
A Message From The Rabbi ...

Family Matters

by Rabbi Yaakov Hoffman

For most of us, it is self-evident that Jewish holidays are times to be spent with loved ones – we would not imagine the Torah needing to spell this out. Yet, there is actually an explicit verse instructing us that Yom Tov is family time!

After God instructs Moshe regarding all the laws of the Passover sacrifice, Moshe relates to the people how to go about doing it: **צאן למשפחותיכם ושחטו הפסח משכו וקחו לכם** “Take sheep for your families and slaughter the Paschal offering.” However, the Korban Pesach is technically not one per family, but one per whatever group (**חבורה**) signs up for it. So why does the Torah use the word “family” here?

The medieval Spanish exegete Rabbenu Bahya writes that this teaches us the importance of spending holidays with family: **מכאן שחייב אדם לקרב קרוביו כדי שישמחו עמהם בימים טובים.** “Hence, one must draw close one’s relatives so that they will rejoice with one on the festivals.” But we remain with the conundrum of why this prescription is even necessary!

If we look carefully at his words, Rabbenu Bahya is actually deriving a much deeper lesson from the verse than simply “spend holidays with family.” He does not say “you must hang out with your family on holidays.” Rather, he mentions that festivals are **לקרב את קרוביו** – to draw one’s relatives close. He is not referring to people who live within one household automatically eating the holiday meals together. The Torah’s lesson about family on Yom Tov is that we must proactively seek to strengthen the weak connections within our immediate as well as extended families.

Certainly, one fulfillment of this idea is to travel in order to spend holidays with physically distant relatives. But it is not only geography that can keep a family apart. Part of the observance of Yom Tov is harnessing the joy of the holiday to try to spend time and repair ties with family members with whom one does not get along.

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Furthermore, most extended Jewish families nowadays have some non-observant members. Sometimes, we might think that sharing a Yom Tov table with them will adversely affect our spirituality. However, Rabbenu Bahya's comment tells us that an important part of the Yom Tov celebration is to harness its warmth and splendor to draw them as close as possible to Judaism. We must thus make a point to invite them to join us for the holiday meals.

Rabbenu Bahya concludes his comments here by quoting a verse in Jeremiah (30:25), which discusses the Messianic era: **בַּעַת הַהֵיאָ נֵאֱמָר** "At that time... I will be the God of all the families of Israel." God singles out "families" here to stress that the a key aspect of our final redemption will be a sense of peace and closeness within the family units, the building blocks of the nation of Israel. By taking advantage of the specialness of the Jewish holidays and using them to connect with family, we are readying ourselves to again share the Korban Pesach with our families, may it be speedily in our days! 🕍

Shul Events:

Purim, March 11-12: Once again we had the pleasure of **Rabbi Hoffman's** beautiful leining of Megillat Esther from a distinctive leather scroll that he himself wrote. As they have for several years, the Hoffmans treated us to a delicious brunch in lieu of conventional Mishloach Manot. It was a wonderful way to start Purim day!

Scholar-in-Residence, March 16-17: On Shabbat, we had the privilege of hearing three wonderful shiurim from **Rabbi Yosef Albo**, Director of Sephardic Programming at Ramaz Upper School. In each he discussed a different way in which food is an essential part of our Torah life, from korbanot to how speaking Torah at a meal transforms it from a purely physical into a religious experience.

מזל טוב / Congratulations

To **Sonya Jacobs** on the birth of a great granddaughter, and to the grandparents, **Robin & Dr. Baruch Jacobs**, and to the parents, **Gabriella & Ben Kalmanowicz**

To **Bertha Gruenspecht** on the birth of a great granddaughter, and to the grandparents, **Judy & Larry Rossman**, and to the parents, **Elana & Rafi Rossman**

To **Sonya Jacobs** on the engagement of a granddaughter, **Devorah Horowitz**, and to Devorah's parents, **Nechama & Tovia Horowitz**

To **Ina Sondheim** on the birth of a great grandson in Israel, and to the grandparents, **Debbie Sondheim & Arthur Adler**, and to the parents, **Nina & Noam Adler**

To **Sonya Jacobs** on the birth of a great grandson, **Daniel**, and to the grandparents, **Nechama & Tovia Horowitz**, and to the parents, **Chaya & Yaakov Teitelbaum**

To **Erika Bauer** on the birth of a great granddaughter, **Shir Zion**, in Montevideo, Uruguay, and to the grandparents, **Karen & Yaron Shlomi**, and to the parents, **Ruth & Rabbi Michael Rubinstein**

To **Sonya Jacobs** on the birth of a great grandson, **Nosson Zvi**, and to the grandparents, **Michele & Shmuel Jacobs**, and to the parents, **Shira & Mosey Kaplan**

To **Ruthie & David Skochil** on the birth of a son, **Akiva Reuven ben David** (Robert Levi Skochil), named after Ruthie's maternal grandfather **Akiva** (Kivi) **ben Levi haLevi** and David's maternal grandfather **Robert Heurich**

Kiddush Sponsors:

Dec 23, Vayigash: **Yosef Rabinowitz** on the first yearzeit of his mother, Sheindel bas Aharon HaKohen

Dec 30, Vayechi: Co-sponsored by **Dvora Hersh** on the 20th yearzeit of her brother, **Robert Alan Lowe** (Yitzchok ben Kalonymous), and by **Judy & Elan Rieser** on the 24th yearzeit of **Alice Einhorn Cohen**, Judy's maternal grandmother and the mother of **Dorothy Bromberg**, and by **Harry Epstein** on the anniversary of his bar mitzvah

Jan 6, Shemot: **Elaine Manning** on the yearzeits of her parents, **Louis & Clara Tischler**

Jan 13, Va'era: **Mordecai & Leslie Segall**

Jan 20, Bo: **Judy & Elan Rieser** on the 4th yearzeit of Elan's maternal grandmother, **Menucha Paltiel**

Jan 27, Beshalach: **Judy & Elan Rieser** on the 8th yearzeit of Elan's maternal grandfather, **Yehuda Paltiel**, and the 15th yearzeit of Judy's paternal grandmother, **Zelda Wolberg Kunofsky**

Feb 24, Tetzaveh: **Shelley Bulman** in celebration of the marriage of her sister-in-law, **Evie Bulman Jacobs**, to **Chaim Kreitzman**

March 3, Ki Tisa: Co-sponsored by **Dvora Hersh** on the first yearzeit of her mother, **Marjorie Lowe** (Peryl bat Nosson), and by **Margot Fein** on the yearzeit of her father, **Louis Fein**

March 10, Vayakhel-Pekudei: Scotch, Bourbon, and Trimmings kiddush co-sponsored **Morris Whitcup** and **Harry Epstein**

March 17, Vayikra: Sit-down kiddush for the Scholar-in-Residence, **Rabbi Joseph Albo**

March 24, Tzav (Shabbat HaGadol): **Charlie & Marjorie Gregor** in celebration of the 3rd birthday of their granddaughter **Yehudis Gregor**

If you are interested in sponsoring a Kiddush,
please call the Shul office (212) 923-4407

Washington Heights Congregation Zmanim

Spring 5778

Zmanim subject to change: please consult the website and weekly e-mails for the latest times

EREV PESACH

TAANIT BECHOROT

MARCH 30

Eat Chametz	before 10:35am
Destroy Chametz	before 11:40am
Candle Lighting	7:00
Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat	7:05
Kiddush	not before 7:52
Chatzot	1:01am

PESACH DAY 1 / SHABBAT

MARCH 31

Shacharit	8:40
Mincha	7:00
Maariv	8:01
Candle Lighting from an existing flame and preparation	after 8:01

PESACH DAY 2

APRIL 1

Shacharit	8:40
Mincha	7:10
Maariv/Havdalah	8:02

EREV SHVII SHEL PESACH

APRIL 5

Mincha/Maariv	7:05
Candle Lighting	7:07

PESACH DAY 7

APRIL 6

Shacharit	8:40
Mincha/Maariv	7:05
Candle Lighting from an existing flame	7:08

PESACH DAY 8 / SHABBAT

APRIL 7

Shacharit	8:40
with Yizkor	approx. 10:00

Mincha	7:05
Maariv/Havdalah	8:08

SHABBAT MEVARCHIM

PARASHAT SHMINI

APRIL 13-14

Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat	7:00
Candle Lighting	7:15
Shacharit	8:40
Mincha	7:15
Maariv/Havdalah	8:16

SHABBAT PARASHAT

TAZRIA-METZORA

APRIL 20-21

Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat	7:00
Candle Lighting	7:22
Shacharit	8:40
Mincha	7:20
Maariv/Havdalah	8:25

SHABBAT PARASHAT

ACHREI MOT-KEDOSHIM

APRIL 27-28

Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat	7:00*
Candle Lighting	7:30
Shacharit	8:40
Mincha	7:30
Maariv/Havdalah	8:33

SHABBAT PARASHAT EMOR

MAY 4-5

Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat	7:00*
Candle Lighting	7:37
Shacharit	8:40
Mincha	7:35
Maariv/Havdalah	8:41

SHABBAT MEVARCHIM PARASHAT BEHAR- BECHUKOTAI

MAY 11-12

Earliest Candles	6:33
Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat	7:00*
Candle Lighting	7:44
Shacharit (note early start)	8:35
Mincha	7:45
Maariv/Havdalah	8:50

EREV SHAVUOT SHABBAT PARASHAT BAMIDBAR

MAY 18-19

Earliest Candles	6:39
Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat	7:00*
Candle Lighting	7:51
Shacharit (note early start)	8:30
Mincha	7:50
Maariv	8:58
Yom Tov Candle Lighting from an existing flame and preparations	after 8:58

SHAVUOT DAY 1

MAY 20

Shacharit (note early start)	8:30
Mincha	7:50
Maariv	8:59
Yom Tov Candle Lighting from an existing flame and preparations	after 8:59

SHAVUOT DAY 2

MAY 21

Shacharit (note early start)	8:30
with Yizkor	approx. 10:00
Mincha	7:50
Maariv/Havdalah	9:00

SHABBAT PARASHAT NASSO

MAY 25-26

Earliest Candles	6:44
Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat	7:00*
Candle Lighting	7:57
Shacharit (note early start)	8:30
Mincha	7:55
Maariv/Havdalah	9:05

SHABBAT PARASHAT BEHA'ALOTCHA

JUNE 1-2

Earliest Candles	6:48
Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat	7:05*
Candle Lighting	8:03
Shacharit (note early start)	8:25
Mincha	8:00
Maariv/Havdalah	9:11

SHABBAT MEVARCHIM PARASHAT SH'LACH

JUNE 8-9

Earliest Candles	6:52
Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat	7:10*
Candle Lighting	8:08
Shacharit (note early start)	8:25
Mincha	8:05
Maariv/Havdalah	9:16

SHABBAT PARASHAT KORACH

JUNE 15-16

Earliest Candles	6:55
Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat	7:15*
Candle Lighting	8:11
Shacharit (note early start)	8:25
Mincha	8:10
Maariv/Havdalah	9:20

SHABBAT PARASHAT CHUKAT

JUNE 22-23

Earliest Candles	6:57
Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat	7:15*
Candle Lighting	8:13
Shacharit (note early start)	8:30
Mincha	8:10
Maariv/Havdalah	9:22

*For those whose families daven with the shul's minyan, candles should be lit no later than 25 minutes after Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat starts

The Eruv

Information about the boundaries of the Washington Heights and YU Eruvin can be found at http://images.shulcloud.com/131/attachments/6279_DOC082112-003.pdf.

Note that the eruv does not extend into Fort Tryon Park or Gorman Park.

Find the CURRENT STATUS of both eruvin at <http://www.mtsinaishul.com/>, or call 646-450-ERUV, or send a text message (SMS) to 412-213-8991. If only the YU eruv is listed as unchecked, check www.yueruv.org closer to Shabbat, or listen to announcements in shul on Friday night.

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A large, bold, black letter 'B' with a smaller 'D' nested inside its right side. Below the 'BD' is the text 'BRIDGE DENTISTS' in a bold, sans-serif font, with the letters slightly arched to follow the curve of the 'D'.

Howard Bloom, D.D.S.

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