he keeps silent, is deemed wise; Intelligent, if he seals his lips. Rabbi Simeon ben Tzemah Duran (1361-1444, Spain and North Africa) notes that a human has two ears but only one tongue, so speech ought to be little and hearing much. Shim'on says that verbosity leads to sin, while silence leads to study and study to action. Rabbi Duran also notes that practice without study is not the ideal, for a person without knowledge does not know what to do, but study which leads to practice is best, so it is enough for one who wishes to practice, to listen, and from listening to learn the right action, and so one holds one's peace.

Silence allows us time to assess and to respond, keeping us from making mistakes and offering us a course of action that causes a minimum of hurt feelings. Silence, therefore, is a vehicle for communication utilized to our benefit if we take

advantage of its potential. Shim'on rightly calls silence a great virtue.

## **Yummy Yummy! The Shul Picnic's on the Way**

Can you beat a juicy grilled kosher hot dog or hamburger? Of course not. So, come with a healthy appetite to Happy Hollow Park on Sunday, June 7, at 6 p.m. Save the date now.

## **Have a Look at This: Gleanings from the Web**

Would you like to know why some versions of Smart Balance Margarine were temporarily not pareve? That is only one of myriad facts to be found at [www.ou.org](http://www.ou.org), the site of the Orthodox Union. Just as one does need to be Jewish to eat Rosen's, neither does one have to be orthodox to find any number of interesting items, subscriptions, and downloads on this site. However, if you prefer to keep organized religion out of your life, you can do that by changing just one letter. The website of Americans United for Separation of Church and State awaits you at [www.au.org](http://www.au.org). If you want the lowdown on what they call swine flu in Israel, log on at <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1081546.html> For a wide range of different sources on Jewish subjects, you might look at <http://www.worldjewishdaily.com/> If you want a good library of Jewish jokes, we often use <http://www.awordinyoureye.com/index.html>

## **Congregation Terminates Experiment**

A meeting of SOA members whose 2008 dues were paid to their normal level of participation was held on April 19 and the congregation terminated all experimental formats for Saturday minyanim.

## Shul Board Solicits Donations to Special Purpose Funds

The Shul board was recently asked to publicize the various funds to which one can make donations to the Shul. When other funds are established, they will be listed.

The Chosnek Fund, named for **Sam and Edith Chosnek**, is for ritual. For example, the fund could be used to repair or replace such things as Torah covers and the like.

The Elkin Fund, named for **Barry Elkin**, is for educational purposes. It might be used, for example, to pay part of the cost of bringing a speaker.

The 100th Anniversary Fund, established by **Ed Simon**, is for capital expenses in building maintenance. This fund provides a naming opportunity for remodeling our building.

The recently established Ha Gomel fund is to celebrate recent recoveries from illness.

### Sons of Abraham Special Funds Donation Form

Enclosed please find my check in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_. Please apply it to:

Ha Gomel (recovery) of \_\_\_\_\_

100th Anniversary Fund (Building) \_\_\_\_\_

Elkin Fund (education) \_\_\_\_\_

Chosnek Fund (ritual) \_\_\_\_\_

Donation in honor / memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Is the donor's name to be held in confidence? \_\_\_\_\_

Send check with this form to Sons of Abraham  
P.O. Box 2671 / West Lafayette, IN 47996-2671.  
Donations will be acknowledged.

Donor(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## Gifts Received

### In memory of Harriet Berger:

Duplicate Bridge Club of Lafayette  
Becca (Wolinsky) and Gus Galante  
Cyrille Simon

Julie and Richard Basney

Patricia and Harold Crumley

Carole L. King

Sandy Pearlman

### In memory of Herman Cember:

Cyrille Simon

Sandy Pearlman

### For the Ha Gomel Fund:

Sandy Pearlman (to wish continued good health to Madelyn Lillianfeld)

## Rabbi's Calendar

May 1 - 3 and May 15 - 17

## Call for Minyanim

Fellow congregant, **David Sanders**, will be convening minyanim in memory of his father. Contact him at «[retrovir@purdue.edu](mailto:retrovir@purdue.edu)» or, if need be, by phone at 743-8580, to offer assistance in completing the minyanim.

## Refuah Shelema

Almighty God, we offer prayers for health and long life to **Sarah Raskin, Sara and Barney Axelrod, Rabbi David Blumofe, Dr. Leslie Pearlstein, Rabbi Gedalyah Engel, and Sylvia Cember.**

## The Good News, Thank G-d

Sid Diamond spent two nights at the hospital upon his return from Arizona and is now back on the road to good health. Sylvia Cember is recovering from a fall. She has been released from the hospital.

## May Candle Lighting Times

source: The Orthodox Union «[www.ou.org](http://www.ou.org)»

**Friday, May 1: 8:24 p.m.**

**Friday, May 8 : 8:31 p.m.**

**Friday, May 15 : 8:38 p.m.**

**Friday, May 22: 8:45 p.m.**

**Friday, May 29 (First Day of Shavu'ot): 8:51 p.m.**

## Shavu'ot

*You shall count for yourselves -- from the day after the Shabbat, from the day when you bring the Omer of the waving -- seven Shabbats, they shall be complete. Until the day after the seventh sabbath you shall count, fifty days... You shall convoke on this very day -- there shall be a holy convocation for yourselves -- you shall do no laborious work; it is an eternal decree in your dwelling places for your generations. -Leviticus 21:15-16, 21*

Shavu'ot, the Festival of Weeks, is the second of the three major festivals with both historical and agricultural significance (the other two are Passover and Sukkot). Agriculturally, it commemorates the time when the first fruits were harvested and brought to the Temple, and is known

as Hag ha-Bikkurim (the Festival of the First Fruits). Historically, it celebrates the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, and is also known as Hag Matan Torateinu (the Festival of the Giving of Our Torah).

The period from Passover to Shavu'ot is a time of great anticipation. We count each of the days from the second day of Passover to the day before Shavu'ot, 49 days or 7 full weeks, hence the name of the festival. See The Counting of the Omer. The counting reminds us of the important connection between Passover and Shavu'ot: Passover freed us physically from bondage, but the giving of the Torah on Shavu'ot redeemed us spiritually from our bondage to idolatry and immorality. Shavu'ot is also known as Pentecost, because it falls on the 50th day; however, Shavu'ot has no particular similarity to the Christian holiday of Pentecost, which occurs 50 days after their Spring holiday.

It is noteworthy that the holiday is called the time of the giving of the Torah, rather than the time of the receiving of the Torah. The sages point out that we are constantly in the process of receiving the Torah, that we receive it every day, but it was first given at this time. Thus it is the giving, not the receiving, that makes this holiday significant.

Shavu'ot is not tied to a particular calendar date, but to a counting from Passover. Because the length of the months used to be variable, determined by observation (see Jewish Calendar), and there are two new moons between Passover and Shavu'ot, Shavu'ot could occur on the 5th or 6th of Sivan. However, now that we have a mathematically determined calendar, and the months between Passover and Shavu'ot do not change length on the mathematical calendar, Shavu'ot is always on the 6th of Sivan (the 6th and 7th outside of Israel. See Extra Day of Holidays.)

Work is not permitted during Shavu'ot.

It is customary to stay up the entire first night of Shavu'ot and study Torah, then pray as early as possible in the morning.

It is customary to eat a dairy meal at least once during Shavu'ot. There are varying opinions as to why this is done. Some say it is a reminder of the promise regarding the land of Israel, a land flowing with "milk and honey." According to another view, it is because our ancestors had just received the Torah (and the dietary laws therein), and did not have both meat and dairy dishes available. See Separation of Meat and Dairy.

The book of Ruth is read at this time. Again, there are varying reasons given for this custom, and none seems to be definitive.

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## Sisterhood Happy Day and Memorial Cards

Sons of Abraham members are invited to participate in the Sisterhood Happy Day and Memorial Card program. For a \$5.00 donation to the Sisterhood, members can have the Sisterhood mail out either a Happy Day or Memorial Card to whomever they wish. To order, call **Iris Treager** (463-2468) or **Sheila Wolinsky** when she is town. When Sheila is away for the winter, call **Bette Rubinstein** (463-4754). When we hear about them, these donations will be listed in the Bulletin.

### Recent gifts:

\* **A donation to the SOA Sisterhood was made in memory of Harriet Berger by Claire Cohen, a cousin of Harriet's.**

## Shul Board to Meet

The Board of Directors of the Shul will meet at 8:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 21 at the Shul. Meetings are open to members of the Shul.

## May Calendar

May 1 - 3: Rabbi Rascoe will be in Lafayette.

May 1: Fri. 8 p.m. Shabbat evening service.

May 2: Tues., 10:00 a.m. Shabbat morning service, with special kiddush presented by students from Hillel with assistance from the Lillianfeld family.

May 5: Tues., 7:30 p.m. Sisterhood Board Meeting. Home of Heather Moskowitz.

May 6: Wed., Noon. Hadassah Donor Luncheon Lafayette Country Club. Program: *Dramatic Readings from Shared Stages: Ten American Dramas of Blacks & Jews*

May 8: Fri. 8 p.m. Shabbat evening service.

May 9: Tues., 10:00 a.m. Shabbat morning service

May 13: Wed., Noon. Sisterhood Closing Luncheon Lafayette Country Club. Program presented by Esther Chosnek, Master Gardener.

May 15 - 17 Rabbi Rascoe will be in town.

May 15: Fri. 8 p.m. Shabbat evening service.

May 16: Sat., 10:00 a.m. Shabbat morning service

May 21: Thurs. 8:00 p.m. Shul Board Meeting

May 22: Fri. 8 p.m. Shabbat evening service.

May 23: Sat., 10:00 a.m. Shabbat morning service

May 29: Fri. 8 p.m. Shabbat evening service. First Day of Shavu'ot

May 30: Sat., 10:00 a.m. Shabbat morning service



Sari Garfinkel, age 4, whose Dad is Eli Garfinkel and whose Mom is Naomi Lasky. Josh and Sari are twins.



Josh Garfinkel, age 4, whose Dad is Eli Garfinkel and whose Mom is Naomi Lasky.



To the right, are (upper) Maya Garfinkel, age 4, and (lower) Leila Garfinkel, age 2. They are the daughters of Dina and Noah Garfinkel.

**Second Day of Shavu'ot The Shavu'ot Dairy Lunch has been cancelled**

## **I Told You So**

It's all your fault, fellow congregants. I begged and begged for photos of your families. The Tubis, Harris and Prohofsky families responded generously, but that was it. So, I threatened to include pictures of Sonya and Alan Garfinkel's grandchildren. Well, I don't make empty threats.

## Miriam (Mickey) Lobstein

It is sad to report the passing of Miriam (Mickey) Lobstein (on March 3) even for those of us who came to Sons of Abraham after she left. That is because this remarkably gifted artist left us examples of her talent in the sanctuary for all to see. We know, for example, of one torah cover and to see more, you need only to look around the sanctuary during Sukkot when her wall hangings are displayed .

## Christine Krushen, World Class Scholar and Traveler

Hershel Krushen reports that Christine Krushen is "all but assured" of having won a fellowship to continue her studies at the postgraduate level at Harvard University. Her field is Slavic Languages. Christine was recently the guest of Cyrelle Simon in Jerusalem. There she met members of the British branch of the Simon family and was invited to stay with them in London for a while. The Simons then arranged for Christine to visit friends of theirs who live in St. Petersburg, Russia. We wish Christine health, happiness, and success in her future endeavors.

## Last Laughs

This is most of the text from a little book called "The Optimist Sees the Bagel, the Pessimist sees the Hole. (Life's Little Jewish Instruction Book) by Leonard Sorcher which may be seen at <http://www.verifine.org/Humor/jewish.html>

\* The optimist sees the bagel, the pessimist sees the hole.

\* If you can't say something nice, say it in Yiddish.

\* It's not who you know, it's who you know had a nose job.

\* Who else could have invented the 50 minute hour?

\* WASPs leave and never say good-bye. Jews say good-bye and never leave.

\* Twenty percent off is a bargain; fifty percent off is a mitzvah.

\* Remember, even Sandy Koufax didn't play ball on Yom Kippur.

\* Israel is the land of milk and honey; Florida is the land of milk of magnesia.

\* Never pay retail.

\* Pork is forbidden, but a pig in a blanket makes a nice hors d'oeuvre.

\* No one leaves a Jewish wedding hungry; but then again, no one leaves with a hangover.

\* The High Holidays have absolutely nothing to do with marijuana.

\* And what's so wrong with dry turkey?

\* Always whisper the names of diseases.

\* One mitzvah can change the world; two will just make you tired.

\* If you don't eat, it will kill me.

\* Anything worth saying is worth repeating a thousand times.

\* The most important word to know in any language is sale.

\* Never take a front-row seat at a bris.

\* Prune danish is definitely an acquired taste.

\* Next year in Jerusalem. The year after that, how about a nice cruise?

\* Never leave a restaurant empty-handed.

\* Spring ahead, fall back, winter in Miami Beach.

\* A bad matzoh ball makes a good paperweight.

\* A schmata is a dress that your husband's ex is wearing.

\* Without Jewish mothers, who would need therapy?

\* Before you read the menu, read the prices.

\* There comes a time in every man's life when he must stand up and tell his mother he's an adult. This usually happens at around age 45.

\* If you're going to whisper at the movies, make sure it's loud enough for everyone else to hear.

\* No meal is complete without leftovers.

\* Laugh now, but one day you'll be driving a big Cadillac and eating dinner at four in the afternoon.

\* Schmeer today, gone tomorrow.