



OCTOBER 12, 2019 | SHABBAT CANDLE LIGHTING 6:04 PM | MOTZEI SHABBAT HAVDALA 7:06 PM

שבת פרשת האזינו
SHABBAT PARSHAT HAAZINU
13 TISHREI

Haftorah is Samuel II: 22:1-51. Don't say צדקתך צדק or אב הרחמים Last time for Kiddush Levanah should be tonight, October 12 (14 Tishrei), but if you must, until 12:12 AM on the first night of Sukkot.

FRIDAY EVENING

MINCHA 6:10 PM
TZAIT HAKOCHAVIM 7:08 PM

SHABBAT

HASHKAMA 8:05 AM
MAIN 9:00 AM
LAST KRIAT SHEMA 9:53 AM
GEMARA SHIUR 5:05 PM
MINCHA 5:50 PM
MAARIV 7:06 PM

סוכות
SUKKOT
15/16 TISHREI, OCTOBER 13-15

SUNDAY EVENING

CANDLE LIGHTING 6:01 PM
MINCHA 6:05 PM
TZAIT HAKOCHAVIM 7:04 PM

MONDAY

HASHKAMA 8:05 AM
SHACHARIT 8:45 AM
LAST KRIAT SHEMA 9:54 AM
MINCHA 6:00 PM
MAARIV 6:45 PM
CANDLE LIGHTING >7:03 PM

TUESDAY

HASHKAMA 8:05 AM
SHACHARIT 8:45 AM
LAST KRIAT SHEMA 9:55 AM
MINCHA 6:00 PM
MAARIV/HAVDALAH 7:01 PM

Rabbi Ely Shestack

HAPPENINGS & EVENTS

Kiddush on the 2nd day of Sukkot is sponsored by the Winchester family in memory of Steve's mother Helen^{ה"ע}, Miriam Hendl bat Shimon, on the eighth Yahrzeit. May her neshama have an aliya.



Sukkah hop will be on the 1st day of Sukkot, Monday, Oct. 14, as follows: (1) Spier sukkah, 40-04 Terhune Pl., at 4:00 PM, (2) Mayer sukkah, 36-23 Ferry Heights, 4:40 PM, and (3) Borsuk sukkah, 82 Garwood Rd., at 5:20 PM. Thank you to our hosts!

Shul's arba minim sale will be Sunday, Oct. 13, from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM.



SIMCHAT TORAH KIDDUSH



Simchat Torah Kiddush (now a post-davening lunch for the first time in shul history) needs your support. To become a Platinum sponsor (\$100) or a general sponsor (\$36), email Steve at seplotnick@gmail.com.

Sponsors to date: **PLATINUM:** Garfunkel, Greenbaum/Goldman, Joseph, Plotnick, Riskin, Spier & Winchester; and **GENERAL:** Agress, Baron, Eisman, Goldgur, Greene, Jacob, Katter, Kor, Lang, Mayer, Oppenheim, Rein, Solomon, Sonnenblick, Strich, Wasserman, K&A Wigod & S. Wigod

GITA COOPERWASSER^{ה"ע} YOUTH PROGRAM ALERT

Parent-Child Learning of Megillah Kohelet is this Shabbat at 5:00 PM, and is open to children and teens of all ages, with interactive discussions, games and snacks, and a special wrap up by Rebbetzin Shestack.



	SUNDAY 10/13	MONDAY 10/14	TUESDAY 10/15	WEDNESDAY 10/16	THURSDAY 10/17	FRIDAY 10/18	
WEEKDAY MINYANIM AT AHAVAT ACHIM							
SHACHARIT	8:15 AM			6:00 AM	6:00 AM	6:00 AM	
MINCHA/MAARIV	6:05 PM					5:55 PM	
MAARIV ONLY					8:00 PM	8:00 PM	
ZMANIM OF INTEREST							
Earliest Talit	6:11 AM				6:14 AM	6:15 AM	6:16 AM
Gedolah	1:10 PM				1:09 PM	1:09 PM	1:09 PM
Shkia	6:19 PM				6:15 PM	6:13 PM	
Tzait	7:04 PM				7:00 PM	6:58 PM	

President Stephen Agress

FUTURE EVENTS

- Oct. 26** - Youth Taking Over, Sharsheret Pink Sudeah Shlishit, sponsored by Kira & Andrew Wigod
- Nov. 2** - Suedah Shlishit is sponsored by David & Lori Garfunkel in memory of Jonathan הרב, and Betsy & Marty Sonnenblick on the Yahrzeit of Betsy's father ימים יהודה חיים, בן ירמיהו, Howard Perlmutter הרב
- Nov. 5** - Food Bank Volunteering. Email eligreenbaum@yahoo.com for info.
- Nov. 8** - Friday Night Dinner
- Nov. 16** - Suedah shlishit is sponsored by the Kor family in honor of David Aufruf
- Nov. 23** - Shamai Bernstein Bar Mitzvah
- Dec. 7** - Yehuda Farajun Bar Mitzvah
- Dec. 7** - Suedah Shlishit is sponsored by Betsy & Marty Sonnenblick on the Yahrzeit of Betsy's mother Elaine Perlmutter הרב, Elka Shaindel bat Tzvi Hersch
- Dec. 21** - Julia Brenenson Bat Mitzvah
- Dec. 27** - Chanukah Dinner
- Jan. 25** - Suedah Shlishit is sponsored by the Sonnenblicks on the Yahrzeit of Marty's mother Helene הרב, זלמן, הענטשא מאטל בת ר' זלמן
- Feb. 1** - Brett Spier Aufruf
- Feb. 8** - Eden Riskin Bat Mitzvah
- Feb. 22** - Yachad Shabbaton
- Feb. 29** - 3rd Annual Comedy Night
- May 16** - Mental Health Awareness program at Sudeah Shlishit, sponsored by Kira & Andrew Wigod
- May 30** - Baruch Crawl

KIDDUSH INFORMATION

- To sponsor a Kiddush (\$1000/\$613/\$318, plus scotch) email gplotnick@aol.com.
- If you are around when the Rabbi says "על המחיה", your assistance in clean up would be appreciated.

18-25 Saddle River Road
Fair Lawn, NJ 07410
201.797.0502
www.avatachim.org

To dedicate a bulletin for \$36 (\$54 w/Photo), email seplotnick@gmail.com

PARSHA POINTS TO PONDER

All the questions on Shirat Ha'azinu are discussion questions, as Ha'azinu is poetic and intentionally ambiguous in nature:

- (1st) What does "E-I Emunah" (v.4) mean - who has faith and who is deserving of faith? (See rashi) In the same verse, what does it mean for Hashem to be both "yashar and tzadik"?
- (3rd) What primary descriptor is Hashem given in this aliyah? What is the meaning of that descriptor?

- (6th) What is the concluding tone of Ha'azinu?
(7th) How does Moshe describe what he has given the Jewish people "today" in his recitation of the song of Ha'azinu?

Answers to Points To Ponder
(3rd) Rock.

(6th) Hashem will absolve His land and His people
(7th) "A testimony" (v. 46). I.e. something they can keep with them to explain their experiences in the world, to give them hope and guide them to a brighter future

Shirley Vann has dedicated the attached Covenant & Conversation (used with permission of the Office of Rabbi Sacks) in memory of her beloved mother Necha bat Yitzchok הרב.

GITA COOPERWASSER הרב

YOUTH PROGRAM DATES

- Oct. 21 - 21st Annual Children's Hakafot**, 4:30 PM, on Shemini Atzeret, Monday, October 21 (inside if raining). Singing, dancing, treats and divrei Torah by a human-sized leviathan. We conclude with the "Farewell to Sukkah" Yehei Ratzon.

GITA COOPERWASSER הרב

YOUTH PROGRAM INFO

- Youth Chabura , from 1st to 5th grade, meet Matthew Levine at the main minyan at 9:00 AM.
- Teen Chabura (6th - 10th), on Shabbat this week meet Jon at 9:00 AM downstairs in the David Schwitzer social hall for rugelach and hot chocolate before heading up to the main minyan. No teen chabura during the first days of Sukkot.
- 11th - 12th graders, meet Andrew Wigod at 10:15 AM on Shabbat. No chabura this Shabbat or during first days of Sukkot.
- Tot Shabbat, 10:30 AM!
- Email ideas/suggestions for the Youth Program to kira.batist.msw@gmail.com

ADULT EDUCATION



- Nov. 1 - Oneg Shabbat** series in memory of Jonathan Garfunkel הרב resumes.
- Dec 20 - Oneg Shabbat**
Jan 10 - Oneg Shabbat
Feb 14 - Oneg Shabbat
Mar 6 - Oneg Shabbat

WEEKLY SHIURIM

- GEMARA SHIUR - Shabbat, 45 minutes before Mincha, learning Beitza.
- FUNDAMENTALS OF JEWISH THOUGHT - TBA.
- BEGINNER TALMUD CLASS - Monday evenings, 8:15 PM.

MEN'S CLUB CALENDAR

- Oct. 13** - Arba Minim Sale
Oct. 14 - Sukkah Hop

SISTERHOOD CALENDAR

- Oct. 22** - Food Auction
Oct. 26 - Book club at Esther Schwed's home, discussing Our Souls at Night, by Kent Haruf.
Nov. 9 - Trivia Night
Nov. 10 - Coat Drive
Dec. 17 - Moroccan and Persian Cooking



COMMUNITY EVENTS

- Nov. 6 - Fiddler on the Roof.** Join **Shomrei Torah** in seeing the moving and powerful show in Yiddish. Email Mendy at tuesdaystorah@yahoo.com to sign up.

THIRD ANNUAL FINE FOOD AUCTION!

Don't forget to sign up for the third annual food auction, with the proceeds from this year's auction going towards purchasing new essential tools for the kitchen to enhance our programming, kiddushes and more!

We are changing the format this year to be part a silent auction to take place before Simchat Torah with a few items to be auctioned off on Simchat Torah. We look forward to full participation from the community for both donating your dishes and bidding on all the delicious offerings. We will need the following information about your dish: (1) Brief description of the dish, (2) Number of servings, and (3) Meat, Dairy or Parve. Whether it's your favorite punch, amazing dessert or trademark dish, we can't wait to see what you come up with! (A full list of auction items will be distributed around Rosh Hashana so keep an eye out!)

Thanks in advance for cooperating! If you have any questions or need the link to sign up, please feel free to reach out to Randi Spier or Liz Jacob.

NEW SHUL WEBSITE!

Our new website is up and running, but we are still finding bugs and making fixes. Our new webmaster, Jordana Bickel, is going to be working on the website fixing any issues, making necessary changes, applying updates, etc.

If you spot any issues during this time of transition, please point them out to us.

COAT DRIVE



Sisterhood Annual Coat Drive, for Center For Hope and Safety, will be Sun., Nov. 10, 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM, 36-02 Hale Pl., Fair Lawn. Gently worn, not torn, outer garments for all ages accepted. For more info, contact Audrey at bickelar@aol.com.

AMAZON SMILE



You can help Ahavat Achim and it won't cost you a cent! Just make regular Amazon purchases at <https://smile.amazon.com/>. After a one-time set up designating your preferred charity as Congregation Ahavat Achim of Fair Lawn, just make your regular Amazon purchases.

- Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to Ahavat Achim.
- Amazon Smile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service.

DONATE A SEFER, ETC.

The shul has Siddurim & Machzorim (\$36) and Chumashim (\$54) available to be donated. Please contact Jeff Safier at robysafier@gmail.com for details.

Yahrzeit Plaques

Memorialize a loved one with a plaque, \$300 for members and \$450 for nonmembers. We will strive to send you written notice of upcoming yahrzeit and announce name during public Yizkor. Email Larry at lardaybern@gmail.com to arrange.

SCRIP

Scrip is available from Men's Club. Email David at dmgarfunkel@gmail.com. Pay using Paypal (treasurer@ahavatachim.org) or use Discover, MasterCard or Visa - email treasurer@ahavatachim.org for details.

MISHEBAYRACH

With a Mishebayrach you've pledged to give Tzedakah on behalf of those for whom you asked Hashem's blessing. Contributions to the shul can be made via Paypal to treasurer@ahavatachim.org, or via MasterCard, Visa or Discover by sending info to treasurer@ahavatachim.org. If by check indicate on its face "Aliyah Donation."

MEN'S CLUB

Please contact Elliot Greene at MensClub@AhavatAchim.Org to join the Men's Club.

HONORARIA

The available Honoraria list will be provided upon request by contacting Steven Plotnick at seplotnick@gmail.com.

DAVID SCHWITZERד"ר

SOCIAL HALL

Please contact Lori Garfunkel at garfmom@gmail.com to book the David Schwitzerד"ר Social Hall for an event or special occasion. \$250 per simcha (members)/\$325 for Associates/\$400 paid in advance for non-members, plus the cost of any additional clean up (plus a \$150 security/cleaning deposit refunded when the social hall is returned in the condition it started in). Private caterers must be approved in advance by the Rabbi.

MITZVAH CARDS

Want mitzvah cards, contact Eita Latkin at 791-8940 or parentsof3@aol.com. Cost is \$3 per card. Also can be ordered in bulk - ten cards for \$25, which you send out yourself privately.

PREPARATION FOR SUKKOT

A man who is exempt from living in the Succah is not exempt from building a Succah. One should purchase a fine set of the Four Species:

- Etrog — The Etrog should be free of holes, thin blister-like protrusions or discoloration. Be sure that the Etrog is not the product of grafted branches.
- Lulav — The central leaf that emanates from the spine, whose end is the highest point of the Lulav, must be whole (not split or clipped), straight and green. Minimum length of Lulav's spine is four handbreadths (ד' טפחים).
- Haddasim — Take three stems of Haddasim, majority of each covered with groups of three leaves from the same rung. Each stem should be at least three handbreadths (ג' טפחים) long. Most leaves should be intact.
- Arovot — We take two Arovot, each reddish in color, whose leaves are long and smooth (not jagged) at the edges. Each stem should be at least three handbreadths (ג' טפחים) long. Most of the leaves should be intact.

Bind the Lulav, Haddasim, and Arovot together. Haddasim to the right of the Lulav and Arovot to the left of the Lulav when the back of the spine is facing the person holding the Lulav. Make two (some make three) additional rings out of the leaves of the Lulav and place them on the Lulav higher than the Haddasim and Arovot.

ערב סוכות - EREV SUKKOT

We bathe (many immerse in a Mikveh), and make preparations for Yom Tov. Candles are lit in the Succah and the Brachot "להדליק נר של יום טוב" and "שהחיינו" are said.

סוכות - SUKKOT

We say אושפיין in the Succah. Don't make Kiddush for Yom Tov on the first two nights before the appearance of three small stars. On the first two nights one is obligated to eat in the Succah. Even if one suffers distress as a consequence of being in the Succah, or if it rains, one should eat at least an olive's size (כזית) of bread in the Succah (however one should not make the Bracha "לישב בסוכה" if it is raining). On other nights, and during the days, if you suffer distress from rain or from any physical condition or malady you are exempt from staying in the Succah. All seven days of Succot one should eat, drink, and spend free time in the Succah. Snacks, such as a quantity of bread up to the size of an egg, or fruit of any quantity, need not be eaten in the Succah. One who strives to do all of his eating and drinking in the Succah will be rewarded, especially if all of his meals with family and friends are eaten in a Succah. In the colder climates, one is exempt from sleeping in the Succah. When one does not make Kiddush he should make the Bracha "לישב בסוכה" after "המוציא", and he should intend that this Bracha apply to all of his activities in the Succah until the next meal. The Bracha over the Four Species is: "וצונו על נטילת לולב..." and on the first day, שהחיינו. The Brachot are made with the Etrog held with the pitum facing down so that the Mitzvah is first performed in its proper manner after the Bracha, when the Etrog is held correctly (pitum facing up). Hold the Etrog in the left hand, and the Lulav with the other species in the right hand, with the back of the Lulav's spine facing the holder. When the Four Species are held properly, they are shaken three times back and forth in front of the person, three times to his right, behind him, to his left, above, and downward.

חול המועד - CHOL HAMOED

If one forgets to say יעלה ויבא, but remembers before מודים, say it before מודים, but if one began מודים return to the beginning of רצה. If one steps backward after Shemonah Esrei [or even if he had only said the second: "יהי לרצון אמרי פי" before moving his feet], he repeats Shemonah Esrei. By Birkat HaMazon, if one omitted יעלה ויבא and remembered after concluding the third Bracha ("בונה ירושלים"), but did not begin the fourth Bracha ("הא-ל-ל") he should say the compensatory Bracha: "אשר נתן...". If he began the fourth Bracha, on Yom Tov he must begin again because of the omission of יעלה ויבא, except on Chol HaMoed when one does not have to repeat Birkat HaMazon if he forgot יעלה ויבא. According to Nusach Sefard & Vilna Gaon, Tefillin is not worn during Chol HaMoed. If you wear Tefillin do so without Brachot (some say the Brachot inaudibly).

MISCELLANEOUS

AHAVAT ACHIM MEMBERSHIP/ HOSPITALITY

Contact Arnie at aspier@verizon.net for membership details. For Shabbat hospitality contact Sara at saraG51@yahoo.com.

BIKKUR CHOLIM/CHESED COMMITTEE

If someone needs a visit/assistance, contact Sara at saralevine06@gmail.com or Mary Lisa at kenkatter541@gmail.com.

PERSONAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Various life cycle events related to members are announced in the bulletin (e.g., births and weddings of children/grandchildren, bar/bat mitzvahs of children, deaths requiring shiva observance, as well as travel to/from Israel to study). Other personal announcements are not appropriate except as part of the bulletin's dedication (a \$36 cost - \$54 with photo).

NUMBERS & INFO

ERUV: To subscribe for updates, email fairlawneruv@groups.io. Check status at <https://groups.io/g/fairlawneruv> or call 201-254-9190.

MIKVAH: 201-796-0350. At Shomrei Torah, 9 PM-10:30 PM, Motzei Shabbat from 1¼ hours after Shabbat ends for 1½ hours. Kaylim Mikvah: Sun. 10 AM-3 PM

TWITTER: AhavatAchimFL

FACEBOOK: [facebook.com/groups/ahavat.achim/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/ahavat.achim/)

INSTAGRAM: [instagram.com/ahavatachimfl/?hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/ahavatachimfl/?hl=en)

FLICKR: [flickr.com/photos/ahavatachim/albums](https://www.flickr.com/photos/ahavatachim/albums)

SHUL CALENDAR

To add events to the shul calendar email Larry at lardavbern@gmail.com.



CONGREGATION AHAVAT ACHIM'S

ONEG SHABBAT LECTURE SERIES

Dedicated to the Memory of Jonathan Garfunkel ז"ל

~ Has Returned ~

Beginning on Friday, November 1st
At the home of Lori & David Garfunkel
12-56 Lyle Terrace
At 8:30 PM

Please join us for an enjoyable evening of
learning with Rabbi Ely Shestack, friends, and
refreshments.



If you are able to host the next Oneg on December 13,
Please call Lori at 791-1205 or email garfmom@gmail.com



Sisterhood of Ahavat Achim Presents



An Evening of LIVE TRIVIA COMPETITION – And Wine & Cheese

Where: Congregation Ahavat Achim

When: Saturday Night, November 9, 2019

Time: 9:00 p.m.

Cost: \$15 per person

RSVP by October 31st to:

Liz Jacob
973-668-3350
Elysheva23@gmail.com



COVENANT & CONVERSATION

THOUGHTS ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA
FROM RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS

בס"ד

האזינו תש"ף
Ha'azinu 5780



I am deeply touched that Covenant & Conversation has been generously sponsored by THE MAURICE WOHL CHARITABLE FOUNDATION in memory of Maurice and Vivienne Wohl ז"ל. Maurice was a visionary philanthropist on a vast scale, driven throughout his life by a sense of Jewish responsibility. Vivienne was a woman of the deepest humanity and compassion, who had a kind word for everyone. Together, they were a unique partnership of dedication and grace, for whom living was giving. Through their Charitable Foundation, they continue to bring blessings to Jewish communities around the world. — RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS

COVENANT & CONVERSATION: FAMILY EDITION

Covenant & Conversation: Family Edition is a new and exciting accompaniment to Rabbi Sacks' weekly *Covenant & Conversation* essay, aimed at connecting older children and teenagers with his ideas and thoughts on the *parsha*. To download the accompanying Family Edition to this Covenant & Conversation essay, please visit www.RabbiSacks.org/CCFamilyEdition or subscribe to Rabbi Sacks' free mailing list via www.RabbiSacks.org/Subscribe.

Let My Teaching Drop As Rain

In the glorious song with which Moses addresses the congregation, he invites the people to think of the Torah – their covenant with God – as if it were like the rain that waters the ground so that it brings forth its produce:

*Let my teaching drop as rain,
My words descend like dew,
Like showers on new grass,
Like abundant rain on tender plants. (Deut. 32:2)*

God's word is like rain in a dry land. It brings life. It makes things grow. There is much we can do of our own accord: we can plough the earth and plant the seeds. But in the end our success depends on something beyond our control. If no rain falls, there will be no harvest, whatever preparations we make. So it is with Israel. It must never be tempted into the hubris of saying: "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me" (Deut. 8:17).

The Sages, however, sensed something more in the analogy. This is how Sifrei (a compendium of commentaries on Numbers and Deuteronomy dating back to the Mishnaic period) puts it:

Let my teaching drop as rain: Just as the rain is one thing, yet it falls on trees, enabling each to produce tasty fruit according to the kind of tree it is – the vine in its way, the olive tree in its way, and the date palm in its way – so the Torah is one, yet its words yield Scripture, Mishnah,

*laws, and lore. Like showers on new grass: Just as showers fall upon plants and make them grow, some green, some red, some black, some white, so the words of Torah produce teachers, worthy individuals, Sages, the righteous, and the pious.*¹

There is only one Torah, yet it has multiple effects. It gives rise to different kinds of teaching, different sorts of virtue. Torah is sometimes seen by its critics as overly prescriptive, as if it sought to make everyone the same. The Midrash argues otherwise. The Torah is compared to rain precisely to emphasise that its most important effect is to make each of us grow into what we could become. We are *not* all the same, nor does Torah seek uniformity. As a famous Mishnah puts it: “When a human being makes many coins from the same mint, they are all the same. God makes everyone in the same image – His image – yet none is the same as another” (Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5).

This emphasis on difference is a recurring theme in Judaism. For example, when Moses asks God to appoint his successor, he uses an unusual phrase: “May the Lord, *God of the spirits of all humankind*, appoint a man over the community” (Num. 27:16). On this, Rashi comments:

Why is this expression (“God of the spirits of all humankind”) used? [Moses] said to Him: Lord of the universe, You know each person’s character, and that no two people are alike. Therefore, appoint a leader for them who will bear with each person according to his disposition.

One of the fundamental requirements of a leader in Judaism is that he or she is able to *respect the differences* between human beings. This is a point emphasised by Maimonides in *Guide for the Perplexed*:

“One of the fundamental requirements of a leader in Judaism is that he or she is able to *respect the differences* between human beings.”

*Humans are, as you know, the highest form in creation, and they therefore contain the largest number of constituent elements. This is why the human race contains so great a variety of individuals that we cannot discover two persons exactly alike in any moral quality or in external appearance.... This great variety and the necessity of social life are essential elements in human nature. But the well-being of society demands that there should be a leader able to regulate the actions of humans. The leader must complete every shortcoming, remove every excess, and prescribe for the conduct of all, so that the natural variety should be counterbalanced by the uniformity of legislation, so that social order be well established.*²

¹ Sifrei, *Ha’azinu* 306.

² Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, II:40.

The political problem as Maimonides sees it is how to regulate the affairs of human beings in such a way as to respect their individuality while not creating chaos. A similar point emerges from a surprising rabbinic teaching: “Our Rabbis taught: If one sees a crowd of Israelites, one says: Blessed Be He who discerns secrets – because the mind of each is different from that of another, just as the face of each is different from another” (Brachot 58a).

We would have expected a blessing over a crowd to emphasise its size, its mass: human beings in their collectivity.³ A crowd is a group large enough for the individuality of the faces to be lost. Yet the blessing stresses the opposite – that each member of a crowd is still an individual with distinctive thoughts, hopes, fears, and aspirations.

“Each member of a crowd is still an individual with distinctive thoughts, hopes, fears, and aspirations.”

The same was true for the relationship between the Sages. A Mishnah states:

When R. Meir died, the composers of fables ceased. When Ben Azzai died, assiduous students ceased. When Ben Zoma died, the expositors ceased. When R. Akiva died, the glory of the Torah ceased. When R. Chanina died, men of deed ceased. When R. Yose Ketanta died, the pious men ceased. When R. Yochanan b. Zakai died, the lustre of wisdom ceased.... When Rabbi died, humility and the fear of sin ceased. (Mishnah Sotah 9:15)

There was no single template of the Sage. Each had his own distinctive merits, his unique contribution to the collective heritage. In this respect, the Sages were merely continuing the tradition of the Torah itself. There is no single role model of the religious hero or heroine in Tanach. The patriarchs and matriarchs each had their own unmistakable character. Moses, Aaron, and Miriam each emerge as different personality types. Kings, Priests, and Prophets had different roles to play in Israelite society. Even among the Prophets, “No two prophesy in the same style,” said the Sages (Sanhedrin 89a). Elijah was zealous, Elisha gentle. Hosea spoke of love, Amos spoke of justice. Isaiah’s visions were simpler and less opaque than those of Ezekiel.

The same applies to even to the revelation at Sinai itself. Each individual heard, in the same words, a different inflection:

The voice of the Lord is with power (Ps. 29:4): that is, according to the power of each individual, the young, the old, and the very small ones, each according to their power [of

³ See Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973).

understanding]. God said to Israel, “Do not believe that there are many gods in heaven because you heard many voices. Know that I alone am the Lord, your God.”⁴

According to Maharsha, there are 600,000 interpretations of Torah. Each individual is theoretically capable of a unique insight into its meaning. The French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas commented:

“There are 600,000 interpretations of Torah. Each individual is theoretically capable of a unique insight into its meaning.”

The Revelation has a particular way of producing meaning, which lies in its calling upon the unique within me. It is as if a multiplicity of persons...were the condition for the plenitude of “absolute truth,” as if each person, by virtue of his own uniqueness, were able to guarantee the revelation of one unique aspect of the truth, so that some of its facets would never have been revealed if certain people had been absent from mankind.⁵

Judaism, in short, emphasises the other side of the *maxim E pluribus unum* (“Out of the many, one”). It says: “Out of the One, many.”

The miracle of creation is that unity in heaven produces diversity on earth. Torah is the rain that feeds this diversity, allowing each of us to become what only we can be.

Shabbat Shalom




**Join Rabbi Sacks
on WhatsApp & Telegram as we
continue to share his messages
over Succot**

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**LOOK OUT FOR
COVENANT &
CONVERSATION
Family Edition**

⁴ Exodus Rabbah 29:1.

⁵ Emmanuel Levinas, “Revelation in the Jewish Tradition,” in *The Levinas Reader*, ed. Sean Hand (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2001), 190–210.