



Sha'arei Shalom

[July 2010 Newsletter](#)

<u>Upcoming Events/Services</u>		
Shabbat Service	8/6	7:30pm
Erev Rosh Hashanah Service	9/8	7:30pm
RH Day 1	9/9	9:30am
RH Day 2	9/10	9:30am
Kol Nidre	9/17	7:00pm
Yom Kippur	9/18	9:30am
Neelah	9/18	5:45pm

Letter From Rabbi Sonia

The saddest day in Jewish history is the 9th of Av (Tisha Be' Av), which this year fell on the 20th of July. On this day, the Babylonians destroyed the First Temple in 586 BCE and the Romans burned down the Second Temple in 70 CE. It is also the day in which the Jews of England and the Jews of Spain were expelled in 1290 and 1492, respectively. Tisha Be' Av culminates the period of mourning that begins three weeks earlier, when the walls surrounding Jerusalem were first breached by the Romans. (During these three weeks weddings are prohibited). The 9th of Av is observed as a fast day; in the evening of the 9th we sit as mourners -on the floor or low stools and read the book of Lamentations (Eicha), which recounts the destruction of Judea.

In explaining the destruction of the Temple by the Romans, the rabbis of the Talmud tell a story of the "baseless hatred" (*sinat hinam*) that existed among Jews at the time. This tale continues to be a warning to Jews for dealing with disagreement within our community. The Talmud relates the following story:

A man wanted to throw a party for all his friends. So he drew up a guest list and instructed his servant to send out the invitations. One of the men on the guest list was named "Kamtza," but the servant made a mistake and invited "Bar Kamtza" instead. Bar Kamtza was actually a sworn enemy of the host!

When Bar Kamtza received his invitation, he was very grateful thinking that the host had finally made amends. But when Bar Kamtza showed up at the party, the host took one look and told his servant to have Bar Kamtza immediately removed from the premises.

When asked to leave, Bar Kamtza said, "I understand the mistake. But it's embarrassing for me to leave the party. I'll gladly pay the cost of my meal if you'll allow me to stay." The host would hear nothing of this, and reiterated his demand to have Bar Kamtza removed. Bar Kamtza appealed again, "I'd even be willing to pay HALF the cost of the entire party, if only I'd be allowed to stay." Again the request was denied. At which point, the distraught Bar Kamtza pleaded, "I'll pay for the entire party! Just please don't embarrass me in this way!"

The host, however, stuck to his guns and threw Bar Kamtza out. The Talmud reports that Bar Kamtza was so hurt and upset, that he went straight to the Roman authorities and gave slanderous reports of disloyal behavior among the Jews. To make a long story short, this fueled the Romans' anger, and they proceeded to attack and destroy the Holy Temple.

Unfortunately, there are plenty of disputes among the Jewish people today carried out in the type of environment depicted in the Talmudic tale, where hostility and mistrust reign. As I write these lines, I am particularly aware of the incident that took place this past July 12, when Anat Hoffman, the head of Women of the Wall, was arrested and banned from the Western Wall for 30 days for holding a Torah scroll at the site. She was arrested by Jerusalem police, following the monthly women's Rosh Chodesh prayer service, and held for five hours before being released. I met Hoffman last summer while in Israel; she is a passionate and articulate activist of the Movement for Progressive Judaism in Israel and serves as head of the Religious Action Center – the public and legal advocacy arm of the Reform Movement in Israel.

As they do at the start of every month, Israel's Women of the Wall gather and hold their services at the Women's section of the Wall. They then exit the plaza, and walk to the archeological site nearby known as Robinson's Arch, where they read from the Torah scroll. They do this because in 2003 Israel's Supreme Court prohibited women from praying as a group and reading from the Torah at the Wall. Instead, they were given permission to gather at Robinson's Arch, along the Southern Wall of the Temple. The Supreme Court thought this was a good compromise to preserve public safety, and at the same time, give the women the opportunity to pray as a group.

Apparently, when the women gathered this past July 12 they took the Torah scroll from the bag in which they were carrying it earlier than they were permitted to do so. They began dancing with it as they left the Western Wall and made their way to Robinson's Arch. Hoffman was arrested immediately afterwards. This is not the first time that a woman was arrested for having a Torah by the Wall....

The story in the Talmud reminds us of how baseless hatred corrodes the moral fabric of society and of the need to work towards greater inclusion of groups like Women of the Wall, who are marginalized by the establishment in Israel.

Happy Birthday Stephanie Marks – July 21st

Hebrew School

Everyone at the school hopes you are enjoying the summer. We are busy planning for the new school which will begin on Sunday September 19. A new school calendar will be forwarded to you soon. We are excited to have many of our experienced teachers returning to lead us through another great school year.

In the meanwhile, please make sure to register your child for Hebrew School if you haven't done so already. Tuition payments are due as follows below:

1. **A \$100 per child, non-refundable deposit was due by June 17, 2010.**
2. **50% of the total tuition was due by July 15, 2010.**
3. **Complete tuition payment is due by August 15, 2010.**

Please mail the registration form and tuition checks to **Sha'arei Shalom, Attn: Religious School, P.O. Box 454, Ashland, MA 01721.**

If you have any questions about the school, please contact Barbara Klein (617-513-9695 or school@shaareishalom-ashland.org)

New Torah Cover Needed

The first Torah for our congregation was in need of repair and that work has now been completed. We are looking to now replace the cover and are seeking a volunteer(s) to donate towards that effort. Please contact Toni Spitzer at ritcom@shaareishalom.org for more info.

Siddurs for the Congregation

If you would like to make a donation of a siddur, please contact Jane Greenstein (janegreenstein@comcast.net; 508-231-0994). The cost is \$36.

Learn how to blow the Shofar – contact Toni Spitzer tonispitzer@comcast.net

Evergreen

At the June 29 meeting of Evergreen at the home of Elissa Naiman, members shared not only what was happening with their family, but their summer vacation plans including a trip to Seattle and San Francisco's wine country, some time in Maine, a week at Chautauqua Institution in Western New York or just staying home. Some members are still actively employed so the time away is especially precious.

The next meeting will be on **Tuesday, July 27, at 7:30** p.m. at the home of Sheila Watnick. Female temple members 60 and over are welcome.
Contact evergreen@shaareishalom.org.

ALSO: Join the Alzheimer's Association at one of its 13 Memory Walks in MA and NH in September. Form a team, become an exhibitor, make a donation or volunteer. For more information, contact Sheila Watnick at 508-881-7331 or sheila.watnick@alz or visit the website at www.memorywalkMANH.org.

Book Club

Summer is a great time to read! Our next picks and dates for meetings are as follows:

"Those who save us" by Jenna Bloom - August 8 at 10 am at Bodacious Bagel

All are welcome. Contact Lisa Clay at lcc1129@yahoo.com.

Oneg

The August oneg will be sponsored by the Murray family in honor of Sha'arei Shalom's 2010 Relay for Life Team. Let's celebrate our great success in being a Silver award team, having raised over \$7,300.00 in the fight against cancer.