



AHAVAT ACHIM

קהלת אהבת אחים

THE FAMILY SHUL

PARSHAT VAYIGASH | JANUARY 4 – JANUARY 10, 2020 | 7 TEVET- 13 TEVET | CANDLE LIGHTING 4:22PM | HAVDALAH 5:26PM

SHABBAT DAVENING

FRIDAY EVENING, JANUARY 3	
CANDLE LIGHTING:	4:22PM
MINCHA:	4:25PM
SHABBAT, JANUARY 4	
HASHKAMA MINYAN	8:15AM
MAIN MINYAN	9:00AM
LAST KRIAT SHMA	9:41AM
MINCHA/SEUDAH SHLISHIT:	4:10PM
MAARIV/HAVDALAH:	5:26PM
<p>אב הרחמים and א-ל מלא are recited צדקתך צדק is recited at minchah</p>	

THIS COMING WEEK

The Fast of Asara B'Tevet is Tuesday. Fast begins at 5:53AM and ends at 5:24PM. For more information, see page 3.

SHABBAT EVENTS

Our congregation and NCSY invite 8-12th grade girls and boys to **Friday Night Lights**. Davening at shul followed by dinner at the **Katters**.

MOTZEI SHABBAT

It's finally here, The Sephardic Cooking Event you've been waiting for! This Saturday night at 7:30 in Ahavat Achim, the Sisterhood will host our Sephardic Cooking Demonstration. Haven't RSVP'ed yet? You can still come and pay at the door for this fun, educational, and delicious evening!



IN OUR FAMILY

Welcome to our newest members, Laura and Javier Coello and family, and Jewel and Robert Safran!

Condolences to Jamie Eisman, on the loss of his mother Ruth a"h. Shiva concluded with the onset of Shabbat. המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

ADULT EDUCATION

Fundamentals of Jewish Thought: Every Shabbat After Kiddush

Beginners Gemarah Shiur: Mondays, 8:15 PM
(Hint: It's not just for beginners!)

GITA COOPERWASSER ע"ה YOUTH PROGRAM INFO

- Youth Chabura, 1st to 5th grade, meet at the main minyan, 9:00AM
- Teen Haftorah & Mussaf minyan for 6th-12th grade boys and girls starting 10:20AM in the Beit Midrash.
- 11th - 12th graders, meet Andrew Wigod at 11:00 AM.
- Tot Shabbat, 10:30AM.
- Email ideas/suggestions for the Youth Program to kira.batist.msw@gmail.com

WEEKDAY DAVENING TIMES

	SUNDAY 1/5	MONDAY 1/6	TUESDAY 1/7	WEDNESDAY 1/8	THURSDAY 1/9	FRIDAY 1/10
SHACHARIT	8:15 AM	6:15 AM	6:00 AM	6:25 AM	6:15 AM	6:25 AM
MINCHA/MAARIV	4:30 PM		4:10 PM			4:35 PM
MAARIV ONLY		8:00 PM		8:00 PM	8:00 PM	



FUTURE EVENTS

- Jan 10** - Oneg Shabbat
- Jan 11** - Seudah Shlishit is sponsored by the Wigod and Sokoloff family in memory of Ron's and Cheryl's ע"ה parents Leonore (Leah bat Zev ע"ה) and Benjamin (Boruch Chaim ben Zevulun Aryeh ע"ה) Sokoloff
- Jan 18** - Family Havdalah Pajama Party for children 2-11, 6:30-8:00PM
- Jan 25** - Seudah Shlishit is sponsored by the Sonnenblicks on the Yahrzeit of Marty's mother Helene ע"ה, הענטשא, מאטל בת ר' זלמן
- Feb 1** - Brett Spier Aufruf
- Feb 8** - Eden Riskin Bat Mitzvah
- Feb 14** - Oneg Shabbat
- Feb 22** - Yachad Shabbaton
- Feb 29** - 3rd Annual Comedy Night
- Mar 1** - Diaper Drive Event
- Mar 6** - Oneg Shabbat

KIDDUSH SPONSOR

- 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.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Jan 11 – Cocoa & Conversation (13-10 Ivy Lane, Fair Lawn, NJ). For women only. An intimate group discussion on "Navigating Tough Relationships". Submit anonymous questions to <https://dno.am/cocoa>. Sponsor at <https://www.darcheinoam.com/event/5780/cocoa>. A Darchei Noam event, Saturday night, 8:30 PM – 10:30 PM.

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.

PAYPAL

When making PayPal payments to the shul, please use <http://paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/1444321>. This will enable the shul to receive your funds without being charged any service fees. Thank you for your assistance and cooperation.

PARSHA POINTS TO PONDER

- (2nd) Yehuda doesn't make his request until this aliyah. What is his actual request of Yosef?
- (2nd/3rd) Discussion Question: Did Yosef intend to "come clean" to his brothers at this point or was he overcome and responding in the moment?
- (4th/5th) There is a one pasuk difference in the way the Torah and the Christian chapter division break up Chapter 45-46 vs. the 4th and 5th aliyah. By making the break between v. 27 and v.28, what is the Torah seeking to emphasize vs. the Christian delineation not making a break between those 2 pesukim?
- (6th) How many of his brothers does Yosef present to Paroah?

Answers to Points To Ponder

- (2nd) To allow him to be enslaved in Binyamin's place (v.33)
- (4th/5th) That Yaakov was not emotionally/reactively deciding to bring his family down to Mitzraim, but that it was calculated and intentional. Therefore there's a space between Yaakov seeing the wagons and feeling uplifted and his deciding to descend to Egypt.
- (6th) Five.

ZEMANIM

	SUNDAY 1/5	MONDAY 1/6	TUESDAY 1/7	WEDNESDAY 1/8	THURSDAY** 1/9	FRIDAY 1/10
Earliest Talit	6:21 AM	6:22 AM	6:22 AM	6:21 AM	6:21 AM	6:21 AM
Gedolah	12:25 PM	12:26 PM	12:26 PM	12:27 PM	12:27PM	12:28PM
Shkia	4:42 PM	4:43 PM	4:44 PM	4:45 PM	4:46 PM	
Tzait	5:27 PM	5:28 PM	5:29 PM	5:30 PM	5:31 PM	5:32 PM

**Latest Kiddush Levana is Thursday night, 1/9 (Tevet 13)



עשרה בטבת - Asara B'Tevet

“And it was in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth (day) of the month, that Nebuchadnetzar, King of Babylon came, he and all his hosts, upon Yerushalayim, and he encamped upon it and built forts around it. And the city came under siege till the eleventh year of King Tzidkiyahu. On the ninth of the month famine was intense in the city, the people had no bread, and the city was breached.” (Melachim II 25).

On the 10th day of the Jewish month of Tevet, in the year 3336 from Creation (425 BCE), the armies of the Babylonian emperor Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem. It is viewed as the beginning of the chain of events that culminated with the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent exiles, something that we have never fully recovered from, because even when the Second Temple was finally built, it never returned to its full glory.

Asara B'Tevet is observed as a day of fasting, mourning and repentance. We refrain from food and drink from daybreak to nightfall (this year 5:53AM - 5:24PM), and add Selichot and other special supplements to our prayers.

If you go to bed the night before the fast with the intention of getting up before daybreak to eat, you may do so. Otherwise, awakening during the night does not allow you to eat. Drinking before daybreak is permissible.



COVENANT & CONVERSATION

FINDING FAITH IN THE PARSHA WITH RABBI SACKS



*"With thanks to **The Maurice Wohl Charitable Foundation** for their generous sponsorship of Covenant & Conversation. Maurice was a visionary philanthropist. Vivienne was a woman of the deepest humility. Together, they were a unique partnership of dedication and grace, for whom living was giving."*

The Future of the Past

In our parsha, Joseph does something unusual. Revealing himself to his brothers, fully aware that they will suffer shock and then guilt as they remember how it is that their brother is in Egypt, he *reinterprets the past*:

"I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no ploughing and reaping. But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt." (Gen. 45:4-8)

This is markedly different to the way Joseph described these events when he spoke to the chief butler in prison: "I was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon" (Gen. 40:15). Then, it was a story of kidnap and injustice.

Now, it has become a story of Divine providence and redemption. It wasn't you, he tells his brothers, it was God. You didn't realise that you were part of a larger plan. And though it began badly, it has ended well. So don't hold yourselves guilty. And do not be afraid of any desire for revenge on my part. There is no such desire. I realise that we were all being directed by a force greater than ourselves, greater than we can fully understand.

Joseph does the same in next week's parsha, when the brothers fear that he may take revenge after their father's death:

“Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? *You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.* (Gen. 50:19-20)

Joseph is helping his brothers to revise their memory of the past. In doing so, he is challenging one of our most fundamental assumptions about time, namely its asymmetry. We can change the future. We cannot change the past. But is that entirely true? What Joseph is doing for his brothers is what he has clearly done for himself: events have changed his and their understanding of the past.

Which means: we cannot fully understand what is happening to us now until we can look back in retrospect and see how it all turned out. This means that we are not held captive by the past. Things can happen to us, not as dramatically as to Joseph perhaps, but nonetheless benign, that can completely alter the way we look back and remember. *By action in the future, we can redeem the past.*

A classic example of this is the late Steve Jobs’ 2005 commencement address at Stanford University, that has now been seen by more than 40 million people on YouTube. In it, he described three crushing blows in his life: dropping out of college, being fired by the company he had founded - Apple, and being diagnosed with cancer. Each one, he said, had led to something important and positive.

“Joseph is challenging one of our most fundamental assumptions about time...”

Dropping out of college, Jobs was able to audit any course he wished. He attended one on calligraphy and this inspired him to build into his first computers a range of proportionally spaced fonts, thus giving computer scripts an elegance that had previously been available only to professional printers. Getting fired from Apple led him to start a new computer company, NeXT, that developed capabilities he would eventually bring back to Apple, as well as acquiring Pixar Animation, the most creative of computer-animated film studios. The diagnosis of cancer led him to a new focus in life. It made him realise: “Your time is limited, so don’t waste it living someone else’s life.”

Jobs’ ability to construct these stories – what he called “connecting the dots” – was surely not unrelated to his ability to survive the blows he suffered in life.¹ Few could have recovered from the setback of being dismissed from his own company, and fewer still could have achieved the transformation he did at Apple when he returned, creating the iPod, iPhone and iPad. He did not believe in tragic inevitabilities. Though he would not have put it in these terms, he knew that by action in the future we can redeem the past.

¹ However, he did delay surgery for his cancer, believing that he could achieve an alternative cure. In this, he was mistaken.

Professor Mordechai Rotenberg of the Hebrew University has argued that this kind of technique, of reinterpreting the past, could be used as a therapeutic technique in rehabilitating patients suffering from a crippling sense of guilt.² If we cannot change the past, then it is always there holding us back like a ball and chain around our legs. We cannot change the past, but we can reinterpret it by integrating it into a new and larger narrative. That is what Joseph was doing, and having used this technique to help him survive a personal life of unparalleled ups and downs, he now uses it to help his brothers live without overpowering guilt.

We find this in Judaism throughout its history. The Prophets reinterpreted biblical narrative for their day. Then came Midrash, which reinterpreted it more radically because the situation of Jews had changed more radically. Then came the great biblical commentators and mystics and philosophers. There has hardly been a generation in all of Jewish history when Jews did not reinterpret their texts in the light of the present tense experience. We are the people who tell stories, and then retell them repeatedly, each time with a slightly different emphasis,

establishing a connection between then and now, rereading the past in the light of the present as best we can.

“By allowing the present to reshape our understanding of the past, we redeem history and make it live as a positive force in our lives.”

It is by telling stories that we make sense of our lives and the life of our people. And it is by allowing the present to reshape our understanding of the past that we redeem history and make it live as a positive force in our lives.

I gave one example when I spoke at the Kinus Shluchim of Chabad, the great gathering of some 5000 Chabad emissaries from around the world. I told them of how, in 1978, I visited the Lubavitcher Rebbe to ask his advice on which career I should follow. I did the usual thing: I sent him a note with the options, A, B or C, expecting him to indicate which one I should follow. The options were to become a barrister, or an economist, or an academic philosopher, either as a fellow of my college in Cambridge or as a professor somewhere else.

The Rebbe read out the list and said No to all three. My mission, he said, was to train Rabbis at Jews' College (now the London School of Jewish studies) and to become a congregational Rabbi myself. So, overnight, I found myself saying goodbye to all my aspirations, to everything for which I had been trained.

The strange fact was, however, that I fulfilled all those ambitions at the very moment that I seem to be walking in the opposite direction. I became an honorary barrister (Bencher) of the Inner Temple and delivered a law lecture in front of 600 barristers and the Lord Chief Justice. I delivered Britain's two

² Mordechai Rotenberg, *Re-biographing and Deviance*, Praeger, 1987.

leading economics lectures, the Mais Lecture and the Hayek Lecture at the Institute of Economic Affairs. I became a fellow of my Cambridge college and a philosophy professor at several universities. I identified with the biblical Joseph because, so often, what I had dreamed of came to be at the very moment that I had given up hope. Only in retrospect did I discover that the Rebbe was not telling me to give up my career plans. He was simply charting a different route and a more beneficial one.

I believe that the way we write the next chapter in our lives affects all the others that have come before. By action in the future, we can redeem much of the pain of the past.

Shabbat Shalom

Jonathan Sacks

**COVENANT AND
CONVERSATION**
Family Edition

AROUND THE SHABBAT TABLE

The **Family Edition of Covenant & Conversation** is an accompanying resource available to download each week from www.RabbiSacks.org/CCFamilyEdition (or via the main Covenant & Conversation email). It helps parents and educators take Rabbi Sacks' ideas from this essay and make them more accessible to teenagers. Each week, we will include three key questions from the Family Edition to inspire discussion around your Shabbat table. For more educational content as well as discussion pointers when answering these questions, please see the Family Edition!

- 1. Why does Joseph revise the way he presents the events that led to his arrival in Egypt?**
- 2. How can the future change the way we understand the past?**
- 3. Can you think of any examples in your life of events that seemed bad at the time but in hindsight were meaningful?**

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