

CONGREGATION AHAVATH ISRAEL

Monthly Bulletin

P.O. Box 070177, Staten Island, N.Y. 10307-0177

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PURIM SERVICE

Please join Rabbi Avraham Maza and Congregation Ahavath Israel for our Purim Service, replete with Megillah Reading, Graggers, Children's Costume Parade and Hamantaschen, on Wednesday, March 7, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. Rabbi Maza will read the Megillat Esther and Matthew Hindin will read his summaries of its chapters.

PASSOVER COMMUNITY SEDER

On Friday, April 6, the first night of Passover, the synagogue will conduct a Community Seder with traditional foods prepared by a Kosher Passover caterer. The price is **\$45** per adult, **\$25** per child under 13. You must reserve your spot before March 6 and pre-pay. To reserve, call Michael Hindin at (718) 984-0142. Walk-ins will not be accepted.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Rabbi Maza will be joining us on March 7 for Purim and April 20-21 for Yom HaShoah. On Purim, we read the *Megillat Esther*, or Book of Esther, which is set in the third year of the reign of Persian King Achashverosh, in his kingdom's capital, Shushan. Achashverosh is Xerxes (in Greek), son of Darius and grandson of Cyrus the Great (who allowed the Jews to return to Israel and rebuild the Second Temple). Achashverosh makes a lavish drinking feast that lasts 180 days, and summons Queen Vashti to display her beauty for his guests, but she refuses. Worried that all women will disobey their husbands, Achashverosh removes her as Queen and issues a royal decree that every man should rule his household and speak his native tongue.

Achashverosh orders all beautiful young girls to be presented so he can choose a new queen. One of these young ladies is Esther, an orphan being fostered by her cousin Mordechai. She finds favor in the King's eyes and is made his new queen. Following Mordechai's instructions, she does not reveal that she is Jewish. Mordechai discovers a plot by two courtiers to assassinate the King. The conspirators are apprehended and hanged, and Mordechai's service to the King is recorded in the royal chronicles.

Achashverosh appoints Haman prime minister, but Mordechai refuses to bow to him. Having discovered that Mordechai is Jewish, Haman decides to kill all Jews. He obtains the king's permission, casts lots (*purim*) to pick a date, and the order is given to "destroy, kill, and exterminate all the Jews, from young to old, little ones and women," and to "plunder their property as spoil." Mordechai learns of the decree and asks Esther to intercede with the King. Jews fast for three days. Esther risks death by going before the King unsummoned and invites both Achashverosh and Haman to a banquet. At the banquet, she invites both men to a second banquet the next evening. Meanwhile, at his wife's suggestion, Haman constructs a gallows fifty cubits high to hang Mordechai.

That night, Achashverosh could not sleep, and when his book of chronicles is read to him, he learns that Mordechai foiled the assassination plot but received no recognition. Haman appears, and Achashverosh asks him what should be done for the man whom the King wishes to honor. Thinking that Achashverosh meant to honor him, Haman says that the man should be dressed in royal robes and led around on the royal horse. To his horror and surprise, Haman is instructed to reward Mordechai in this fashion.

At Esther's second banquet, she reveals that she is Jewish and that Haman is planning to destroy, slay and exterminate all Jews, including herself. Overcome by rage, Achashverosh leaves the room, and Haman begs Esther to spare his life, falling upon her. The King returns, thinks Haman is assaulting Queen Esther, and orders that Haman be hanged on the very gallows that he prepared for Haman. Mordechai is appointed prime minister to replace Haman. Esther begs the King to annul the decree to exterminate the Jews, but the decree cannot be recalled, so he allows the Jews to defend themselves during the attacks, and destroy their enemies. On 13 Adar, in Shushan, the Jews slay 500 attackers and Haman's ten sons, but take no plunder. The

next day, the Jews slaughter 75,000 Persians. Mordechai and Esther send letters establishing an annual commemoration of the redemption in a festival called Purim.

~ Matthew Hindin

SISTERHOOD 2011-2012 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 2, 2012	Shabbat Across America
March 7, 2012	Purim gift bags, with wine for adults and juice for children.
Spring 2012	The Sisterhood will sell Kosher Passover wine.
April 29, 2012	Sunday – Flea Market
May 2012	National Museum of American Jewish History, Philadelphia
June 2012	Sisterhood Members Brunch, Installation of Officers

YOM HASHOAH, HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE

Yom HaShoah is our day of commemoration for the approximately six million Jews who were murdered in the Holocaust between 1933 and 1945. The word “holocaust” means “burnt offering” and many Jews prefer the Hebrew word *Shoah*, which connotes catastrophe, calamity, disaster and destruction. Yom HaShoah occurs on 27 Nisan, to coincide with the 1943 Warsaw ghetto uprising, and corresponds to Thursday, April 19 this year. Please join Rabbi Maza, Shoah survivor Benjamin Wayne and Congregation Ahavath Israel for our Yom HaShoah observance on Friday, April 20, 2012, at 7:00 p.m.

KADDISH

Some of our members, including our congregation leader, are in mourning and must say *Kaddish*. *Kaddish* requires a *minyan*, or quorum. It is a mitzvah for those who attend our Friday night and Saturday services to make a *minyan* and allow *Kaddish* to be said.

BAR / BAT MITZVAH LESSONS

Bar and Bat Mitzvah lessons are now being taught by our congregation leader, Joel Russo. Please contact the synagogue at (718) 356-8740 for more information.

The Bulletin is available online at www.congregationahavathisrael.com/Newsletter.cfm.

CALENDAR

EVENTS SCHEDULE

- Shabbat Across America – Friday, March 2, 2012
- Purim Service – Wednesday, March 7, 2012
- Passover Community Seder – Friday, April 6, 2012
- Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance – Friday, April 20, 2012

SERVICES SCHEDULE

- Friday Night – 8:00 PM Service
- Saturday Morning – 10:00 AM Service

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