



The Jewish Community of Hamelin Newsletter

May 2021 • Iyar–Sivan 5781

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Dear members, friends and supporters,

We're counting — how many days have we been counting? How many more days will it be? We are not only calculating the time with regard to the Corona-related restrictions. We are asking how many days until the vaccination or until a state that we call “normality” reigns again. Concurrently, we live in a time calculation that the Torah gives us. Beginning on Passover, we count fifty days (Omer days) until Shavuot. Before the existence of a calendar, the time of this holiday was determined solely on the date of the first day of Passover. Seven weeks plus one day later, the “Festival of the Weeks,” Shavuot is celebrated. This period of fifty days is called the “time of counting the Omer” and it resembles a ladder with fifty rungs, culminating in the gift of the Torah. We use the time to ready ourselves. Having set calendars today would seem to make this practice antiquated. We might then ask why we should continue to count the Omer days. The simple answer is because the Torah instructs us to! But the Torah does not want us to just obey the commandments mechanically — rather, with the counting of the Omer, it reminds us every evening that calendars not only mark periods of time but also pose the question of how we fill the time.



The Omer Days are a time of spiritual preparation, of becoming conscious. At Passover we were asked to feel that we had been freed from Egyptian slavery and at Shavuot, the festival of the gift of the Torah, we imagine ourselves standing on Mount Sinai. The physical liberation must be followed by the spiritual liberation. We are no longer slaves and now take the responsibility for ourselves, for the people around us, and for the world around us. The Torah is not just an heirloom that we have inherited from previous generations and are now respectfully keeping, but it is actually our inheritance that we use to shape our lives. Rabbi Jakob Yizchak Halevi Horowitz (1745–1815), known as “The Seer of Lublin,” one of the greatest leaders of Hasidism, said of the Revelation on Sinai:

“The Ten Commandments are all written in the singular:

He who brought you out..., You shouldn't have..., You shouldn't do "...

This is as if to say: “Even if the whole world deviates from the way of Torah, you should not follow them.

The Torah was given to you, especially to you!”

The past year has particularly challenged us and demanded personal responsibility from all of us. The number of infections is currently rising, but at the same time the number of our community members who have been vaccinated at least once is also increasing. As a precaution, we will continue to hold our Sabbath services and events via Zoom in May. That said, we are confident that we will be able to meet again in June. By June many will have received the second vaccination. I ask everyone for a few more weeks of patience. We can continue to stay in contact by e-mail, telephone and on Zoom.



With best regards and Shalom — Rabbi Ulrike Offenberg

Looking back at April

To our great regret, it was not possible this year to celebrate our beloved Seder evening together. On the other hand, the Passover packages that Olga Gerr prepared were hand delivered to our members by many helpers and volunteers. We hope that the Matzah, wine, Passover cake and Hagaddah for Seder added a little Pessach-like atmosphere. As part of our Zoom meetings every Friday we celebrated the beginning of Passover, the seventh day of Passover and the central Israeli memorial days of Yom HaSchoah and Yom HaSikkaron / Yom HaSchoah. We are a stable minyan who meet weekly and look forward to seeing each other and exchanging personal and community news in addition to prayers. Participation in the weekly Shiur on the weekly Torah reading is also very gratifying. Anyone who has problems setting up Zoom or questions about how to use this medium is cordially invited to contact Olga Gerr or Rabbi Offenberg. We are happy to help.



NETZER
GERMANY E.V.
SOMMER-
MACHANOT:



~~~~~  
Nord-Camp (8-14 J.):  
22. Juli - 29. Juli '21  
(Roshim:ot Elena & Mishel)



Süd-Camp (8-14 J.):  
22. August - 29. August '21  
(Roshim:ot Eva & Julia)



Ältesten-Camp (15-18 J.):  
01. August - 08. August '21  
(Roshim:ot Daniel & Sima)





## Jewish life in May

May 9th is a memorable date of liberation from Nazism and the end of World War II. On May 9th, most Jewish communities in Germany not only celebrate it as the “Day of Liberation” but also as the Day of the “Liberators.” Most Jews living in Germany today emigrated in the 1990’s from the former Soviet Union. Some of our most elderly members actually served in the Red Army and most certainly their parents and relatives of our members fought against Nazi Germany. As proud veterans, they celebrate this day and our community celebrates with them. On the 76th anniversary of Victory on Sunday, May 9, 2021, we will honor all those who gave their lives for the liberation from National Socialism. Rabbi Ulrike Offenberg and Valery Bogachik have prepared a festive program for this unforgettable day with poems, songs, and personal stories and family history. We sincerely thank all of our veterans and wish them good health and happiness.

## Shavuot

Since Corona means that the congregations in many countries are not able to hold services and the Tikkun at Shavuot as usual, the “European Union for Progressive Judaism,” the European umbrella organization of Reform congregations, is offering special programming. It will actually be an opportunity for European congregations to celebrate together. There will be an international Shavuot service on Sunday, May 16, 2021, 7:30 p.m.–8:30 p.m., followed by a Europe-wide night of learning in ten different languages! Shiurim (study sessions) will be offered in Russian, English, German, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Dutch, Czech and Hungarian until late into the night. If you speak several languages, you can switch between them in order to attend exciting events in a different group. Rabbi Offenberg is actively involved in this initiative and will send the program and access data by email.

Our community we will hold a Zoom meeting on Shavuot on Monday, May 17, 2021 at 4 p.m. Even if we can't hold our popular “cheesecake competition” this year, the culinary side should be an important “ingredient” of this gathering. Everyone is asked to prepare a milky Shavuot dish, whether sweet or savory, and then to present it. We will also hear texts and music on the theme of the “Feast of the Gift of the Torah.”

A festive Shavuot meal traditionally includes dairy dishes: cheese, cottage cheese, sour cream, quark and more. Many families and regions have their own recipes. Here’s one of many:

### Jewish cheesecake

130 g melted butter,  
350 g cookies, butter or whole-meal cookies (crumbled)  
350 grams of sugar  
350 g cream cheese  
3 eggs  
1 lemon (s), juice and zest  
350 g sour cream  
Blueberries, strawberries, raspberries or other fresh fruits



1. Preheat the oven to 190 ° C. Grease a 23 cm spring-form pan.
2. Mix the cookie crumbs with 4 tablespoons of the sugar, add the butter and stir well.
3. Pour the mixture into the mold, press it down well and chill for 30 minutes
4. Stir the cream cheese with the hand mixer until soft, add the eggs, stir, and then stir in 250 g of the sugar and the vanilla or lemon.
5. Pour the mixture on the dough and bake for 45 minutes. Let cool down for 10 minutes.
6. Mix the sour cream with the rest of the sugar.
7. When the cake has cooled down a little, pour the sour cream over the cake, spread it evenly, and bake for another 5 minutes (this gives it a nice sheen).
8. Let the cake cool at room temperature and then refrigerate until ready to serve.
9. Serve with the fresh fruit. Enjoy!



**Congratulations — Mazel Tov!**

We wish our Muslim brothers and sisters a blessed Ramadan. May it be a time of easy fasting, fruitful reflection and spirituality. We sent a letter of greeting to the Hamelin Mosques.

We warmly congratulate the General Secretary of the Israeli reform movement, Rabbi Gil'ad Kariv, on his election to the Knesset. His mandate is the fruit of long work for religious pluralism, peace and justice in Israeli society. In the first days of his administration he made the voice of Reform Judaism heard by remembering Rabbi Regina Jonas in the Knesset and supporting

the right for all to pray at the Kotel, supporting The Women of the Wall and presenting them with a Torah scroll.



**Get well — Refuah Shlamah**

We wish everyone in our community who are currently ill a speedy and complete recovery. Our thoughts and hearts are with them.

**Donations — Zedakah**

We would like to thank the members and friends who support our community life with generous donations. For donations in May, our thanks go to Sabine Demuth, Israel Edelstein, Mark Ovsievitsch, Ute Gibas, Ute Niedert and the Dohme family.

May all donors be blessed for their generosity.

**Summer Camp with Netzer Germany**

Netzer Germany, invites our children to summer camp again during the summer holidays. For the 8 to 14 year-old children summer camp runs from July 22 to 29, for older youth, the following week August 1–8. Registration is now open. See the poster with this newsletter.

**Jahrzeit in May**

- |                     |                             |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| Betya Kholmer       | 8. 5. 1997 / 1. Iyar 5757   |
| Evgenia Benderskaja | 24. 5. 2001 / 2. Sivan 5761 |
| Vladimir Rubanov    | 14. 5. 2002 / 3. Sivan 5762 |
| Sofia Kaspler       | 13. 5. 2008 / 8. Iyar 5768  |
| Feliks Gurevich     | 1. 5. 2014 / 1. Iyar 5774   |
| Isaak Frid          | 7. 5. 2020 / 13. Iyar 5780  |

May their memories be for a blessing. Please join us Online on Fridays at 5:30 p.m. to say Kaddish. Jahrzeit candles are available for purchase in the synagogue office.



**Schalom!**

**Your synagogue board and Rabbi**

## Program May 2021 • Iyar–Sivan 5781

Synagogue office hours: 9:00 am–5:00 pm daily

Dates can change at short notice

|                   |                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wednesday, May 5  | 6:00 p.m.      | Shiur for the weekly Torah portion "Behar-Bechukkotai", Zoom                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Friday, May 7     | 5:30 p.m.      | Kabbalat Shabbat, Zoom                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Saturday, May 8   | 6:00 p.m.      | Kinderkehillah, Zoom                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Sunday, May 9     | 4:00 p.m.      | May 9th — Victory Day, Zoom                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Tuesday, May 11   | 7:00 p.m.      | "Time Travel—Jewish Festivals and Traditions," book presentation with Rabbi Offenberg and Rabbi Prof. Dr. Dalia Marx, Jerusalem, sponsored by Encounter Christians and Jews in Lower Saxony e.V., per zoom.<br>Registration via: <a href="mailto: oef@begegnung-christen-juden.org">oef@begegnung-christen-juden.org</a>           |
| Wednesday, May 12 | 6:00 p.m.      | Shiur for the weekly Torah portion "Bemidbar," Zoom                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Friday, May 14    | 5.30 p.m.      | Kabbalat Shabbat, Zoom                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                   | 8:30.p.m.      | NDR Info: "Shabat Shalom" Torah Thoughts with Rabbi Offenberg                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Sunday, May 16    | 7:30–8:30 p.m. | Shavuot celebration, Zoom                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Monday, May 17    | 4:00 p.m.      | Shavuot Cheesecake Celebration, Zoom                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Wednesday, May 19 | 6:00 p.m.      | Shiur for the weekly Torah portion "Nasso," Zoom                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Friday, May 21    | 5:30 p.m.      | Kabbalat Shabbat, Zoom                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Saturday, May 22  | 6:00 p.m.      | Kinderkehillah, Zoom                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Wednesday, May 26 | 6:00 p.m.      | Shiur for the weekly Torah portion "Beha'alotekha," Zoom                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Thursday, May 27  | 7:00 p.m.      | Bible dialogue between Catholic deacon Hans-Georg Spangenberg and Rabbi Offenberg, sponsored by Society for Christian-Jewish Cooperation and "Encounters between Christians and Jews in Lower Saxony e.V.," via zoom.<br>Registration via: <a href="mailto: oef@begegnung-christen-juden.org">oef@begegnung-christen-juden.org</a> |
| Friday, May 28    | 5.30 p.m.      | Kabbalat Shabbat, Zoom                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

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### **Jewish Community of Hamelin**

Member of the Union of Progressive Jews in Germany, the World Union of Progressive Judaism, and the Central Council of Jews of Germany

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