

CELEBRATION!

Shavuot Magazine 5-7 Sivan, 5785 | June 1-3 2025

**What if the Torah
was given on Wall St?** p. 4

Why Cheese p. 9

Adult Education p. 11





THE REBBE'S MESSAGE OBJECTIVE MORALITY

The Ten Commandments begin with the fundamental precepts of man's relation to G-d, and conclude with precepts governing man's relation to man. This emphasizes that even the most elementary ethical and moral precepts have validity and effectiveness only if they derive from the authority of "I am G-d your G-d" and "Thou shalt have no other gods."

The history of mankind has continuously demonstrated that human life can make no real progress where the imperatives of morality and ethics are not based on the authority of the Supreme Being, but are human inventions that can be changed and modified to suit the proclivities of the age. The state of the generation of the present day is the best proof of that.

In Jewish life, in particular, there can be no separation between morality and ethics on the one hand, and our belief in One G-d on the other. Unity is the very core of both our belief and our daily conduct,

where the material and spiritual aspect of life must be brought into full harmony, with the spiritual aspect being the predominating and determining factor.

There can be no difference of opinion as to the necessity to bring up a child in the proper relationship towards others, with respect for parents and elders, and so forth, from his/her earliest age. On the same basis, it is equally imperative to bring up a Jewish child in the spirit of Torah and Mitzvot from his/her earliest age. Only this kind of upbringing and education can be called a complete and unified education, a true Torah-education. This is what the wisest of all men meant when he said, "Train the child in the way he should go, and he will not depart from it when he grows old" (Prov. 22:6).

Excerpt & adapted from a letter by the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of blessed memory, dated 5730 [1970]

INSIDE

- 6 Practical Shavuot
- 12 Turning the Wheels
- 14 Photo Gallery: JEP



**Has G-D Ever
Spoken to You?**

*For the meaning behind the cover artwork
see, "Flowers & Plants" on pg. 7*



**Chocolate Chip
Cheesecake Recipe**



**Of Football and
Love Letters**

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in part by the generosity of the*



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*Dedicated to the Rebbe,
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, OBM,
whose boundless love and teachings are an
endless source of inspiration and guidance.*

As this publication contains holy content, please do not discard inappropriately

Shavuot

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Shavuot is the holiday that commemorates G-d's gifting the Torah to the Jewish people at Mount Sinai.

The word Shavuot means "weeks." It celebrates the completion of the seven-week Omer counting period that is between Passover and Shavuot.

While the Torah was given by G-d to the Jewish people more than 3,336 years ago, every year on the holiday of Shavuot we renew our acceptance of G-d's gift, and G-d gifts us the Torah anew.

The giving of the Torah was a far-reaching event that touched the essence of the Jewish soul for all times. Our sages compared this event to a wedding between G-d and the Jewish people. Shavuot also means "oaths," for on this day G-d swore eternal devotion to us, and we in turn

pledged everlasting loyalty to Him.

Shavuot, like Shabbat and other holidays, is celebrated by enjoying festive holiday meals, and abstaining from work. Women and girls usher in the holiday by lighting the holiday candles on both nights of Shavuot (for blessings see page 7).

Everyone - men, women and children - even little babies! - come to synagogue to hear the reading of the ten commandments on the first day of Shavuot (see pg. 5).

Shavuot is also celebrated through enjoying delicious dairy foods and studying Torah wisdom late into the night.



Why Is Shavuot So Easy?

You may have noticed that other than going to synagogue to hear the reading of the Ten Commandments, there are very few laws unique to Shavuot. Unlike Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, there are no lengthy prayers. And unlike Sukkot and Passover, we can eat whatever we like, as well as wherever we like. Sure, there are the customs related to flowers, blintzes, and cheesecakes, but it's really a piece of (cheese)cake compared to the other holidays.

Is something missing here? Shouldn't the holiday on which we received the many laws of the Torah have some laws of its own?

The answer lies in a common misunderstanding.

The Torah is often seen as a "bandage" solution. The world is a dark and scary jungle filled with all sorts of unhealthy foods, relationships and forms of recreation. So the Torah keeps us out of trouble. Basically, there was always a world, stuff, and us. The Torah? That came later on. It wasn't until 2,448 years after creation that G-d decided to work on the glitches, or at least provide us a way to maneuver around them. With this approach, the Torah is an imposed set of laws—one that clashes with the world around us.



Luckily, there's another way to look at things.

The Torah is G-d's wisdom, and it existed long before there was a world. G-d wasn't happy with this wisdom staying in the spiritual worlds. He wanted a physical world where this wisdom would be studied and its commandments observed. To make things challenging, He planted obstacles and distractions, but these are merely masks that conceal the world's true purpose: An activity center for Torah and mitzvot, a place where every word can be transformed into Torah, every gadget used for holiness, every dollar turned into a mitzvah.

And because this was the intent from the very beginning, it's Torah—not the craziness on the outside—that is the world's true genetic makeup. We need the Torah merely to reveal what the world always was meant to be: a home for G-d.

Each year on Shavuot, when we re-experience Sinai, we show our appreciation for Torah through normal eating and celebrating—without any special rules. For the Torah does not introduce a new reality, but rather sheds light, purpose and sanctity into everything that is already here now.

Has G-D Ever Spoken To You?

It's been said that if you talk to G-d, you're a religious person; if G-d talks to you, you're crazy.

I guess that means I'm crazy. G-d talks to me—not as frequently as He should, but fairly often.

I might be arguing with my wife—that same tired argument that we've had a hundred times already—when something inside me says, “Hey, just a minute. Maybe look at it her way, for a change?”

Who said that, me? I don't talk that way to myself!

Or I might be walking along a sunny street, thinking my usual thoughts—the balance in my bank account, or what to have for lunch—when I'm struck with a deep sadness, a sudden yearning for something higher, something more meaningful. Who said that, me? I don't say things like that—not since I was twenty years old, anyway.

Our Sages tell us that “every day a Heavenly voice issues forth from Mount Sinai” calling for us to return. Asked Chassidism's founder, Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov: What is the purpose of this voice, if no one hears it?

But we all hear it, answered the Baal Shem Tov. **Every time that we are struck with an unexpected thought that pushes us in the right direction**—unexpected because it is totally out of character for us, and a complete departure from our present frame of mind—**that means that our inner ear has picked up an echo of the Divine voice calling from Mount Sinai.**

Whether or not you make it a habit to talk to G-d, you should listen to Him talk to you. It'll be the sanest moment of your day.

By Yanki Tauber; Copyright and reprinted with permission of Chabad.org

WHAT IF THE TORAH WAS GIVEN ON Wall Street?

In the desert there are no office buildings or factories. So if you lived in the desert, chances are you wouldn't have a job. There'd be no boss bossing you, and no underlings under you.

In the desert there aren't even any department stores or groceries. You'd eat manna from heaven and wear the same pair of shoes for forty years.

That is why, say our sages, G-d gave us the Torah in the desert.



Had He given it to us on Wall Street, He would have had to decide whom to appoint to the board and who should retain a controlling interest. Had He given it to us in the Holy Land, He'd have had to decide if He wants it in religious Jerusalem, mystical Safed or hi-tech Tel Aviv. Or perhaps He'd have preferred a Marxist kibbutz or even a neo-Zionist settlement?

G-d wanted no shareholders in his Torah, no corporate structure, no social or political context. In fact, no context whatsoever. Just us and the Torah.

Wouldn't it have been great to stay in the desert?

But as soon as G-d was sure that we'd gotten the message—that we understood that the Torah is not the product of any particular age, environment or cultural milieu, and that it belongs, absolutely and unequivocally, to each and every one of us—he sent us to the cities and the towns of His world, to its farms and marketplaces, to its universities and office buildings. He told us that now that He's done His part, it's up to us to make His Torah relevant in all these places and in all these contexts.

Still, it's nice to come back to the desert once in a while. At least for a visit.

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PRACTICAL Shavuot

First Things First Sunday & Monday, June 1 & 2

Women and girls light holiday candles to usher in the holiday, on both the first and second evenings of the holidays.

For blessings, times and instructions, see page 7.

As on Shabbat and other holidays, special holiday meals are eaten, and we abstain from work.

The 10 Commandments Monday, June 2

Men, women and children- even little babies! - go to the synagogue to hear the reading of the Ten Commandments on the first day of Shavuot.

At the reading of the Ten Commandments, each year, we “Renew” our commitment to G-d and his Torah.



Yizkor Tuesday, June 3

On the second day of Shavuot, the Yizkor memorial service is recited.



Pulling an All Nighter Sunday, June 1

On the first night of Shavuot, it is customary to stay up all night learning Torah. The Midrash relates how the night before the giving of the Torah, the Jewish people did what anybody does before an important event—they turned in early for a good night’s sleep. This seemingly innocent decision, however, led to embarrassing consequences. The next morning, when it came time for the Torah to be given, the place was empty. **The entire Jewish people had slept in.** The Midrash even recounts that Moses had to wake them—causing G-d to later lament, “Why have I come and no one is here to receive me?” This story is at the heart of the custom of staying up late. In order to rectify our forefathers’ mistake, we stay up late on the first night of Shavuot to show that our enthusiasm is complete.



Dairy Foods

It is customary to eat dairy foods on Shavuot. Menus range from traditional cheese blintzes to quiches, casseroles and more. There are a number of reasons for this custom. For more, see page 9.



Ruth

Some communities read the Book of Ruth during morning services on the second day of Shavuot, as King David—whose passing occurred on this day—was a descendant of Ruth the Moabite.

Ruth was also a sincere convert, who embraced Judaism with all her heart. On Shavuot all Jews were



converts having unconditionally accepted the Torah and all of its precepts.

Flowers & Plants

Many have the custom to decorate their homes- and synagogues- with flowers and sweet-smelling plants in advance of Shavuot. Our Sages taught that although Mount Sinai was situated in a desert, in honor of the giving of the Torah, the mountain miraculously bloomed and sprouted flowers.



Candle Lighting TIMES* & BLESSINGS

Sunday, June 1 – Light candles at 8:02 pm

Monday, June 2 – Light candles after 9:15 pm**

Tuesday, June 3 – Holiday ends at 9:16 pm

1. Bah-rookh ah-tah ah-doh-noi eh-loh-hay-noo meh-lekh hah-oh-lahm ah-sheh ki-deh-shah-noo beh-mitz-voh-tahv veh-tzee-vah-noo leh-hahd-lik nehr shehl yohm tohv.

Translation: Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to kindle the holiday light.


2. Bah-rookh ah-tah ah-doh-noi eh-loh-hay-noo meh-lekh hah-oh-lahm sheh-heh-kheh-yah-noo veh-kee-mah-noo ve-hih-gee-ah-noo liz-mahn hah-zeh

Translation: Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has granted us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this occasion.

* For the Gurnee area

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Why CHEESE?

On Shavuot we have a custom to eat dairy foods. Many reasons are given for this practice. Here are a few:

1. With the giving of the Torah, the Jews became obligated to observe the laws of kosher. However, as **the Torah was given on Shabbat**, no cattle could be slaughtered that day, nor could utensils be koshered. Thus, on Shavuot, the Jews ate dairy.

2. The Torah is likened to nourishing milk.

Also, the Hebrew word for milk is **chalav**, and when the numerical values of each of the letters in the word *chalav* are added together—8 + 30 + 2—the total **is forty**. Forty is the number of days Moses spent on Mount Sinai when receiving the Torah.



A Deep Reason to Eat Cheesecake

Question:

What's behind the custom of eating dairy products on Shavuot? Is there a connection between the giving of the Torah at Mt Sinai and eating milk products? (I'm not complaining, I love cheesecake - I'm just looking for a deep spiritual excuse to eat more.)

Answer:

Milk is actually refined blood. In a complex and wondrous process, the mammary glands transform blood into pure white milk.

There's something supernatural about that. To take a liquid as pungent and distasteful as blood, and convert it into a nourishing and drinkable food is nothing short of miraculous.

We can simulate this miracle in our own lives. Blood represents raw animalistic passion and untamed instinct. Milk is a symbol of refinement and purity of character. Making milk out of blood - refining our lower instincts - is our life goal.

The Torah introduced a radical new path to achieve this goal - the divine commands. Through engaging in simple acts of goodness and sanctity, we can tame our animalistic instincts and align ourselves with the divine. With each individual act we elevate ourselves and our world another step, gradually transforming a rough and untamed existence into a home for G-d. We can turn our blood into milk.

I also love cheesecake. But this year as we eat it, let's remember the message behind it - that the Torah was given to transform our selfish appetites into an appetite for giving; to turn our blood, which is just for ourselves, into milk, the one thing the body produces just to give to another.

By Aron Moss

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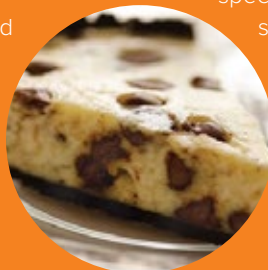
Chocolate Chip Cheesecake Recipe

INGREDIENTS:

- 1½ (8-ounce) packages cream cheese, softened
- ¼ cup sugar
- ¼ cup light brown sugar, packed
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1 cup chocolate chips
- 1 (9-inch) prepared chocolate or plain graham cracker crust
- ½ cup pie filling or ½ cup sour cream (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

- Preheat oven to 350° F ● Using an electric mixer at medium speed, mix cream cheese and sugars together until smooth. Add eggs, one at a time, mixing into batter. When fully blended, mix in vanilla. ● Using a silicone spatula, fold in chocolate chips. ● Pour into graham cracker crust. ● Bake at 350° for 40 to 50 minutes or until just slightly jiggly in the center. The cake will finish cooking from the retained heat after you take it out of the oven. ● Chill in refrigerator at least 4 hours before serving. ● Before serving top with either a layer of sour cream or your favorite flavor pie filling, if desired.



OF FOOTBALL AND Love Letters

Recently a friend asked me if I would meet with his son, Sam, and help him prepare his Bar Mitzvah speech. I got together with Sam and began to share with him some insights into the Torah portion he would be reading in the synagogue on Shabbat. I actually got really into it, seeing how carefully he was listening, nodding his head every so often. So I started to go even deeper and began to tell him some of the mystical meanings behind the passages he would be publicly reading. I was really impressed, he seemed to be really understanding me.

Well, after about an hour of all this deep talk, I said, "Sammy, do you have any questions?"

He said, "Yeah, just one. Why do I have to obey all these commandments, keep all these rules?"

Well, I felt pretty silly. Here I was going off the deep end when he didn't even know what his Bar Mitzvah meant. I asked him, **"Sammy, do you like football?"**

"I love it! I play it all the time."

"Do you know the rules?" I continued.

"Of course, you can't play if you don't know the rules."

"Why not?"

"Cuz then there would be no game. You couldn't win or lose. There couldn't be touch downs, no out of bounds, no violations, no penalties. Without the rules it would just be chaos and no fun."

"Precisely, and that's true about the game of life also. Without rules and regulations it would be chaos, no fun, no adventure, no challenge. You couldn't win or lose. And even though we all know, 'it's not whether you win or lose but it's how you play the game,' without rules there is no way to evaluate 'how you play the game.' The Torah's commandments are the game rules of life and G-d is the referee."

In the end, Sammy got psyched for his Bar Mitzvah.

On Shavuot we celebrate getting the game rules of life because if there are no game rules, there is no game. And on that day we rejoice because we became players in the game of life. Because if there is no right and wrong, then what difference does it make what I do? If there is nothing to violate, there is nothing to fulfill. I can't even play a game of football without rules, let alone live my life!

The Torah, however, is more than the rules of life. Torah is a living encounter with G-d. The experience at Mt. Sinai was not only a revelation of G-d's truth, but more importantly, it was a revelation of G-d's love. Torah was and continues to be G-d's love letter. It is

the greatest gift ever because it embodies G-d's presence.

Imagine one day, you are at work, eating lunch at the employee cafeteria, and someone drops a letter in front of you. You see that it's a letter from the one you love. You save the letter. You're going to read it in a very special place because this letter deserves more. Now imagine you're in that special place. You open the letter carefully, you start to read your beloved's words and you actually begin to hear his/her voice. If

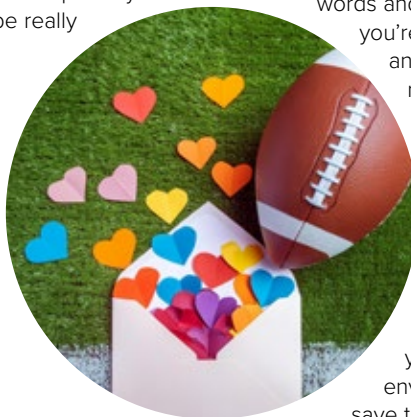
you're anything like me, you'll read the letter over and over again, because you know there's much more to this letter. The first time you read it you get the simple meaning. But then you read it even more carefully. You pay attention not only to what it says, but also to the way its sentences are structured, the way the letters are formed, the deeper and more subtle messages and meanings that are being conveyed in your beloved's words.

Once you've analyzed every aspect, you carefully refold the letter, place it in its envelope and tuck it away for safekeeping. You save this letter because you sense the presence of your beloved within these mere sheets of paper.

This, in essence, is learning Torah. Through our involvement with the text, we hear G-d's voice, feel the Divine presence and experience G-d's love and relive the revelation at Sinai each day of our lives. In this way, the Torah embodies not only a way of life but also a way to love. The wisdom and commandments of the Torah empower us to love each other and love G-d.

Shavuot is a day to celebrate the laws in love and the love in law.

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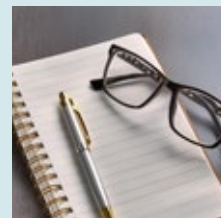
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1 pm & 7 pm

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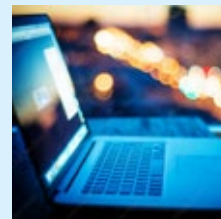
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Realign at the end of the day. A 5 minute daily wrap up with community, inspiration and a prayer.



Monday-Thursday



9:00 pm

Via
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POWER Tefillin

Men's deluxe breakfast & Tefillin wrapping - a monthly booster.



TBD



10:00 am

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Women's EVENTS

Socialize, taste, create, and enjoy. Explore the stories and messages of the Torah and how they connect to contemporary Jewish women.



TBD



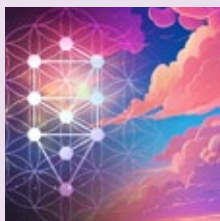
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HERE'S *my* STORY

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TURNING THE WHEELS

EPHRAIM ILIN

Efraim Ilin built Israel's first automobile assembly plant, Kaiser-Frazer of Israel, in 1951. An industrialist, philanthropist and art patron, he passed away in 2010 at age 98. He was interviewed in his home in Tel Aviv, in September, 2009.

With the founding of the State of Israel in 1948, the Henry Ford Motor Company realized that the new state would need a huge number of vehicles for the military and the government, and it announced plans to build a car assembly plant in Israel.

This made news all around the world. The Jewish State was just founded, and the Henry Ford Motor Company would be the first to build a factory there!

Our joy didn't last long. As soon as the Arabs heard about Ford's plans, they announced that if Ford didn't back down, they'd boycott it by putting the company on the Arab League's blacklist.

So, of course, Ford pulled out.

For the Israeli government it was a moment of crisis. With Ford capitulating to the Arabs, who would invest in Israel?

While the government was searching for alternatives, out of the blue, my friend, Lord Israel Ziev of London, called me up and told me, "There's a man you must talk to. His name is Hickman Price. He is with the Kaiser-Frazer Export Corporation. His company built an automobile plant in Holland, and it was a great success. Now they want to build one in Greece. I suggested to him that he should meet with you first."

The arrangements were made, and we met. And from the very first moment, we knew we were going to do business. But this project required \$2.5 million. That would be equivalent to \$250 million today, perhaps \$300 million – so a lot of money.

I asked Kaiser-Frazer to invest half a million, and I would form a group that would invest two million. I thought I'd have no trouble putting together such a group. There was no shortage of potential candidates!

But when the lawyers got down to drafting the contracts, where was the money? Nowhere to be seen!



The time came to sign the contracts, but I didn't have the courage to do it...I couldn't sleep ... It was then that I recalled an incident involving my late father. He couldn't decide whether to move his family to Israel, so he went to the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe for advice. And here I was in New York. So, I said to myself: I can go ask the Rebbe right now!

Now this was 1950 – the Previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yoseph Yitzchak, had passed away a few months earlier, and his son-in-law, the Rebbe, had not yet formally accepted the leadership. But people were already turning to him.

I contacted Pinye Althaus, a Chabad chasid I knew, and within two days, Pinye arranged an appointment. I received a message, "Be at this address at 11 a.m." The address was a ground floor apartment in Brooklyn somewhere.

I was moved just seeing the Rebbe. I felt I was standing in front of a giant. And, yet, at the same time he was such

a wonderful person, so good, so knowledgeable.

We spoke in three languages: Russian, French – he spoke excellent French – and Hebrew. I was with him for about forty minutes. I remember he was very interested in my past involvement in Etzel, the Jewish underground, my experiences in the British prisons and during the War of Independence, and how I had gotten to where I was in life...

Then I told him about the car company proposal. Since the Rebbe himself was educated as an engineer, he knew more about cars than I did. I seem to recall that he said, "A car is made up of 30,000 parts. That doesn't mean 30,000 industries, but it does mean 3,000!"

You have to understand: A car assembly plant is a trade school for at least fifty vocations: metalwork, painting, carpentry, upholstery, etc. This was very important, because Jews were coming to Israel straight from the concentration camps. They were not skilled in the slightest; they were Holocaust survivors...

He said, "This plant could be the foundation for all of Israel's industry!" He saw the larger picture, on the national



scale. And then he said, "I see that throughout your life you've encountered many obstacles,

but God was behind you. God will be behind you in the future, as well. And if, for some reason, things don't work out, then whatever happens, you will be among your fellow Jews and you'll always find a way to survive."

I no longer remember all his exact words, but I will never forget the wisdom, the kindheartedness, and the quiet way he spoke... A feeling of

tranquility came over me.

When I left, I felt as if a heavy stone had been lifted from my heart. I knew that I would sign the contracts – and that's what I did.

Our company took off. In the first ten years, we produced twenty-eight percent of Israel's entire gross domestic product! Our exports reached all the way to Argentina, Brazil, Colombia – and closer to home, we reached Turkey, France, Scandinavia, Finland and Sweden. We even reached South Africa.

The work was enormous, the expenses were enormous, but that was what built industry in Israel.

MY ENCOUNTER
with the **REBBE**

An oral history project dedicated to documenting the life of the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory. The story is one of thousands recorded in the 900 videotaped interviews conducted to date. Please share your comments and suggestions. mystory@jemedia.org

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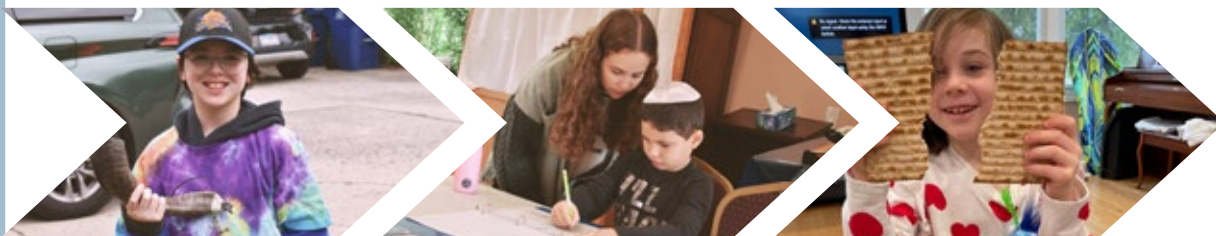
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This publication is in loving memory of Mrs. Henya Federman and her daughter Shterna Sara Federman.