



****We will be having an important congregational meeting on Friday,
December 6 at 6:00pm****

Message from the Rabbi –December 2013

The Last, Best and Absolutely Definitive Word on Thanksgiving and Chanukah 2013/5774!

Dear friends

I know you've heard, read and probably talked about this. But here's the best explanation I've come across, and you can dazzle your friends, family and acquaintances with it. My source is Dr. Joel Hoffman, an amazing scholar who focuses on translation, Hebrew, and the Bible but loves mathematical puzzles as well.

For starters, Dr. Hoffman says, we need to remember that the 4th Thursday in November can range from the 22nd to the 28th, and that, on average, Thanksgiving falls on the 28th about every seven years. (It's not exactly every seven years because leap days throw things off a little.)

The Jewish month of Kislev can currently start as early as November 3 or as late as December 2, which means that the first day of Hanukkah can come as early as November 28 or as late as December 27.

The reason for the broad range of possible dates is that the Jewish calendar is a mix of the lunar and

solar. The months are based on the cycles of the moon. But our calendar changes the lengths of those months, and even how many months are in a year, to make sure that Passover always falls in the spring. (Same goes for our other season-specific holidays.) This complex system was established by one Rav Shmuel in the first half of the first millennium CE and ensures that the Jewish date and the secular date match up every 19 years. (By contrast, the Muslim calendar is all lunar, which is why Ramadan can occur during any time of the solar year. The Christian religious calendar is almost entirely solar with Easter occurring on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox, around March 21, a calculation that involves the moon as well as the sun.)

One-hundred and fifty-two years ago, in 1861, the first day of Chanukah and the 4th Thursday in November were both on November 28th. But there was no Thanksgiving back then.

Because of this Jewish 19-year cycle, 19 years from now, in the year 2032, Hanukkah will again fall on November 28. But Thanksgiving in that year falls three days *earlier*, on the 25th.

On average, we would expect the 19-year Jewish cycle and the 7-year Thanksgiving-on-November-28 cycle to coincide about every 19×7 years, which is to say, approximately every 133 years. And they sort of do.

One-hundred and fifty-two years ago, in 1861, the first day of Chanukah and the 4th Thursday in November were both on November 28th. But there was no Thanksgiving back then! And in another 152 years, in 2165, Thanksgiving falls on the 28th, and you'd expect Hanukkah also to fall on the 28th, but it doesn't. That's because Rav Shmuel (remember him?), thought that the year was 365.25 days long. (So did everyone else back then.) This is why we have a usual year of 365 days, but every 4th year we add a leap day in February to make 366.

But Shmuel — again, like everyone else — was off by a little more than 11 minutes. The year is not quite 365.25 days long, but, rather, closer to only 365.2425 days, or about 11 minutes shorter than 365.25 days. For a long time no one noticed those 11 minutes. For a longer time no one cared. But by the time of Pope Gregory XIII in 1582, those 11 minutes per year — or about 3 days per 400 years — had added up to about ten days.

This meant that March 21, which had once been the approximate date of the spring equinox, was now 10 days later than the spring equinox. This was a problem for the Church, because the springtime holiday of Easter was shifting further and further away from spring.

Pope Gregory fixed the problem in two ways: by cutting 10 days from the calendar and eliminating 3 leap days every 400 years. This became known as the Gregorian calendar, and it gradually spread through the Christian world. (Can you believe he figured this out without any “device” except his brain??)

Jews, of course, didn't care what Pope Gregory said. They kept using Shmuel's calendar for their calculations. The Shmuelian calendar and the Gregorian calendar have been diverging at the rate of about 11 minutes a year, or 3 days every 400 years. So not long after the year 2100, the Jewish

calendar and the secular calendar will diverge by an additional 1 day.

This is why (remember the question from several paragraphs ago?) in the year 2165, when we'd expect Thanksgiving and Chanukah to coincide again, Chanukah will actually be one day later. And that is why Thanksgiving and Chanukah will never again coincide.

Got it? Good! Let's review:

The reason Chanukah can move around the calendar so much has to do with the Earth's orbit and the imperfections of our calendar systems. It takes the Earth approximately 365 days 5 hours and 48 minutes to orbit the sun. Since neither the Gregorian calendar nor the Jewish calendar averages out to exactly this length, not even when you take leap years into account, the summer solstice is slowly creeping earlier and earlier on the Gregorian calendar, and it will move backward through May, April, March, and eventually all the way back to June 21 over the course of a million-odd years. On the Jewish calendar, the solstice is set to loop around even quicker, at “only” every 80,000 years. However, if Jews don't ever abandon the calculations based on the Shmuelian calendar, Chanukah will keep getting later and later — moving through winter, then into spring, summer, and finally back into fall — so that tens of thousands of years from now it and Thanksgiving will again coincide. But long before then the springtime holiday of Passover will have moved deep into summer, so be on the lookout for a memo with a calendar update in the next several thousand years.

And in the meantime, I hope that you had a wonderful Thanksgiving and that the end of the secular year 2013 is a light-filled one for you and all your loved ones. With thanks to Dr. Joel Hoffman, calculator extraordinaire!

Chag urim sameach! (Happy holiday of lights!)

Rabbi Kim Geringer

P.S. Mark your calendars for Feb. 14, 11,506, when Valentine's Day will become Valentinukkah's Day!

??????ASK THE RABBI??????



Have a religious question that you have wanted to ask the Rabbi? Well here is your chance to submit via **email to info@shaareyhayam.org**, use **the website or send a letter to A Reform Jewish Community, P.O. Box 1268, Manahawkin, NJ 08050 Attention Rabbi Geringer**. The Rabbi will select some questions and they will be published, along with her answers, in the newsletter.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

"Any change, even a change for the better, is always accompanied by drawbacks and discomforts."

As we continue to evolve our relatively young congregation, we will come up against both opportunities and obstacles. Changes may either be forced upon us, or sought out by us for our betterment. Sometimes these two will merge.

We will be having an important congregational meeting on Friday, December 7, at 6:00pm. Please make an effort to attend if you can. We will be discussing and possibly taking action on some important topics regarding our future.

By the way, the above quote is from a novelist named Arnold Bennett. I had not heard of him before, but thought it was a good quote.

Philip Miller

Chanukah Lighting Barnegat Town Hall



CONGREGATION SHA'AREY HA-YAM BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Past President	Aaron Shapiro	609-242-2390	shap1010@comcast.net

Yahrzeits

בראבא ve yitkadash sh'mei יתגדל

December 10, 2004	Beatrice Sales, Sister-in-Law of Maralyn Riccardi
December 14, 1995	Paul Donadio, Husband of Rosalie Donadio
December 16, 2005	Marian Polon, Mother of Hal Polon
December 18, 1964	Emanuel Berlin, Grandfather of Syble Bleiweis
December 23, 1978	John Patrician, Father of Rose Jackson
December 31, 1997 (Teveth 21)	Cecelia Topper, Mother-in-Law of Samuel Lewis
December	Ruth Lessig, Grandmother of Dr. Ben Lessig
Correction of November 3 Yahrzeit Benjamin Chasanoff, Father of Deanna Bovasso	

Happy Anniversary

December 21, 1961 Syble & Ernest Bleiweis



December 31, 1958 Dolly/Mike Weiss



ברוכים הבאים

A Belated (sorry) welcome to **Barry and Luci Lewishon** of Waretown to our congregation family.



December 6 Myles Levy



December 8 Cyndy Friedland



December 9 Rosalie Donadio



December 12 Dolly Weiss



December 12 Inez Levine



December 17 Shelly Wallerstein



December 24 Michael Dunn



TRIBUTE CARDS SENT

- ❖ Tribute to: Arlene Armstrong from Ruth and Gary Schlyen
- ❖ In Honor of her son Bradley's engagement



- Phil Cohen who is recuperating after a medical procedure.

JEWISH FACTS DECEMBER 5

- 1776 (24th of Kislev, 5537): For the first time the Chanukah candle is kindled in the newly independent United States.
- 1782: Birthdate of Martin Van Buren, eighth President of the United States. Van Buren intervened in the so-called Damascus Affair, seeking to use the good office of the Presidency to protect the lives and well-being of a group of Syrian Jews who had been falsely accused in another round of the "blood libel."



Support our Congregation and Hebrew School

On Thursday, December 12th our Hebrew School and Adult Choir will be representing our Congregation at SOMH Festival of Lights. The program begins at 5:30PM in the hospital parking lot on Route 72. Dress warmly and join us as we represent our Congregation. Of course, refreshments will be served inside after the program.

Hebrew School Student

Mazel Tov to Brianna Otto who won an honorable mention in Federation's Chanukah Car contest!!
We are certainly proud of her talents.

Membership

Membership in our spiritual family is a wonderful way to meet new friends that have moved or just moved to Southern Ocean County. We are reaching out in different ways to let folks know that we are here...it's hard to believe that so many unaffiliated Jews do not know that there is a Reform congregation right here in Manahawkin!! Help us grow and spread the word...who knows, your neighbor might have grandchildren that are looking to find out more about their Judaism, roots and heritage!



MEMBERSHIP

TEMPLE COMMITTEES
New Members Welcome

Temple Committees	Chair/Members
Birthdays & Anniversaries	<u>Susan Shapiro</u>
Choir	<u>Philip Altland</u> Cyndy Friedland, Wendi Higgins, Pat Barndt, Madelyn Dunn, Robert Dunn, Syble Bleiweis, Rena Kreisler
Finance	Treasurer, Financial Secretary, President
Fundraising	<u>Dayna Otto</u> Pat Barndt, Syble Bleiweis, Bari Cohen, Madelyn Dunn, Cyndy Friedland, Wendi Higgins, Joan Silverman, Blanche Spiegel
Greeters	<u>Rose Jackson & Judie Levin</u> Pat Barndt, Syble Bleiweis, Hope Gardiner, Wendi Higgins, Rhonda Levy, Thelma Polon, Susan Shapiro
Hospital Visits	<u>Jack Crespy</u>
Membership	<u>Cyndy Friedland</u> Syble Bleiweis, Joan Silverman
Music	<u>Philip Altland</u> Stan Jackson
Newsletter	<u>Rose Jackson</u> Hope Gardiner
Oneg & Dinners	<u>Madelyn Dunn</u> Pat Barndt, Wendi Higgins
Publicity	<u>Cyndy Friedland</u>
Religious School	<u>Cyndy Friedland/ Phil Miller</u>
Ritual	<u>Charles Flum</u> Philip Altland, Stan Jackson, Alan Levy
Sunshine	<u>Syble Bleiweis</u> Ruth Schlyen, Phyllis Blum, Harriet Cohen
Tributes	<u>Syble Bleiweis</u>
Yahrzeits	<u>Harriet Cohen</u>



A GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED (a novel) by Dara Horn also wrote “ALL OTHER NIGHTS”

Josie Ashkenazi is a brilliant software designer who has created a program that allows its users to record every element of their lives and, thus, to keep the past alive, at least digitally. Her software is called Genizah, after the Cairo Genizah, a repository of ancient Hebrew manuscripts kept in storage for centuries because Jewish law forbids throwing away anything inscribed with the name of God. The Cairo Genizah was discovered in 1896 by Solomon Schechter, whose story is told in alternating chapters with the modern-day account of Josie’s capture by Islamic terrorists in Egypt. But the layers don’t stop there. Josie’s story, including the role of her jealous sister, Judith, parallels the biblical account of Joseph, and interwoven through all these thematic and narrative structures is Maimonides’ *A Guide for the Perplexed*, a twelfth-century philosophical treatise that has influenced religious scholars for nearly 1,000 years. Yes, the novel is as intricately constructed as Joseph’s coat of many colors, and, yes, it echoes the thematic density of the philosophical work after which it is named, but beneath all that beats the living heart of a very human drama, one that will have readers both caught up in the suspense and moved by the tragic dimensions of the unresolved dilemma at the core of the story.

Having read “All Other Nights” (about a Yankee Jewish spy attending a Seder with Confederate Jewish patriots), “The Cairo Genizah” (a scholarly tome very carefully researched) and “A Guide to the Perplexed” by Moses Maimonides (which influenced Jewish scholarship in much the same way that St. Thomas Aquinas influenced Christian theology), I marvel at the way in which Ms. Horn (a Jersey girl) has, through this novel, facilitated the acquisition of knowledge without the reader’s awareness in history, religion and politics. It is an exciting thriller which moves quickly until one is left with a weight of knowledge in one’s mind and shredding of emotion in one’s *neshumah*.

Submitted by Rosalie Donadio

CHANUKAH DINNER



Biagio's Trattoria

is sponsoring

A Dine A Round

for

Congregation Sha'arey Ha-Yam

Monday, December 16

Lunch through Dinner

509 US Highway 9

Lanoka Harbor, NJ, 08734

609-242-2034

www.biagioscave.com

Please bring this flier with you

Suds & Stuff.

Beer Tasting, Appetizers & Auction

The Arlington.

January 16, 2014

5:30 - 7:30pm

1302 Long Beach Blvd.
Ship Bottom, NJ

\$40 per ticket

Advance Sales Only

\$20 of ticket is tax deductible to the extent permitted by law

This event will benefit S.T.A.R.T.
(Stafford Teachers And Residents Together)
& Gates of the Sea

For Tickets & more information please call

609.709.9410

We NEED your support!

FUND RAISING

- December 16, 2013 – Dine-A-Round Biagio's Trattoria
- January 16, 2014 - Save The Date - 'Suds & Stuff' - Beer Tasting at The Arlington - Ship Bottom, NJ - 5:30 - 7:30 pm
- ShopRite Cards are a constant fund raiser. Please contact Dayna (609-709-9410) or Syble(609.978.4240) to purchase anytime. They will always be sold at services.
- Tribute Cards can be sent on your behalf to anyone you would like, for any reason you have, for a \$5 donation. Please contact Syble.



A WORTHY CAUSE

Corey Mullin will be collecting the following the following items for donation to the pediatric unit at Jersey Shore Medical Center. The items must be new. The items will be collected from now until December 10th. Please bring the items to services or call (908) 216-8742 for pick up.

DVDs
CDs
PC games
Games
Playing cards
Toys
Puzzles

2013 - 2014 Temple Sha'arey Ha-yam Schedule Services 7:30pm	
Tuesday, December 3, 2013	Hanukkah Party Lefty's at 5:00pm
Friday, December 6, 2013 6:00pm Important Congregation Meeting	
Friday, December 6, 2013 7:30pm Services	
Thursday, December 12th	
SOMC Foundation's Lights of Life Hebrew School	
Monday, December 16, 2013 Dine Around Biagio's Trattoria	
Friday, December 20, 2013	
Friday, January 3, 2014	
Thursday, January 16, 2014 Studs & Stuff	
Friday, January 17, 2014	
(Tu B'Shevat)	
Friday, February 14, 2014	
Friday, February 28, 2014	
Friday, March 14, 2014	
Friday, March 28, 2014	
Friday, April 11, 2014	
April 17, 2014	
Second Seder	
Friday, April 25, 2014	
Friday, May 9, 2014	
Israel Independence Day	
Friday, May 23, 2014	
Friday, June 13, 2014	
Friday, June 27, 2014	