



קליהל קהלה



The weekly newsheet of Clayhall United Synagogue

Shabbos 9 May 2009/ 15 Iyar 5769

Service Times

Shacharis	9.00 am
Pre-Shabbos Minchah Shiur	7.10 pm
Minchah followed by Seudah	8.00 pm
Shabbos ends	9.33 pm
Shabbos next week	7.30pm

Rabbi Wilson begins his pre-Minchah Shabbos Shiur series this afternoon at 7.10 pm. Further details can be found inside. Flower tubs (14"-16" in diameter) containing an assortment of summer flowering plants have been ordered for **Shavuos**. After Shavuos they are available for members to purchase at a discounted rate of £15 each. To reserve your beautiful tub, please contact Deana in the Shul office on 8551 6533. The recent **Shul mailing** contains not only important AGM information but also details about all forthcoming Shul events. Please do your best to support these. It is always very helpful if you could reply promptly and within the time stated. Otherwise you might be disappointed if places are no longer available.

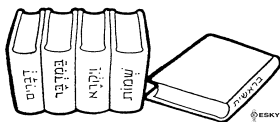
Torah Reading

Leyning: Emor
Hertz p 513, Soncino p 740
Haftorah:
Hertz p 528, Soncino p 761

Rabbi Nissan Wilson

Gabriel Simons

*This Tuesday is **Lag B'Omer**, the 33rd day of the Counting of the Omer. It is an intensely spiritual day when thousands visit R' Shimon bar Yochai's tomb.*



You can sponsor the Clayhall Kehilla for just £15 in celebration of a simchah or to commemorate a Yahrzeit, or for no reason at all!

Children's Service: 10.30 am - 11.15 am (alternate weeks)

Weekday Services

Shacharis: Monday to Friday, 7.00 am. Sunday @ 8.15 am.

Shacharis Rosh Chodesh: 6.45 am Monday to Friday.

Shacharis Rosh Chodesh: 8.00 am Sundays.

Minchah: 1.45 pm, Monday to Thursday.

Minchah & Ma'ariv: 7.30 pm, Tuesday and Wednesday.

Sunday breakfasts: 25th May, 28th June & 2nd August

Genesis...Something New

The Shul's new fund raising committee kicks off with its inaugural function on **Sunday 17 May**. This is a Chicago Bridge and Kalooki evening. Tickets at just £6 each are available from Philip Shamplina, Vivienne Agassi or the shul office. Light refreshments will be served. Don't delay in booking.

Weather permitting, a Garden Party is planned for 21 June and further information will be provided soon. On **Sunday 18 October**, Genesis presents a Grand Quiz Supper Evening with the Number One quiz inquisitor, Michael Finger. Put this date in your diary!

Tikun Leil Shavuos

One of our annual highlights is the Tikun Leil Shavuos. Single malts, lashings of cheesecake, and some great home-grown, inspiring words of Torah provide the perfect blend. We are delighted that Freda & Leslie Pollock are again hosting the event. It starts on **Thursday 28 May** at 11.45 pm until about 3.30 am. We will then daven Shacharis around 4.00 am. For those not too nocturnal, the Shavuos morning service will be repeated at 9.00 am in Shul!

Shul Calendar & Magazine

Your insertions are needed for the new Shul calendar. Birthdays, anniversaries, yahrtzeits can be included. This year, Bar and Bas mitzvah dates can be highlighted. Forms were recently sent out but there are spare ones in the office. These should either be returned to **Ruth Lyndon** directly or given to Deana in the office. If you have had a simchah since 1 March or will be celebrating one before 15 July, let **Cynthia Simmons** have a photograph for the Rosh Hashanah edition of *Shalom*. Contact her on 8550 8018.

New Shiur Series

Rabbi Wilson's afternoon Shabbos Shiur series will be based on *Be'er Hagulah* of the Maharal of Prague. This far reaching classic work of the Maharal teaches us to analyse the Aggadic passages of the Talmud and unlock the deeper wisdom hidden within. The Shiurim begin this afternoon, **Shabbos 9 May**. It will always start 50 minutes before Minchah and everyone is warmly welcome.

Clayhall Community Shabbaton

Our flagship event of the year takes place on Shabbos 23th May 2009. We are very honoured and privileged to welcome **Rabbi Yehudah Lieberman** as our scholar-in-residence. Rabbi Lieberman is the head of the prestigious Edgware Kollel and is an experienced educator and lecturer. His engaging style and sharp wit have made him one of the most popular speakers in NW London. He is a highly respected scholar and thinker and has made a vast contribution to both formal and informal education.

The exciting programme starts with Shacharis at 9.00 am. A hot cholent and buffet Kiddush follows the service at 11.30 am. At 12.15 pm, Rabbi Lieberman will talk about "*Standing the test of time: Building lasting relationships in a disposable society.*" After the community Shabbos lunch, there is a choice of programme with either Rabbi Wilson speaking on "Mercy Killing? Euthanasia and the Value of Life" or Rabbi Lieberman offering "Tradition, Religion and the Generation Gap." Ice-creams at about 3.45 pm will bring the day to a close.

There will be a full children's programme and an action-packed day for teenagers. We would like as many families as possible to attend and application forms are either available online or through the recent mailing. They must be returned to the Shul office **no later** than Thursday 14th May. Cost is £13 per adult, £8 for under 16's and £5 for under 12's.

7-Day Celebration

R' Chaim Vital said that his teacher the *Arizal* visited the tomb of **Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai** in honour of Lag B'Omer and he stayed there for three consecutive days. The Chasidic masters taught that the spiritual aura that is manifest at Meron on Lag B'Omer, the Yahrzeit of Rabbi Shimon, is present for the entire week; from three days preceding this day until the third day following it, similar to the aura of Shabbos.

Children's Ice Cream Kiddush

The Children's Service will be having a special Shavuot ice-cream Kiddush on **Shabbos (2nd day Yom Tov) 30 May**. There will be plenty of haribos, marshmallows, sprinkles and, of course, delicious ice cream - children only!

Clayhall AGM 2009

The Clayhall Shul AGM takes place here on **Tuesday 19 May at 8 pm**. Voting for several positions begins from 6.00 pm to 8.00 pm. Candidate lists and other papers have just been sent to members. The AGM is a real opportunity to voice your comments and opinions on Shul matters. The Honorary Officers want to encourage a healthy debate and it is hoped that members will respond appropriately. The AGM will, as always, be preceded by a short DVD from the Community Security Trust.

Counting the Omer by Rabbi Yehudah Appel

A poor man, desperate to find the means to support his family, sets sail to foreign shores. Tragically, his **ship is sunk** in the stormy sea, but he makes it to a tropical island. It is literally **covered with diamonds**. Determined to return home, he finds a shipbuilder on the island and offers to pay him in diamonds to build a boat. The shipbuilder laughs and then says, "But what am I going to do with **worthless diamonds?!"** The hapless stranger soon learns that the currency of value on the island is **meat gristle**. Working hard, he earns enough meat gristle not only to pay for the building of a boat, but also to have plenty to bring back with him. When his boat is finished, he **loads it up with meat gristle** and heads home. His family is overjoyed to see him. Proudly, he announces, "**We are now rich!**" He opens the hatch and shows them... meat gristle! A **ghastly silence** hangs in the air. The poor man realizes his tragic mistake, and begins to cry.

Each of us is, to some extent, the poor man in this story. Brought into this world to accomplish certain tasks and uphold certain values, we often **lose our way** in the frantic pace of modern life. Too often we find ourselves trading diamonds for meat gristle. Tragically, we can never regain that lost time. How do we combat this confusion? One of the most powerful tools Judaism offers is Shabbos. A Jew frees himself from the frantic activities of the week - in order to step back and focus on the **truly important elements** in life. On Shabbos, we spend more time at home with our family, and with G-d. We take walks and contemplate the direction of our life. Judaism says there are two other particularly **powerful times** to work on evaluating one's actions: the High Holidays, and the period between Pesach and Shavuot. This latter period is known as the time of "**Counting the Omer.**" Beginning on the 2nd day of Pesach, the Torah commands us to count 49 days leading up to Shavuot, when we received the Torah. According to many commentaries, this count is to bridge the Pesach and Shavuot. While it is true that the Jewish people received their **physical freedom** on Pesach, that freedom was essentially **without purpose** until they were given the Torah on Sinai on Shavuot. Thus Shavuot is the ultimate purpose of Pesach. Our counting the days as we move towards Shavuot reminds us to **focus on meaningful goals**.

Other sources note the association between the counting of the Omer and the **harvest seasons**. The word "*Omer*" itself denotes a dry measurement and refers to the amount of barley flour that was brought as an offering to the Temple on 2nd day Pesach. This offering came at the time of the barley harvest and was an expression of thanks to G-d. At the end of the 49 days of counting, at the time of the wheat harvest, an offering of wheat flour was also brought. According to the *Abarbanel*, with all their involvement in farming activities, the agrarian population of Israel could become too **absorbed in their work** and forget the significance of the period. The Omer count served to act as a brake on such self-absorption. During these weeks, when Jews around the world are counting the Omer, it has become another modern-day reminder to focus on the **diamonds** in our lives... and not the gristle.

Clayhall United Synagogue

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