

## Parshat Bamidbar/Shavuot

### Friday 18th May 2018

Candle Lighting	4.43pm
Maariv	6.15pm

### Shabbat 19th May 2018

Shacharit	9.00am
Mincha	4.25pm
Candle Lighting after	5.40pm
Maariv	6.00pm
Tikkun Leil	8.30pm

### Sunday 20th May 2018

Shacharit	9.00am
Mincha	4.40pm
Candle Lighting after	5.40pm
Maariv	6.00pm

### Monday 21st May 2018

Shacharit	9.00am
Yizkor approx	10.30am
Mincha	4.40pm
Maariv	5.40pm

## A word from the Rabbi

### WHY BE JEWISH?

Some time ago a number of local lay leaders participated in a brainstorming session at the request of a particular Jewish communal organisation. I was asked to contribute to the deliberations.

The topic to be addressed concerned the apparent apathy in the Jewish community in general, and in our youth in particular. The statistics were grim; Jewish day school attendance was rapidly declining, youth movements were suffering, attendance at communal functions for both Zionist and local causes was rapidly decreasing. Even our Jewish sports teams were struggling to attract the numbers of former years.

The question was posed as to how we could promote these organisations, institutions and functions. Strategies were discussed and issued outlined, all in an attempt to solve the great problem of Jewish disenfranchisement. The ultimate goal was to ensure Jewish continuity.

Jewish continuity is the new buzz word on the street. It is bandied about by our elders as they look patronisingly at our youth and gloomily at the future. In the past, staying Jewish was not only expected, it was assumed. But the passage of time and embrace of first-world love and tolerance have meant Jewish continuity can no longer be assumed. It is under threat. We try our best by out-sourcing Jewish education to the schools rather than focussing on it in our homes. We envelop our children in Jewish sports teams, promote Jewish social circles and talk the Jewish talk. We sometimes even encourage them to attend Shul. Nevertheless, it would appear that we are losing the battle.

But are we asking the right question? The question shouldn't be "How can we ensure Jewish continuity?" It should be "Why is Jewish continuity important?"

"And at that time", to quote the Haggadah, I turned to the leaders and, like the wicked son, I asked them, "Why is Jewish continuity important?"

The answer given by the 'father' was silence. His face contorted as he struggled with the question. Like the emperor realising his terrible mistake, the penny had finally dropped, "I don't know."

If you don't know why Jewish continuity is worthy of prolonging, then why are you investing resources in answering an irrelevant question?

Start with why.

As Jews, rather than being a mission-driven nation, our Jewishness has developed into a nostalgic and nationalistic endeavour. We are no different to any other ethnic group. They eat souvlaki, we eat gefilte fish. They remember Sicily, we the Heim. They remember the Armenian genocide, we the Holocaust. The difference is only in the detail.

If a young Greek, Lebanese, Italian or Iranian requested your guidance regarding his desire to marry out of his culture or faith, how would you advise him? His parents are radically opposed to this move and are threatening harsh pressures to make him change his decision.

What would you say?

Would your gut instinct be to think of his parents as bigots, racists, possibly radicals?

Are we any different?

The Jewish answer to why be Jewish is Shavuot.

The acceptance of the Torah moulded a nation that was destined to be different - different in their values, different in their actions and different in their ethos.

It is the Torah that distinguishes a Jew from a gentile; the Torah and nothing else.

**Shabbat shalom and chag sameiach**

**We wish a hearty Mazal Tov on your Wedding Anniversary to:**

David and Sylvia Glasser

Julian and Ilana Hotz

Rodney and Carmel Kenner

Craig and Daniel Segel

**We wish a hearty Mazal Tov on your Bar/Bat Mitzvah Anniversary to:**

Ryan Joffe

Jonathan Rosenberg

Richard Shakenovsky

**We wish long life to the following Members who commemorate Yartzeit this week:**

Frederick Alexander

for his mother

Lynette Alexander

Russell Marx

for his sister

Zane Breskal

Debbi Levy

for her father

Alan Chenik

Moses Gordon

for his mother

Chiene Gordon

Lewis Horwitz

for his father

Sydney Horwitz

Glenda Krawchuk

for her mother in law

Sally Krawchuk

Hillary Simon and

Nathan Luck

for their father

Issy Luck

Stanley Schneider

for his father

Leo Schneider

Sandra Plit

for her brother

Selwyn Shlom

Ada Berger

for her brother

Benny Silver

Ada Berger

for her mother

Feiga Silver