

Congregation Sha'arey Ha-Yam

Newsletter for May 2012

www.shaareyhayam.org

Message from the Rabbi:

"A man takes a wife and possesses her. She does not find favor in his eyes because he finds some unseemly thing in her, and he writes her a bill of divorcement (literally, 'a document of cutting off'), hands it to her, and sends her away from his house." (Deuteronomy 24:1-2)

"If the husband debars his wife from participating in certain joyous functions, or if he prevents her from wearing costly dresses and jewelry that he can afford to buy, she may sue for and be granted a divorce...If she says, 'My husband is distasteful to me, I cannot live with him,' the court should compel the husband to divorce her because a wife is not like a captive woman." (*Mishneh Torah*, 12th century)

Since earliest times, Judaism has provided for divorce when the relationship between two people who have been joined together in *kiddushin* (sacred matrimony) has broken down irrevocably. The decision to separate is painful, not only for the couple (and any children or even grandchildren that they may have), but also for their extended families and the entire community. Jewish tradition teaches that when a marriage is dissolved, "...even the altar sheds tears." (Talmud). Jews who wish to divorce their partners of course obtain civil divorces like everyone else. However, the mechanism by which a Jewish marriage is traditionally dissolved is called a *get*. In a Jewish wedding, it is *kiddushin*, the act of declaring this particular person and relationship to be separate and apart from all others, that creates a marriage. In Jewish terms, a *get* cancels *kiddushin*. A *get* is a no-fault document that makes no mention of the grounds for the divorce or the resolution of other issues. In Jewish law, only the man can issue the *get*. Each party must acknowledge that they understand what is happening and that they are acting freely and without coercion. The husband authorizes a scribe to write the document and witnesses sign it. Either the husband or his proxy presents the signed document to the wife. Once she accepts it, the divorce takes effect immediately. The problems that can be created when a Jewish man refuses to give his estranged wife a *get* have been well publicized in recent years. These women, known as *agunot* ("chained ones") can be stuck in limbo indefinitely. With only a civil divorce and no *get*, most Conservative and virtually all Orthodox rabbis (including in the State of Israel) will not marry a Jewish woman since in the eyes of traditional Judaism she and her ex-spouse are still considered married. Should she marry anyway, the children resulting from the new marriage may be considered illegitimate and in some parts of the Jewish community those children themselves will be limited as to whom they will be able to marry.

Why, you may be wondering, am I even talking here in our bulletin about traditional Jewish divorce practices? What does this have to do with us as Reform Jews? The answer is, more than you might think. In my last semester of rabbinical school, my classmates and I attended what was known as "Senior Seminar," a series of lectures and presentations designed to familiarize us with various professional issues that we were likely to encounter following ordination. On one occasion we were addressed by two individuals, Dr. Isaac Skolnik, director of an organization called *Kayama*, and Reform Rabbi Paula Winnig, then of Temple Sinai of Long Island. *Kayama*, we learned, is a non-profit, non-denominational organization founded in 1985 whose purpose is to provide information regarding the ramifications and implications of a Jewish divorce and to provide technical and financial assistance to those who wish to obtain one. Since 1985 they have facilitated Jewish divorces for almost 2,000 divorcing couples. It was Rabbi Winnig who addressed the question, "What does this have to do with Reform Jews?" Rabbi Winnig told us that she routinely refers **all** divorcing couples to *Kayama* for information, assistance, and support. From a religious standpoint, said Rabbi Winnig, Jews ought not to limit their options for the future. Who knows, she said, whom or under what circumstances a person may wish to remarry in the future? She strongly believed, she told us, that obtaining a Jewish divorce could also provide a sense of emotional closure, especially for those whose marriage began with a Jewish ceremony. Rabbi Charles Kroloff of Temple

Emanu-El in Westfield recently wrote, "I have been referring members of my congregation to *Kayama* for many years...As we know, a Jew who is divorced but has not obtained a *get* may have difficulty being married by rabbis who do require a *get*. Our views on the *get* process vary. But I have found that by referring couples to *Kayama*, I have helped them preserve their freedom to choose future spouses and [wedding officiants]. Those who work with *Kayama* are thoughtful and sensitive individuals who interact very well with Reform rabbis and those whom we serve..."

There are substantial differences between the Jewish denominations on many issues. Jewish divorce and *gittin* (plural of *get*) is one of them. The unequal position of husband and wife in the *get* process is troubling and even offensive to many liberal Jews. Reform rabbis have at their disposal an egalitarian "Ritual of Release" ceremony which some couples find comforting and meaningful. Nevertheless, despite their diverse views on the need for a *get*, the heads of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association and the Central Conference of American Rabbis (Reform) have recently written to their membership regarding the practical importance of the *get* and the availability of *Kayama* as a trusted resource. I have spoken to a number of Jewish women who were issued *gittin* by divorcing spouses in traditional (Orthodox) settings. Overwhelmingly these women have told me that their experiences were very difficult. Generally they did not understand the ceremonial process and no one explained it to them. Rather than feeling relief and closure as a result of the ritual, they felt awkward, uncomfortable, embarrassed, and diminished. For those who choose a traditional Jewish divorce, it doesn't have to be this way. I have for many years now referred divorcing couples to *Kayama*; the experience has never been anything about supportive and affirming. If you know a Jewish couple planning to divorce, consider telling them about *Kayama* and at least giving them the option to learn more about what it can offer. *Kayama* can be reached at (800) 932-8589 or at www.Kayama.org.

Rabbi Kim S. Geringer

President's Message:

Now that the Gift Auction is over and it was a huge success, the congregation must give a colossal thank you to Dayna Otto and all the volunteers that worked on the committee to make this the largest fund raiser of the fiscal year. The fund raising committee worked really hard to meet their goals and the congregants who gave of their time, financial backing, and support to this endeavor are to be commended. This committee is in need of new members who are willing to work to help us attain our fund-raising goals for the next year. Please contact me if you would like to join this committee or if you have any ideas for fund-raising events.

The next community event is the annual congregational meeting to be held Sunday, May 20th at 7:00 PM at the church. At this meeting, the board will make its annual report on the progress of our congregation to the membership and present the budget for the fiscal year beginning June 1, 2012 and ending May 31, 2013. Please come and participate in the workings of your temple and give your feedback concerning our operation and events.

As we progress, the next happening for the temple is the implementation of the Adult Education Class. This special Hebrew 101 class is scheduled to begin on June 12th. Additional information will be publicized. The special classes held by the rabbi are almost complete and shortly two of our congregants will be converted to the Jewish faith. Their mikvah will take place in a temple in Teaneck, New Jersey. Our sincere congratulations go to Pat Barndt and Wendi Higgins on the occasion of this mitzvah.

The planning of services and the celebration of the High Holidays are now in the early stages of preparation. *If* you have any suggestions, please send them to me. Rosh Hashanah services will begin on Sunday evening, September 16th so mark your calendars.

As we proceed into the summer season, may you all have a wonderful and healthy summer. Hope to see you at Services.

Aaron Shapiro, President

News from the Hebrew School:

Our Hebrew school teachers, students and their families went to the *Matzoh* Factory in Lakewood to observe how *matzoh* is made. Chaplain Yaakov Wenger and Chaplain Israel Bursztyn of the Ocean County Sheriff's Department guided us all through the process, explaining how the eighteen minutes from measuring the flour and water through the fruition of the *matzoh* is so important to the history of "Kosher for Passover" *matzoh*. We were all so impressed with this that we will plan to visit the Factory every year! Our thanks go to Stephanie Bloom for arranging this field trip.



ADULT EDUCATION....

Iris Harari our new Hebrew Teacher is available to start Adult Education Classes for us. We need to know what you are interested in; Hebrew 101, basics and some conversational Hebrew, Life in Israel, What it was like to be in the Yom Kippur War, and whatever you would like to learn about! Please e-mail Cyndy Friedland at Cfriedland119@comcast.net with your wish list. There will be a fee for the course, and we will also open these classes to non-members.

HEBREW 101 UPDATE:

Spring is upon us and it's time once again to introduce our Hebrew 101 course. Iris Harari will be teaching this class on Tuesdays starting in June. Our target date for the first class will be June 12th starting at 5 PM. This will be an introduction to beginners Hebrew concentrating on the alphabet and ritual prayers. To sign up for the class e-mail Cyndy at cfriedland119@comcast.net or call 609-698-4459 with your reservation. There will be a charge for the class.

Cyndy Friedland, Director, Hebrew School

Yahrzeit May 2012

May 2	Herb Feldhuhn	Husband of Marlene Feldhuhn
May 5	Theodore Cohen	Father of Phil Cohen
May 9	Louis Platman	Father of Thelma Polon
May 10	Nicole Ryanne Miller	Niece of Patricia Barndt
May 14	Terry Levin	Mother of David Levin
May 14	Annie Gordon	Sister of Maralyn Ricciardi
May 28	David Crespy	Father of Jack Crespy (7 Sivan)
May 29	Pauline Gold	Mother of Rita Gold
May 31	Samuel Kanowith	Father of Susan Shapiro (10 Sivan)

FINAL NOTICE

PLEASE NOTE: To have the name of your loved one listed in *The Bulletin* and announced at Services by the Rabbi on the anniversary of their Yahrzeit, contact Phyllis Feather at PO Box 624, Barnegat, NJ 08005 or call **(609) 978-5500**. The list must be updated; even if you have sent in a name/names, response is necessary in order to insure that this process is up to date and that your Yahrzeit will be announced.

Mazel Tov to:

Gary and Ruth Schlyen on the recent wedding of their daughter, Amy to Matt Goldstein.

Birthdays

May	03	Judy Levin
	09	Debbie Majewski
	25	Maralyn Ricciardi

Anniversaries

May	22/2010	Craig and Gina Cohen
	27/1995	Mr. & Mrs. Carey Belitz

Get Well Wishes to:

Dolly Weiss
Terry Silverman
Rita Gold
Joe Breese

Fran Breese is retiring as contributor to the monthly newsletter. I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for all the interesting "Tidbits" and birthday/anniversary tracking. Thank you Fran!

In order to update this information, please email Sue at shap1010@comcast.net with birthday and anniversary information.

Jewish Tidbits by Fran Breese [TALKING TO THE WALL]

There are countless jokes about someone pleading with a person, receiving no results and lamenting, "It's like talking to a wall." The expression, of course, dates back 2,000 years (the jokes are a lot newer). For countless years, Jews have been praying towards what is known as the "Western Wall", the "Wailing Wall" or in Hebrew, the "Kotel".

Immediately after the U.N. declared Israel an independent state in 1948, Israel was attacked by five invading armies in what was called the War of Independence. In a stunning display of determination and ingenuity, after countless fatalities on all sides, the fledgling Jewish nation was victorious. But the "Wall" was captured by the Jordanians and after more than 1,900 years of free access by members of all religions, the Western Wall found itself behind barbed wire, inaccessible to all except those who sought to disgrace it by turning it into a garbage dump.

Only in 1967 was the Wall returned to Jewish hands where it has since become the foremost center of attention in the world. People by the thousands, not hundreds, come every day to see it, marvel at the mighty stones that enveloped some unknown, long-ago structure and to pray there. They come from all walks of life, from virtually every country on earth to see the famous wall that has been the yearning of the Jewish people for 2,000 years.

But why pray there? Aren't people just "talking to the Wall?" Not if you ask them. There is a special feeling, a feeling of closeness to a Super Being, a spiritual, emotional feeling that elevates the soul when it bonds with its Source. It leaves a lifetime impression on people of all religions when they come to pray at that one, special location. Does G-d exist or not? For those who come to the Wall to pour out their hearts and walk away knowing that their prayers have been answered, perhaps with a "yes" perhaps with a "no", you will never convince them otherwise. But for those who refuse to consider that there is a Higher Power watching over us and hearing our prayers, well for them, it's like talking to a wall. From JUDAISM ONLINE www.SimpleToRemember.com

Book Review by Rosalie Donadio

The House at Tyneford, a novel, by Natasha Solomons

It's the Spring of 1938 and no longer safe to be a Jew in Vienna. Nineteen-year-old Elis Landau is forced to leave her glittering life of parties and champagne to become a parlor maid in England. She arrives at Tyneford, the great house on the bay, where servants polish silver and serve drinks on the lawn. But the war is coming, and the world is changing. When the master of Tyneford's young son, Kit, returns home, he and Elise strike up an unlikely upstairs-downstairs friendship that will transform Tyneford and Elise – forever.

This novel has been described as “heartfelt, poignant, with vivid historical detail”; I found it to be carefully researched and very authentic. The protagonist is a young Viennese woman, Elise, daughter of a successful, educated and cultured family, who is sent to England because her parents could only obtain two visas; it is 1938 in Vienna and the Landau’s are Jewish. As a refugee, Elise must seek work as a “domestic” until her parents can send her a Visa. She learns to be “invisible” while employed on an English estate, Tyneford. However, there are complications as well as the developing relationship with the Manor’s heir. Natasha Solomons is an exceptional writer who tells her story with a woven background of authentic visual detail. It is a charming tale and a respite of all the turbulent and sad books heavy with the reality that takes place during this black episode of history.

MAY NEWS FROM THE FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE:

Gift Auction: *A monumental thank you to all who solicited, donated, sent emails for donations, schlepped, set up, sold tickets, baked, and attended our biggest fundraiser!! This has been a very successful annual event for us, and without everyone's participation we could not do this!! We are a wonderful group of dedicated members and friends that are committed to our Congregation!!*

Oneg Sponsorship: Do you or your family have a simcha to share with our congregation? What better way to celebrate than sponsoring an Oneg! We offer several levels that can be sponsored, \$50, \$75, and \$100. Our Onegs include wine, juice, challah and other desserts. The upper levels include fruit and extras to enhance the Oneg. Kindly contact Madelyn Dunn at 609-660-1614 to reserve your date.

Help Wanted! Congregation Sha'arey Ha-Yam has beautiful logo T-shirts available in all sizes for only \$10.00 apiece. “Recipes to Remember” our very own cookbook is a 3-ring binder with an included easel for free-standing on a countertop. Each cookbook is filled with over 180 recipes with lots of tips, hints and suggestions. The cookbook sells for \$18.00 and makes an excellent gift for friends or family, and is a wonderful keepsake as well. T-shirts and cookbooks are always available at services.

Reserve The Date! Jewish Heritage Night at the Lakewood Blue Claws on **Tuesday, May 22**. Gates open at 5:00 PM. Pregame program begins at 5:30 PM. Game starts at 6:45 PM. Information to follow.

*Congregational Meeting will be held **Sunday, May 20th** at 7:00 PM.*

2012 SCHEDULE OF SERVICE 7:30 PM (DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

May 4	September 17 Rosh Hashanah
May 18	September 25 Erev Yom Kippur
June 8	September 26 Yom Kippur; Break the Fast

