



AHAVAT ACHIM
 קהלת אהבת אחים
 THE FAMILY SHUL

NASSO | MAY 21 - MAY 28, 2021 | 10 SIVAN - 17 SIVAN | CANDLE LIGHTING 7:55 PM | HAYDALAH 8:59 PM

SHABBAT

FRIDAY, MAY 21	
SHACHARIT	6:30 AM
MINCHA/KABALAT SHABBAT	6:30 PM
EARLIEST CANDLE LIGHTING	6:42 PM
CANDLE LIGHTING	7:55 PM
SATURDAY, MAY 22	
SHACHARIT	9:00 AM
LAST KRIAT SHMA	9:13 AM
MINCHA	7:55 PM
MAARIV / HAVDALAH	8:59 PM
אב הרחמים is not recited at Mussaf צדקתך צדק is not recited at Mincha	

IN OUR FAMILY

Our condolences to Arnie Spier and the entire Spier family on the passing of his beloved father, Walter Spier. The funeral was on 5/19 and Arnie will be sitting shiva in Fair Lawn from Saturday night through Shachrit on Tuesday morning. May Arnie and his family be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Yerushalayim.

We regret to inform you of the passing of Charlotte Moscovitz. May the family be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Yerushalayim.

THIS SHABBAT

Commencing this Shabbat, the indoor minyan will begin at 9am with Brachot. Starting a week from this Shabbat, on May 29th, we will be reinstating the 8am haskama minyan in place of the 9am outdoor minyan. More details to come.

The Youth Department is excited to announce the re-launch of Shabbat groups! Children ages 0-5 are invited to join their friends for outdoor groups on Shabbat mornings from 10:15-10:45 AM in the parking lot. Children under 3 must be accompanied by a designated adult. Parents of children over 3 who will drop off their child should email kira.batist.msw@gmail.com.

Join the Rabbi between mincha and maariv for an exciting shiur as we explore Sefer Ezra.

THIS WEEK

In addition to our regular shul minyanim, from Shabbat afternoon mincha through Tuesday morning, there will also be minyanim at the Spier shiva house. [Please help ensure we have minyanim at both locations by signing up.](#)

Rabbinic Intern R' Yair Lichtman will be continuing an exciting series exploring Responsa literature from current lead-

ing Poskim to COVID Halachic inquiries. Please contact Rabbi Shestack to sponsor a session. The series will continue on *Sunday, May 23rd at 9 AM* on Zoom.

The Talmud 4 All class will resume this week on *Monday, May 24th at 8:40 PM* on Zoom.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Our Americana Series "Exploring "One Nation Under God" Through the Lense of Judaism" will continue on *Monday, May 31st at 9am* on Zoom.

Mazal Tov to Mary Lisa & Ken Katter who are this year's Ahavat Achim Journal Dinner Honorees. This year we are planning an outdoor brunch (in person), to be held on *Sunday, June 20, 2021*. [Submit your journal ad now!](#)



ZEMANIM

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	5/23	5/24	5/25	5/26	5/27	5/28
Shacharit	8:00 AM	6:30 AM	6:30 AM	6:30 AM	6:30 AM	6:30 AM
Mincha/Maariv	8:03 PM	8:04 PM	8:05 PM	8:06 PM	8:07 PM	6:35 PM
Earliest Talit	4:26 AM	4:25 AM	4:24 AM	4:23 AM	4:22 AM	4:21 AM
Gedolah	1:30 PM	1:31 PM	1:31 PM	1:31 PM	1:31 PM	1:31 PM
Shkia	8:15 PM	8:16 PM	8:17 PM	8:18 PM	8:19 PM	
Tzait	8:55 PM	8:56 PM	8:57 PM	8:58 PM	8:59 PM	8:59 PM





FROM THE PRESIDENT

At present, we continue to follow current NJ State requirements for indoor religious gatherings which mandate mask wearing and social distancing. As such, mask-wearing and social distancing is required indoors at all times. In accordance with current NJ and CDC guidelines, masks are no longer required outdoors, and we have resumed our weekly shabbat kiddush outdoors.

Appropriate COVID standards and guidelines, particularly for institutions with responsibility for a large kehila are both complex and fluid. Currently, RCBC shuls have taken varied approaches to mask wearing and social distancing requirements. The Rabbi and I continue to review, discuss, and seek guidance both within and outside the shul as we decide the most appropriate course of action for our daily and shabbat minyanim. We will continue to be guided by both halacha and desire to accommodate our membership's needs and expectations while being sensitive to the spectrum of concerns and viewpoints brought about by COVID.

Please continue to be both mindful and respectful of those with a different view- point, particularly as standards continue to change.

Finally, as previously reported, the vast majority of our adult membership who regularly attend services are fully vaccinated, and our teens are availing of the opportunity to vaccinate. We strongly urge everyone eligible to get vaccinated. If anyone either needs assistance in scheduling a vaccine or has concerns about the vaccine, please reach out to the Rabbi.

Anyone having questions or suggestions should not hesitate to contact Stephen Agress or the Rabbi.

IN OUR SHUL

The David Schwitzer Social Hall is available for rental to members and associate members for smachot. All rentals must strictly adhere to NJ State mandates for indoor catering. For information, please contact Joan Goldberg at communications@ahavatachim.org.

If you have not already done so, please [submit your Yizkor pledges here](#).



AHAVAT ACHIM
קהלת אהבת אחים
THE FAMILY SHUL

AHAVAT ACHIM PRESENTS: WEEKLY CLASSES

- *COVID Halachic Inquiries*
 - *Taught by:* R' Yair Lichtman
 - *When:* Sundays at 9:00am
 - *Where:* on Zoom
- *Talmud 4 All Shiur*
 - *Taught by:* Rabbi Ely Shestack
 - *When:* Mondays at 8:15pm
 - *Where:* on Zoom
- *Exploring Sefer Ezra*
 - *Taught by:* Rabbi Ely Shestack
 - *When:* Saturdays between Mincha & Maariv
 - *Where:* outdoor minyan at shul



CONGREGATION AHAVAT ACHIM

PRESENTS



AN AMERICANA SERIES

.....

EXPLORING "ONE NATION UNDER GOD" THROUGH THE LENS OF JUDAISM

.....

This series will take place on the following days:

11/27: Day after Thanksgiving **2/15:** President's Day

1/1: New Year's Day **4/18:** Tax Day

1/18: Martin Luther King Day **5/31:** Memorial Day

7/4: 4th of July

[HTTPS://ZOOM.US/J/7291311899](https://zoom.us/j/7291311899)

PASSWORD: 112233

LEARN MORE AT
WWW.AHAVATACHIM.ORG



AHAVAT ACHIM

קהלת אהבת אחים

THE FAMILY SHUL

COVENANT & CONVERSATION



LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP

WITH RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS זצ"ל



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.

Rabbi Sacks זצ"ל had prepared a full year of *Covenant & Conversation* for 5781, based on his book *Lessons in Leadership*. The Rabbi Sacks Legacy Trust will continue to distribute these weekly essays, so that people all around the world can keep on learning and finding inspiration in his Torah.

The Politics of Envy

Naso 5781

Few things in the Torah are more revolutionary than its conception of leadership.

Ancient societies were hierarchical. The masses were poor and prone to hunger and disease. They were usually illiterate. They were exploited by rulers as a means to wealth and power rather than treated as people with individual rights – a concept born only in the seventeenth century. At times they formed a *corvée*, a vast conscripted labour force, often used to construct monumental buildings intended to glorify kings. At others they were dragooned into the army to further the ruler's imperial designs.

Rulers often had absolute power of life and death over their subjects. Not only were kings and pharaohs heads of state; they also held the highest religious rank, as they were considered children of the gods or even demigods themselves. Their power had nothing to do with the consent of the governed. It was seen as written into the fabric of the universe. Just as the sun ruled the sky and the lion ruled the animal realm, so kings ruled their populations. That was how things were in nature, and nature itself was sacrosanct.

The Torah is a sustained polemic against this way of seeing things. Not just kings but all of us, regardless of colour, culture, class or creed, are in the image and likeness of God. In the Torah, God summons His special people, Israel, to take the first steps towards what might eventually become a truly egalitarian society – or to put it more precisely, a society in which dignity, *kavod*, does not depend on power or wealth or an accident of birth.

Hence the concept, which we will explore more fully in parshat Korach, of *leadership as service*. The highest title accorded to Moses in the Torah is that of *eved Hashem*, “a servant of God” (Deut. 34:5). His highest praise is that he was “very humble, more so than anyone else on earth” (Num. 12:3). To lead is to serve. Greatness is humility. As the book of Proverbs puts it, “A man’s pride will bring him low, but the humble in spirit will retain honour” (Prov. 29:23).

“Dignity does not depend on power or wealth or an accident of birth.”

The Torah points us in the direction of an ideal world, but it does not assume that we have reached it yet or even that we are within striking distance. The people Moses led, like many of us today, were still prone to fixate on ambition, aspiration, vanity, and self-indulgence. They still had the human desire for honour and status. And Moses had to recognise that fact. It would be a major source of conflict in the months and years ahead. It is one of the primary themes of the book of Bamidbar.

Of whom were the Israelites jealous? Most of them did not aspire to be Moses. He was, after all, the man who spoke to God and to whom God spoke. He performed miracles, brought plagues against the Egyptians, divided the Red Sea, and gave the people water from a rock and manna from heaven. Few would have had the hubris to believe they could do any of these things.

But they did have reason to resent the fact that religious leadership seemed to be confined to only one tribe, Levi, and one family within that tribe, the Kohanim, male descendants of Aaron. Now that the Tabernacle was to be consecrated and the people were about to begin the second half of their journey, from Sinai to the Promised Land, there was a real risk of envy and animosity.

That is a constant throughout history. We desire, said Shakespeare, “this man’s gift and that man’s scope.” Aeschylus said, “It is in the character of very few men to honour without envy a friend who has prospered.”¹ Goethe warned that although “hatred is active, and envy passive dislike; there is but one step from envy to hate.” Jews should know this in their very bones. We have often been envied, and all too frequently has that envy turned to hate, with tragic consequences.

Leaders need to be aware of the perils of envy, especially within the people they lead. This is one of the unifying themes of the long and apparently disconnected parsha of Naso. In it we see Moses confronting three potential sources of envy. The first lay within the tribe of Levi. Its

¹ Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1.832.

members had reason to resent the fact that priesthood had gone to just one man and his descendants: Aaron, Moses' brother.

The second had to do with individuals who were neither of the tribe of Levi nor of the family of Aaron but who felt that they had the right to be holy in the sense of having a special, intense relationship with God in the way that the priests had. The third had to do with the leadership of the other tribes who might have felt left out of the service of the Tabernacle. We see Moses dealing sequentially with all these potential dangers.

First, he gives each Levitical clan a special role in carrying the vessels, furnishings, and framework of the Tabernacle whenever the people journeyed from place to place. The most sacred objects were to be carried by the clan of Kohath. The Gershonites were to carry the cloths, coverings, and drapes. The Merarites were to carry the planks, bars, posts, and sockets that made up the Tabernacle's framework. Each clan was, in other words, to have a special role and place in the solemn procession as the house of God was carried through the desert.

Next, Moses deals with individuals who aspire to a higher level of holiness. This, it seems, is the underlying logic of the Nazirite, the individual who vows to set himself apart for the Lord (Numbers 6:2). He was not to drink wine or any other grape product; he was not to have his hair cut; and he was not defile himself through contact with the dead. Becoming a Nazirite was, it seems, a way of temporarily assuming the kind of set-apartness associated with the priesthood, a voluntary extra degree of holiness.²

Lastly, Moses turns to the leadership of the tribes. The highly repetitive chapter 7 of our parsha itemises the offerings of each of the tribes on the occasion of the dedication of the altar. Their offerings were identical, and the Torah could have abbreviated its account by describing the gifts brought by one tribe and stating that each of the other tribes did likewise. Yet the sheer repetition has the effect of emphasising the fact that each tribe had its moment of glory. Each, by giving to the house of God, acquired its own share of honour.

“Find ways in which those with a particular passion can express it, and ensure that everyone has a chance to contribute.”

These episodes are not the whole of Naso but they consist of enough of it to signal a principle that every leader and every group needs to take seriously. Even when people accept, in theory, the equal dignity of all, and even when they see leadership as service, the old dysfunctional passions die hard. People still resent the success of others. They still feel that honour has gone to others when it should have gone to them. Rabbi Elazar HaKappar said: “Envy, lust and the pursuit of honour drive a person out of the world.”³

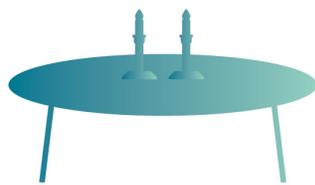
² See Maimonides, Hilchot Shemittah ve-Yovel 13:13.

³ Mishnah Avot 4:21.

The fact that these are destructive emotions does not stop some people – perhaps most of us – feeling them from time to time, and nothing does more to put at risk the harmony of the group. That is one reason why a leader must be humble. They should feel none of these things. But a leader must also be aware that not everyone is humble. Every Moses has a Korach, every Julius Caesar a Cassius, every Duncan a Macbeth, every Othello an Iago. In many groups there is a potential troublemaker driven by a sense of injury to their self-esteem. These are often a leader’s deadliest enemies and they can do great damage to the group.

There is no way of eliminating the danger entirely, but Moses in this week’s parsha tells us how to behave. **Honour everyone equally. Pay special attention to potentially disaffected groups. Make each feel valued. Give everyone a moment in the limelight, if only in a ceremonial way. Set a personal example of humility. Make it clear to all that leadership is service, not a form of status. Find ways in which those with a particular passion can express it, and ensure that everyone has a chance to contribute.**

There is no failsafe way to avoid the politics of envy but there are ways of minimising it, and our parsha is an object lesson in how to do so.



AROUND THE SHABBAT TABLE

1. What is revolutionary about the Torah’s concept of leadership?
2. Can envy ever be harnessed in a positive way? What are the inherent risks with this emotion?
3. What conflict does Rabbi Sacks allude to that will be a central theme in the book of Bamidbar?
Can you think of any examples?



www.RabbiSacks.org     @RabbiSacks

The Office of Rabbi Sacks, PO Box 72007, London, NW6 6RW • +44 (0)20 7286 6391 • info@rabbisacks.org

© Rabbi Sacks • All rights reserved • The Office of Rabbi Sacks is supported by The Covenant & Conversation Trust