

MAKING THE FIT OF TORAH YOUR OWN

Rivka Cathrin Weinstein

Another holiday--already? Didn't we just eat Matzah? So, what's so important about Shavuot?

Between Passover and Shavuot, as my workload naturally increases, it would be so much easier not to have another holiday. But, when I think about it for a moment, I realize how important Shavuot is for the Jews, for me personally as a Jewess, and a convert to Judaism at that.

Why? On Shavuot we remember that the "Heart of Judaism," the Torah, was given to us at Mount Sinai.

Legend has it that every Jew was there--even those of us who were not born Jewish. On Shavuot, we also read the Book of Ruth, who was the first convert to Judaism. What's the connection? Ruth's mother-in-law, Naomi, is Jewish, and after Naomi's husband and sons die, Naomi wants to return to her homeland from which she had fled because of a famine. The famine has lifted, and Naomi advises Ruth and her other daughter-in-law to return to their people, the Moabites. But Ruth insists on staying and utters the famous words to Naomi, "Your people are my people, where you go, I will go [...], your G-d is my G-d."

But still, what does that have to do with the giving of the Torah? To my mind, it has everything to do with the Torah. The Torah is a gift to us, and we, of all the nations who were offered the Torah, accepted. But the decision to take on Torah is one that each of us has to personally make, just as Ruth did, as I did and as you probably did. But if making the Torah your own fails, keeping the Mitzvot, the commandments, will seem like an onerous task.

The feeling of "observing *this* is impossible!" happened every time I tried to do things too quickly.

I was absolutely clueless about Judaism when I moved to New York in 2004. I grew up in Germany and during a two-month sabbatical had fallen in love with New York. I knew that I wanted to live on the Upper West Side, and, before long, I decided that I wanted to

Arbeit Macht Frei

Growing up in Germany there was only one aspect of Judaism-- the Holocaust



belong to the people I saw walking to synagogue on Saturday morning. The rest I had to learn.

Growing up in Germany in the 70's meant being introduced to only one aspect of Judaism, the Holocaust. Out of fear of anti-Semitism, it was safest not to speak about Jews but rather focus on dealing with our guilt as Germans. After my move here, it took me a long time to set foot in a shul, so I started taking classes. That part came easy to me, but the first time I tried to keep Shabbat was a disaster. I was overwhelmed, frustrated. It just

couldn't be done... But then I started trying again, learning with a Rebbetzin, taking small steps, one at a time. Suddenly, I started looking forward to the peacefulness of Shabbat, and, after a year or so, I was there. The same was true for keeping kosher. Today, I can't imagine *not* keeping kosher.

I can still appreciate how much I used to like Italian prosciutto, but if I would eat it, I know I would feel as if I soiled my soul.

I was challenged again when I met my husband Ed. While he had a formal Orthodox education as a child and teen, he was not exactly what you would call "observant." But he was eager to be pulled in, back to Judaism. Today I am very proud of him for keeping kosher and observing Shabbat. It seems as if he needed the pull that I provided, and I needed the reminder that observance is a process. Even if it sometimes goes two steps forward and one back, the trajectory is what counts. The fact that Ed and I keep learning from each other as we make the Torah our own, is a precious gift.

I wish all of you much success as you continue to reach for your own growth-goals--and remember to be gentle in judging yourself, if, at times, it takes a little longer than expected.

Chag Samayach!

Rivka Cathrin Weinstein lives in Margate on the Jersey Shore with her husband Ed and dog Winston. She works in New York City where she manages the student program for a medical publisher. Her background is in medicine, but her love for books and pedagogy prevailed.

CONGRATULATIONS AND MAZAL TOV

ENGAGEMENTS

Efrat (Laura) Greenstein and Yigal Brayer
Shahina (Shaina) Rahemanji
and Ari Moses
Simona Shokrian and Dr. Gerard Epelbaum



CONDOLENCES

Ahuva Cohen, on the loss of her father, David Glenn Lassiter
Family of Shelly Goldberg
Natalie, Tony and Eve Gittelson, on the loss of their husband
and stepfather, Mort Lachman
Olga Berde-Mahl, on the loss of her mother, Rosalia Berde
Ira Wolff, on the loss of his father, Louis Wolff

SPEEDY RECOVERY/REFUAH SH'LAIMA

Nosson Nuta haLevi ben Esther

CONGRATULATIONS

Norton Goodman on celebrating his 90th birthday
Beryl Korot and Steve Reich (Founding Members of the
Beginners Service December 1975) upon Steve receiving
the 2009 Pulitzer Prize in music for his composition *Double
Sextet*

TODAH RABBAH

Iris Cahn and Mordechai Beilis for chairing this year's
SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA program

TSETCHEM L'SHALOM (To live and/or study in Israel)

Rivka (Anja) and Asher Barmoha

MARRIAGES

Alexandra Naomi Eband and Sagi Chen
Mazal Tov to parents, Rafi and Lorraine Eband

BIRTHS

Rivka (Anja) and Asher Barmoha, on the birth of a boy,
Raphael
Shira (Schonfeld) and Naphtali Buchwald,
on the birth of a boy, Yehoshua Nechemiah,
Mazal Tov to grandparents
Aidel and Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald
Sarah and Rabbi Avraham Leib Kremiansky,
on the birth of a girl, Shira Miriam

BAR/BAT MITZVAH

Zev Schwartz
Mazal Tov to parents, Beth and Joshua Schwartz

Shelly Goldberg

Shelly (Cohen) Goldberg was an extraordinary woman, wife, daughter, mother and sister, who came to the Beginners Service in 1987, a few years after receiving her MBA from Harvard. She wrote a memorable article about Shavuot for the Beginners Service that can be accessed at <http://bit.ly/ShelGo>. She was a truly G-d fearing woman in every aspect of her life, and when facing her untimely death at age 52. She will be sorely missed by all.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Thu May 28, 2009 - 5th of Sivan
EREV SHAUVOT
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:50 AM
 Remember to Make an Eruv Tavshilin
 Candle Lighting 8:01 PM
 Mincha 8:05 PM
 Maariv 8:50 PM

Fri May 29, 2009 - 6th of Sivan SHAUVOT
 Morning Services 4:55 & 9:00 AM
 Bible Class 7:05 PM
 Daf Yomi 7:20 PM
 Mincha 8:05 PM
 Earliest Candle Lighting 6:45 PM
 Shabbat Candles Before 8:02 PM

Sat May 30, 2009 - 7th of Sivan SHAUVOT
 Daf Yomi 7:15 AM
 Morning Services 8:00 & 9:00 AM
 Bible Class 6:50 PM
 Talmud Class 7:05 PM
 Mincha 7:50 PM
 Maariv 9:02 PM
 Yom Tov Ends 9:02 PM
 Daily Mincha & Maariv 8:10 PM

Fri June 5, 2009 - 13th of Sivan
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Earliest Candle Lighting 6:50 PM
 Candle Lighting 8:07 PM
 Mincha 6:45 & 8:10 PM

Sat June 6, 2009 - 14th of Sivan Nasso
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services .. 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Talmud & Bible Class 6:55 PM
 Mincha 7:55 PM
 Maariv/Shabbat Ends 9:07 PM
 Daily Mincha & Maariv 8:15 PM

Fri June 12, 2009 - 20th of Sivan
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Earliest Candle Lighting 6:54 PM
 Candle Lighting 8:11 PM
 Mincha 6:45 & 8:15 PM

Sat June 13, 2009 - 21st of Sivan
Beha'alotcha
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services .. 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Talmud & Bible Class 7:00 PM
 Mincha 8:00 PM
 Maariv/Shabbat Ends 9:11 PM
 Daily Mincha & Maariv 8:20 PM

Fri June 19, 2009 - 27th of Sivan
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Earliest Candle Lighting 6:56 PM
 Candle Lighting 8:13 PM
 Mincha 6:45 & 8:20 PM

Sat June 20, 2009 - 28th of Sivan Sh'lach
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services .. 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Talmud & Bible Class 7:05 PM
 Mincha 8:05 PM
 Maariv/Shabbat Ends 9:13 PM
 Daily Mincha & Maariv 8:20 PM

Mon June 22, 2009 - 30th of Sivan
ROSH CHODESH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM

Tue June 23, 2009 - 1st of Tamuz
ROSH CHODESH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM

Fri June 26, 2009 - 4th of Tamuz
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Earliest Candle Lighting 6:57 PM
 Candle Lighting 8:14 PM
 Mincha 6:45 & 8:20 PM

Sat June 27, 2009 - 5th of Tamuz Korach
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services .. 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Talmud & Bible Class 7:05 PM
 Mincha 8:05 PM
 Maariv/Shabbat Ends 9:14 PM
 Daily Mincha & Maariv 8:20 PM

Fri July 3, 2009 - 11th of Tamuz
LEGAL HOLIDAY
 Morning Services 7:10 & 8:30 AM
 Earliest Candle Lighting 6:57 PM
 Candle Lighting 8:14 PM
 Mincha 6:45 & 8:20 PM

Sat July 4, 2009 - 12th of Tamuz
Chukat-Balak INDEPENDENCE DAY
 Daf Yomi 6:55 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services .. 7:40, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Bible Class 7:05 PM
 Perek Class 7:05 PM
 Mincha 8:05 PM
 Maariv/Shabbat Ends 9:14 PM
 Daily Mincha & Maariv 8:20 PM

Thu July 9, 2009 - 17th of Tamuz
SHIVA ASSAR B'TAMUZ
 Fast Begins 4:20 AM
 Morning Services 6:50 & 7:30 AM
 Mincha 8:00 PM
 Fast Ends 9:01 PM

Fri July 10, 2009 - 18th of Tamuz
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Earliest Candle Lighting 6:54 PM
 Candle Lighting 8:11 PM
 Mincha 6:45 & 8:15 PM

Sat July 11, 2009 - 19th of Tamuz Pinchas
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services .. 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Bible Class 7:00 PM
 Perek Class 7:00 PM
 Mincha 8:00 PM
 Maariv/Shabbat Ends 9:11 PM
 Daily Mincha & Maariv 8:20 PM

Fri July 17, 2009 - 25th of Tamuz
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Earliest Candle Lighting 6:50 PM
 Candle Lighting 8:07 PM
 Mincha 6:45 & 8:10 PM

Sat July 18, 2009 - 26th of Tamuz
Matot-Masei
 Daf Yomi 6:55 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services .. 7:40, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Bible Class 6:55 PM
 Perek Class 6:55 PM
 Mincha 7:55 PM
 Maariv/Shabbat Ends 9:07 PM
 Daily Mincha & Maariv 8:15 PM

Wed July 22, 2009 - 1st of Av
ROSH CHODESH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM

Fri July 24, 2009 - 3rd of Av
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Earliest Candle Lighting 6:50 PM
 Candle Lighting 8:02 PM
 Mincha 6:45 & 8:05 PM

Sat July 25, 2009 - 4th of Av Devarim
SHABBAT HAZON
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services .. 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Bible Class 6:50 PM
 Perek Class 6:50 PM
 Mincha 7:50 PM
 Maariv/Shabbat Ends 9:02 PM
 Daily Mincha & Maariv 8:10 PM

Wed July 29, 2009 - 8th of Av
EREV TISH'A B'AV
 Mincha 8:05 PM
 Fast Begins 8:15 PM
 Maariv & Kinnot 8:46 PM

Thu July 30, 2009 - 9th of Av TISH'A B'AV
 Morning Services 6:30 & 8:30 AM
 Chatzot 1:01 PM
 Early Mincha 1:37 PM
 Mincha 7:40 PM
 Fast Ends 8:45 PM

Fri July 31, 2009 - 10th of Av
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Chatzot 1:01 PM
 Earliest Candle Lighting 6:43 PM
 Candle Lighting 7:55 PM
 Mincha 6:45 & 8:00 PM

Sat August 1, 2009 - 11th of Av Vaetchanan
SHABBAT NACHAMU
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services .. 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Bible Class 6:45 PM
 Perek Class 6:45 PM
 Mincha 7:45 PM
 Maariv/Shabbat Ends 8:55 PM
 Daily Mincha & Maariv 8:00 PM

Fri August 7, 2009 - 17th of Av
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Earliest Candle Lighting 6:34 PM
 Candle Lighting 7:46 PM
 Mincha 6:45 & 7:50 PM

Sat August 8, 2009 - 18th of Av Eikev
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services .. 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Bible Class 6:35 PM
 Perek Class 6:35 PM
 Mincha 7:35 PM
 Maariv/Shabbat Ends 8:46 PM
 Daily Mincha & Maariv 7:50 PM

Fri August 14, 2009 - 24th of Av
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Earliest Candle Lighting 6:30 PM
 Candle Lighting 7:37 PM
 Mincha 6:45 & 7:40 PM

Sat August 15, 2009 - 25th of Av Re'eh
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services .. 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Bible Class 6:25 PM
 Perek Class 6:25 PM
 Mincha 7:25 PM
 Maariv/Shabbat Ends 8:37 PM
 Daily Mincha & Maariv 7:45 PM

Thu August 20, 2009 - 30th of Av
ROSH CHODESH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM

Fri August 21, 2009 - 1st of Elul
ROSH CHODESH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM
 Earliest Candle Lighting 6:20 PM
 Candle Lighting 7:27 PM
 Mincha 6:45 & 7:30 PM

Sat August 22, 2009 - 2nd of Elul Shoftim
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services .. 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Bible Class 6:15 PM
 Perek Class 6:15 PM
 Mincha 7:15 PM
 Maariv/Shabbat Ends 8:27 PM
 Daily Mincha & Maariv 7:30 PM

Fri August 28, 2009 - 8th of Elul
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Earliest Candle Lighting 6:09 PM
 Candle Lighting 7:16 PM
 Mincha 6:45 & 7:20 PM

Sat August 29, 2009 - 9th of Elul Ki Teitzei
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services .. 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Bible Class 6:05 PM
 Perek Class 6:05 PM
 Mincha 7:05 PM
 Maariv/Shabbat Ends 8:16 PM
 Daily Mincha & Maariv 7:20 PM

Fri September 4, 2009 - 15th of Elul
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Candle Lighting 7:05 PM
 Mincha 7:10 PM

Sat September 5, 2009 - 16th of Elul
Ki Tavo
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services .. 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Talmud & Bible Class 5:55 PM
 Mincha 6:55 PM
 Maariv/Shabbat Ends 8:05 PM
 Daily Mincha & Maariv 7:10 PM

Mon September 7, 2009 - 18th of Elul
LABOR DAY
 Morning Services 7:00 & 8:30 AM

Fri September 11, 2009 - 22nd of Elul
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Candle Lighting 6:53 PM
 Mincha 7:00 PM

Sat September 12, 2009 - 23rd of Elul
Nitzavim-Vayelech
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services .. 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Talmud & Bible Class 5:45 PM
 Mincha 6:45 PM
 Maariv/Shabbat Ends 7:53 PM
 Daily Mincha & Maariv 7:00 PM
 Early Selichot 10:00 PM
 Late Selichot 12:51 AM

Sun September 13, 2009 - 24th of Elul
 Morning Services 7:10 & 8:30 AM

Mon September 14, 2009 - 25th of Elul
 Selichot & Morning Services
 6:40 & 7:30 AM

Tue September 15, 2009 - 26th of Elul
 Selichot & Morning Services
 6:40 & 7:30 AM

Wed September 16, 2009 - 27th of Elul
 Selichot & Morning Services
 6:40 & 7:30 AM

Thu September 17, 2009 - 28th of Elul
 Selichot & Morning Services
 6:40 & 7:30 AM

SAVE THE DATE

All Night Shavuot Learn-a-thon

Thurs, May 28,
11:30 p.m. - 4:45 a.m.

Final Beginners Shabbat Luncheon of the Season
Sat, June 6 - \$20

First Beginners Shabbat Luncheon of the Season
Sat, Sept 12 - \$20

Rosh Hashanah
Fri - Sun, Sept 18 - Sept 20