
S&P Central Newsletter - Shabuot 5775 / 2015

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Draft

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Dear Friends,

Boas vindas! Bienvenida! Bienvenue! Shalom shalom! Lag Ba'omer has just ended, and this newsletter should arrive to your inboxes with plenty of time for you to prepare for Shabuot. Enjoy!

S&P Central
www.sandpcentral.org

P.S. To suggest an item for future editions, please email us at sandpcentral@gmail.com. If you have suggested improvements for the website (www.sandpcentral.org) or would like to help in some other way, please let us know as well!

NEWS

Lisbon

New Rabbi Announced

The Jewish Community of Lisbon (<http://www.cilisboa.org>) announces that Rav Samuel de Beck Spitzer will be its new spiritual leader. Originally from England, with his rabbinical ordination issued by the Rabbinat in Israel, he also has a teaching diploma from the Ministry of Education in Israel and a post-graduate professional diplomas from the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester (UK). He has also acted for several years as an opera soloist of the New Israeli Opera and Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra. He takes up his new post this month.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Leeds

June 16-19 / Two S&P Presenters at International Music Conference

At an international conference on Jewish prayer music this June, two of the presenters will speak about S&P nusach. They are Peter Nahon, an expert in the Portuguese nusach of France who often helps to lead services at the synagogue in Bordeaux (<http://www.synagogue-bordeaux.com>); and Eliot Alderman, who has served as choirmaster of the S&P Jews' Congregation in London (<http://www.sandp.org/index.html>). You can read more about the conference and their presentations here:

<http://ptja.leeds.ac.uk/magnified-sanctified-the-music-of-jewish-prayer/programme/>

New York

May 28 / "Sephardic Journeys" at the Center for Jewish History

The American Sephardi Federation opens a new exhibit at the Center for Jewish History (15 West 16th St, NYC), showcasing the rich diversity of the Sephardic World, from the communities of Spain and Portugal to those of the

Middle East, North Africa, Asia and Latin America. Among objects featured in the exhibit is the first English translation of the Hebrew prayer book in America. Speakers on the opening evening will include Marc Angel, Rabbi Emeritus of the Congregation Shearith Israel, as well as Yamin Levy, Senior Rabbi at Great Neck's Iranian Jewish Center. The evening will also feature live music. More info here: <http://cjh.org/p/42>.

RECENT EVENTS

Montreal

April 29 / Presentation on the Jews of Portugal by Dr. De Souza

As part of a series sponsored by the Women's Learning Group of the Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue, Dr. Igor Holanda De Souza gave a talk titled, "The Jews of Portugal: Between History and Memory." Dr. De Souza is currently a post-doctoral fellow at McGill University. More information here: <http://womenlearning.weebly.com>

Philadelphia

May 9 / Parnas Emeritus Leon Levy Marks Special Anniversary

On Shabbat Emor, Parnas Emeritus Leon Levy, who served the congregation for 31 years in that position, celebrated his 80th birthday by reading the Haftorah, also marking the 67th anniversary of his Bar-Mitzvah. Services were followed by a special lunch dedicated to the occasion.

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

Azores

"Last Azorean Synagogue Is Saved from Ruin," by Michael Holtzman, Fall River News, April 21, 2015

The sanctuary of the Sahar Hassamain Synagogue in Ponta Delgada, São Miguel, has been refinished and reconditioned. Built in 1836 -- and the last one remaining in the Azores -- it fell into disrepair in the mid-20th century and was essentially abandoned.

<http://fall-river.wickedlocal.com/article/20150421/NEWS/150428955>

SHABUOT LITURGY

Among the most distinctive Shabuot customs is the recital of the Azharot and the Book of Ruth before the Minha service. Below are descriptions and recordings of both:

Azharot

"The main poem is a precis of the 613 commandments written by R. Shelomo ibn Gevirol (c. 1020-1058). In England the first section, summarising the positive commands, is read on the first day, and the second, summarizing the negative ones, on the second. The poem is preceded by an introductory poem by R. David Eleazar ibn Bakuda, who lived in Saragossa in the 12th Century. He has followed the custom of hiding his name in the opening letters of the verses." -- Rabbi Jonathan Cohen, London Sephardi Music (<https://sites.google.com/site/londonsephardimusic/home>):

The London chant can be heard here (sung by Rabbi Cohen):

<http://www.londonsephardimusic.org/files/Music/Shavuot/Azharot.mp3>

The New York chant can be hear here (sung by Shearith Israel Shamash Zachary Edinger):

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=10100146831655090>

Book of Ruth

"The Book of Ruth is traditionally read on Shabuot since it deals with both the Israeli wheat harvest at this time of year which the festival marks, as well as acceptance of the Torah, in this case by Ruth as a faithful convert. The younger girls of the congregation who take part are pre-assigned a few verses each, which they carefully rehearse, learning to chant them according to the the congregation's unique traditional cancellation system for the Book of Ruth." -- Congregation Shearith Israel, NY (<http://shearithisrael.org/content/book-ruth>)

Listen to New York's unique melody for Book of Ruth sung by Shearith Israel's Hazzan Rabbi Ira Rohde:
<http://www.shearithisrael.org/content/ruth-chapter-1>

RECIPE FOR SHABUOT

This issue's recipe, in honor of Shabuot, comes from Janet Amateau, a Barcelona-based chef and food historian who shares her knowledge of Sephardic food traditions on her website, Sephardicfood.com. Below is her *sutlatch* recipe along with a link explaining why it's such an important recipe in Sephardic culture (and also why everyone today makes it the wrong way!): <http://sephardicfood.com/2014/05/29/hold-the-cheesecake-ill-take-sutlatch/>:

Sutlatch

Turkish rice flour pudding with fragrant blossoms

Special equipment

The ideal pot for sutlatch is one designed for making reductions and sauces, heavy gauged and with either of two specific shapes. A *saucier* is low and wide with a slight bulge around the middle. The bowl shape accommodates a whisk and reduces the risk of scorching. A Windsor pan is shaped like an inverted cone with the tip cut off. Wider at the top than at the bottom, it encourages moisture to evaporate rapidly.

Ingredients for four servings:

4 heaping tablespoons fine milled rice flour
1/3 cup water
1 quart (4 cups) whole fresh milk
¼ cup (4 tablespoons) vanilla sugar
1 teaspoon orange flower water
ground cinnamon
edible white flowers, either orange blossom or honeysuckle

Directions

In a heavy-bottomed saucepan, moisten the rice flour with water and let it rest for 5 minutes. Set the pan over a high flame, and stir in the milk and sugar. When the milk begins to simmer, reduce the flame to medium, and continue stirring the pot. The pudding will thicken very slowly. As it does, gradually reduce the flame to prevent scorching. Stir continuously until the pudding is thick and smooth. Take turns with someone if you need a break, but don't stop stirring, and don't give up! It may take an hour, and longer for a bigger batch. Once thickened, remove the pot from the heat and stir in orange flower water to taste.

The texture should be very smooth. If it isn't, pass the sutlatch through a fine mesh sieve into individual bowls. Cover each pudding with wax paper or plastic wrap while they're still warm. Let cool to room temperature, and refrigerate.

Garnish just before serving with edible white flowers & cinnamon. Fragrant orange blossoms are a reminder of Spain & Portugal. For Shavuot, sweet honeysuckle references the land of milk and honey. In Rhodes tradition, guests are each served a bowl with their first initial written in ground cinnamon. Cut a stencil, hold it close to the surface of the pudding, and sprinkle generously.

IN MEMORIUM

Rome

Passing of Rabbi Elio Toaff, Chief Rabbi of Rome

Rabbi Elio Toaff, the chief rabbi of Rome for some 50 years, passed away on April 20. He was born in Livorno, son of the chief rabbi there. As a young man, he served in the Italian Resistance against the Nazis, and subsequent to the war, helped lead the Italian Jewish community out of the war's devastation. In 1986, he invited Pope John Paul II to visit the Great Synagogue, which was the first known visit by a pope to a synagogue. You can read more about him here:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/21/world/europe/elio-toaff-spiritual-leader-of-italian-jews-dies-at-99.html>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Where can I find S&P communities around the world?

Right here on this list we've compiled:

<http://www.sandpcentral.org/#!/communities>

Please note it's a work in progress. If you see something that is missing or incorrect, please do write and let us know.

How can I learn more about S&P minhag and melodies?

Happily, a number of the S&P communities have built websites filled with an abundance of readings, recordings, and commentary. You can find those sites here on these two pages:

<http://www.sandpcentral.org/#!/minhag>

<http://www.sandpcentral.org/#!/melodies>

Where can I purchase S&P prayer books, birkat hamazon books, etc?

There are a number of versions in various translations offered by several communities. You can learn what is available and how to contact the communities here on this page:

<http://www.sandpcentral.org/#!/texts>

Where can I join discussions of S&P traditions with others online?

Facebook features several excellent discussion groups. Please see a list of them here:

<http://www.sandpcentral.org/#!/discuss>

I'm interested in the food! Where can I find some good S&P and other Sephardic recipes?

For excellent Greek, Turkish, Moroccan, Italian and other recipes, you can find some excellent websites here on this page:

<http://www.sandpcentral.org/#!/food>

I'd like to find others to form an S&P minyan in my area. Do you have a suggestion?

Yes! Do you live in Nome, Alaska? No worries. We are beginning to form a list of people with this goal. Please send us your name and location, and we'll let you know if we hear from others in your area.