



CANDLE LIGHTING 7:09 PM | 7 ELUL 5782 | SEPTEMBER 3, 2022 | HAVDALA 8:11 PM

שבת פרשת שופטים
SHABBAT PARSHAT SHOFTIM

Haftorah is Isaiah 51:12-52:12
(אנכי אנכי). Pirkei Avot Chapter 6.

FRIDAY EVENING

MINCHA	7:15 PM
SHKIA	7:27 PM
TZAIT HAKOCHAVIM	8:07 PM

SHABBAT

HASHKAMA	8:15 AM
MAIN	9:00 AM
LAST KRIAT SHEMA	9:40 AM
GEMARA SHIUR	6:15 PM
MINCHA	7:00 PM
MAARIV	8:11 PM

MAZEL TOV!

Kiddush is sponsored by Aliza & Richie Mayer in honor of their daughter Perri's Bat Mitzvah. A special welcome to Perri's Savta and Gramps, Mark & Meryl Berow, Gra Susan Mayer, and her aunts, uncles, cousins from near and far. Mazel tov!



יעלה מעלה במעלות התורה והיראה ומעשים טובים
May she grow further in the heights of Torah, fear of God and good deeds.

SEUDAH SHLISHIT

Seuda shlishit is sponsored by the Kor family to commemorate the yahrzeit of Hazkiel's father, Avraham Ben Yecheskel ע"ה.

MAZEL TOV!



Mazel tov to Betsy & Marty Sonnenblick on the birth of a granddaughter to Esti & Orel Cohen.

יגדולה לתורה ולחופה ולמעשים טובים
May they raise her to Torah, chuppah and good deeds.

MAZEL TOV!

Mazel tov to Stacey & Yitz Finkelstein on their son Mikey's engagement to Leora Fischman.



יעלה הזיווג יפה ויבנו בית נאמן בישראל
May the beautiful couple be elevated to build a faithful house of Israel.

WELCOME!

Welcome to Bobbie and Heshy Brooks who just joined as associate members!

WE ARE PLAYING SOME BASEBALL!!



Community baseball game at Edison Park is this Sunday at 3:00 PM, followed by a BBQ at the shul at 5:00 PM. Play ball, cheer on players, or just enjoy the BBQ (BBQ cost is \$15 per person or \$36 per family).



	SUNDAY 9/4	MONDAY 9/5	TUESDAY 9/6	WEDNESDAY 9/7	THURSDAY 9/8	FRIDAY 9/9
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WEEKDAY MINYANIM AT AHAVAT ACHIM

SHACHARIT	8:00 AM	8:00 AM	6:25 AM	6:25 AM	6:15 AM	6:25 AM
MINCHA/MAARIV	7:12 PM	7:10 PM	7:09 PM	7:07 PM	7:05 PM	7:00 PM

ZMANIM

Earliest Talit	5:30 AM	5:31 AM	5:32 AM	5:33 AM	5:35 AM	5:36 AM
Gedolah	1:28 PM	1:27 PM	1:27 PM	1:26 PM	1:26 PM	1:25 PM
Shkia	7:24 PM	7:22 PM	7:21 PM	7:19 PM	7:17 PM	
Tzait Hakochoavim	8:04 PM	8:02 PM	8:01 PM	7:59 PM	7:57 PM	

IN OUR FUTURE

September 4 - Community baseball game at 3:00 PM at Edison Park, followed by a BBQ at the shul at 5:00 PM. Come to play ball, cheer on the players, play games or just enjoy the last BBQ of the summer! \$15 per person/\$36 per family for the BBQ. RSVP by 8/31!

September 6 - Shul Board Meeting, 9 PM.

September 24 - Seudah Shlishit is sponsored by the Agress family to commemorate the Yahrzeit of Amy's father, Ha'Rav Yisroel Yehuda Ben Ephraim Michal Ha'Levi Pruzansky ז"ל.

October 29 - Seudah Shlishit is sponsored in honor of a siyum for Mesechet Ketuvot.

KIDDUSH INFORMATION



- To sponsor a Kiddush (\$1000/\$613/\$318, plus a bottle of scotch) email dmgarfunkel@gmail.com. Larger kiddushes may require a price adjustment based on expected crowd sizes, requested menus, etc.
- If you are around when the Rabbi says "על המחיה", your assistance in clean up would be appreciated.

SEUDAH SHLISHIT INFO



To sponsor for \$136 Seudah Shlishit (or in the case of multiple sponsors, \$100 per sponsor) to commemorate Yahrzeits, for a Siyum, or for another occasion, email David at dmgarfunkel@gmail.com.

SHIURIM



- TALMUD 4 ALL CLASS - ON HIATUS.
- TORAH FOR YOUR COMMUTE, via a Whatsapp group, with 3-minute daily halacha insights and a weekly 5-minute parsha elucidation. To join email Rabbi Shestack at rabbishestack@gmail.com.
- WOMEN'S MONTHLY SHABBAT AFTERNOON SHIUR with Rebbetzin Chana Shestack.
- WEEKLY GEMARA SHIUR, Shabbat afternoons 45 minutes before Mincha.
- MESORAH-IN-REVERSE lecture series at Suedah Shlishit on Shabbat.



COMMUNITY SECURITY

To volunteer and become part of our community security service, email



Margo at security@ahavatachim.org.

BULLETIN DEDICATIONS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND SHUL CALENDAR

- Email seplotnick@gmail.com to request an announcement of a simcha, refuah or life cycle event in the bulletin or to dedicate a bulletin for \$36 (\$54 w/Photo).



GITA COOPERWASSER י"ע YOUTH EVENTS

September 17 - Young Families Mix & Munch Lunch after Kiddush (hosts TBD), followed by



dessert and Stay & Play at the Santacruz home, 19-06 Jordan Rd., 3:00 PM

September 24 - Parent-Child Learning, Rosh Hashanah edition, followed by honey cake decorating to enjoy with friends.

Children ages 7 and up will enjoy an interaction learning session with Andrew Wigod while the younger children participate in PCL! RSVP by 9/20.

October 2 - Create Sukkah decorations at 3:00 PM and enjoy a fun pizza party at Ahavat Achim! Pizza is \$5/child or \$12 max/family. Please RSVP by 9/25.

October 11 - Youth Sukkot Event (details to come).

GITA COOPERWASSER י"ע YOUTH PROGRAM



- Rabbi Meet & Greet, every Friday night, kids come over to the Rabbi after davening to receive a cup of grape juice and a ticket!
- Shabbat Youth groups start at 10:15 AM. Children ages 3-12 years old can earn tickets for coming to minyan (Friday night and/or Shabbat day), asking the rabbi questions or attending parent-child learning programs! Tickets can be redeemed for exciting prizes over time!
- Children under age 4 meet in the youth room to the left upon entry to the social hall. This will be a parent led group.
- Children ages 4-7 meet in the youth room to the right upon entry to the social hall. This group will be run by our wonderful youth leaders. Parents are encouraged to drop their children off.
- Older elementary aged children and pre-teens meet in the Beit Midrash.



Dear Shul Member,

This year's High Holiday services will be held in our main sanctuary. Rosh Hashanah 5783 begins on Sunday evening, September 25 and continues on Monday and Tuesday, September 26 and 27. Yom Kippur begins Tuesday evening, October 4. We are looking forward to a meaningful and spiritual Yamim Noraim together.

In preparation for these High Holy Days, I would like to establish the seating requests so that members have the opportunity to choose their seats. Members wishing to retain their Shabbos seats may do so if their reservation is received no later than **Sunday, September 11.**

Seats can be purchased online or by mail. Please register for seats by submitting the online Google form [Yomim Noraim Online Reservation form](#)

If you have difficulty with the Google form, contact me or print out a hard copy of the form [[click here](#)].

Additionally, there will be age-appropriate professionally led groups for children aged 2-12. Advanced registration is required. To register your child(ren) [[click here](#)]. If you have questions about childcare or the form, email Kira Wigod at kira.batist.msw@gmail.com. Childcare registration is required by Sunday, September 18.

I would greatly appreciate and strongly urge you to take a few moments to complete the attached form(s) and return it to me as soon as possible. Your prompt response will assist me in more efficient planning and it will also avoid disappointment. **The deadline again is Sunday, September 11.**

Please return this form to me at: 6 Kershner Place
Fair Lawn, New Jersey 07410
or E-mail your response to me at: thegabbai@aol.com.

If you have any questions please call me at 791-8775. Thank you for your cooperation.

Marty Sonnenblick, Gabbai

[Yomim Noraim Online Reservation form](#)

For a printable form [[click here](#)]



August 8, 2022

Dear Friends,

We hope you are enjoying your summer. In preparation for the upcoming High Holidays, we are compiling an updated Yizkor (Remembrance) Booklet to be utilized on Yom Kippur, Shemini Atzeret, Pesach and Shavuot in 5783.

As always, this Yizkor Booklet will contain the Yizkor memorial service recited for deceased loved ones. Additionally, since the Yizkor prayers include an obligation to make a charitable donation in honor of the deceased, our Yizkor Booklet lists the names of loved ones we ask Hashem to remember.

If you submitted names for our Yizkor Booklet last year, please let us know if you want the names reprinted in an identical manner. If there are any changes, please advise accordingly. You can review last year's entries by clicking [here](#).

If you did not submit last year, you can add your beloved ones' name(s) to this year's Yizkor Booklet, by either (1) using the online google form [[Click here for online form](#)] OR (2) complete the printable form [[Click here for printable form](#)] and return it along with your payment enclosed no later than **Sunday, September 18, 2022** to:

Joyce Heller
14 Kershner Place
Fair Lawn, NJ 07410
jheller127@gmail.com

Listings are \$20 per name. We accept checks or PayPal. Please make checks payable to Ahavat Achim, or if using PayPal, use this link, <http://Paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/1444321>

Should you have any questions, please email Joyce Heller at jheller127@gmail.com or call Joyce at **201-741-6982**. We thank you for your participation and wish you a very Happy & Healthy New Year!

Sincerely,

Yizkor Booklet Committee



Congregation Ahavat Achim's Sisterhood Membership Renewal & Rosh Hashana Scroll

___ Yes, please enroll me as a Sisterhood member

___ Yes, please include me/us on the Rosh Hashanah Scroll

Please PRINT my/our name(s) on the Scroll as follows:

Sisterhood dues for 5783 are \$36

Inclusion in the Rosh Hashanah Scroll is \$10 per family

To sign up for these items you can do any of the following:

- Click on this [link](#) to sign up online.
- Or, Print this form and mail it along with your check payable to Sisterhood of Ahavat Achim to Beth Wechsler at 378 Owen Ave., Fair Lawn, 07410

- Or, Email Beth at beth.berman@aya.yale.edu and pay with PayPal by clicking [here](#)

Kindly respond by September 18th. Thank you for your participation

May Hashem grant us all a healthy, joyful & peaceful New Year

Congregation Ahavat Achim
18-25 Saddle River Road, Fair Lawn
<http://www.ahavatachim.org/>

Fun and games for all ages!



AHAVAT ACHIM

קהלת אהבת אחים

THE FAMILY SHUL

Good food!



COMMUNITY BASEBALL GAME & BBQ

Join us on Sunday, September 4 at 3pm for a community baseball game at Edison Park, followed by a BBQ at shul at 5pm!

**COME TO PLAY BALL, CHEER ON PLAYERS,
OR ENJOY THE LAST BBQ OF SUMMER!**

\$15 PER PERSON / \$36 PER FAMILY FOR BBQ

RSVP BY 8/31



Join Ahavat Achim Youth
Parent Child Learning
Rosh Hashanah Edition

Shabbat, September 24th at 4 PM
in the Kiddush Hall



Honeycake decorating to enjoy with
your friends!

Plus interactive learning session with
Andrew Wigod for kids ages 7 & up.

RSVP to youth@ahavatachim.org by 9/20

PARENTS AND ME

STAY & PLAY

Congregation Ahavat Achim



Featuring a special interactive program
led by Rabbi Shestack!

Sept 17th
@ 3 PM

Santacruz Home
19-06 Jordan Road



Questions? Email Natasha at nbnadler@gmail.com

Sukkot Craft & Pizza Party



***Create a special sukkah decoration with
your friends!***

***Sunday, October 2 at 3:00 PM
@ Ahavat Achim (exact location TBD)***

\$5/child or \$12 max/family

RSVP to youth@ahavatchim.org by 9/25



AHAVAT ACHIM

קהלת אהבת אחים

THE FAMILY GROUP



With thanks to **Wohl Legacy** 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.

Environmental Responsibility

Shoftim

Some commands in the Torah were understood so narrowly by the Sages that they were rendered almost inapplicable. One example is the *ir ha-nidachat*, the city led astray into idolatry, about which the Torah states that “you shall put the inhabitants of that town to the sword.” (Deut. 13:16) Another is the *ben sorer umoreh*, the stubborn and rebellious child, brought by his parents to the court and, if found guilty, put to death. (Deut. 21:18-21)

In both of these cases some Sages then interpreted the law so restrictively that they said “there never was and never will be” a case in which the law was applied. (Sanhedrin 71a) As for the condemned city, Rabbi Eliezer said that if it contained a single mezuzah, the law was not enforced (*ibid.*). In the case of the rebellious child, R. Yehuda taught that if the mother and father did not sound or look alike, the law did not apply (*ibid.*). According to these interpretations, the two laws were never meant to be put into practice, but were written solely “so that we should expound them and receive reward.”¹ They had only an educational - not a legal - function.

In the opposite direction, some laws were held to be far more extensive than they seemed at first sight. One striking example occurs in this week’s parsha. It refers to the conduct of a siege during wartime. The Torah states:

When you lay siege to a town and wage war against it for a long time to capture it, do not destroy its trees; do not wield an axe against them. You may eat from them; you must not cut them down. Are trees of the field human beings, that you should besiege them too? Only trees that you know do not produce food may you cut down for use building siege works until the town that has made war against you falls. (Deut. 20:19-20)

¹ Tosefta Sanhedrin 11:6, 14:1.

This prohibition against destroying fruit-bearing trees was known as the rule of *bal tashchit*, “do not destroy”. On the face of it, it is highly limited in scope. It does no more than forbid a “scorched earth” policy in the conduct of war. It seems to have no peacetime application. However, the Sages understood it very broadly to include any act of needless destruction. Maimonides states the law thus:

“Not only does this apply to trees, but also whoever breaks vessels or tears garments, destroys a building, blocks a wellspring of water, or destructively wastes food transgresses the command of *bal tashchit*.”²

This is the halachic basis of an ethic of environmental responsibility.

Why did the Oral Tradition, or at least some of its exponents, narrow the scope of the law in some cases, and broaden it in others? The short answer is: we do not know. The rabbinic literature does not tell us. But we can speculate. A *posek*, seeking to interpret Divine law in specific cases, will endeavour to do so in a way consistent with the total structure of biblical teaching. If a text seems to conflict with a basic principle of Jewish law, it will be understood restrictively, at least by some. If it exemplifies such a principle, it will be understood broadly.

The law of the condemned city, where all the inhabitants were sentenced to death, seems to conflict with the principle of individual justice. When Sodom was threatened with such a fate, Abraham argued that if there were only ten innocent people, the destruction of the entire population would be manifestly unfair: “Shall the Judge of all the earth not do justice?” (Gen. 18:25)

The law of the stubborn and rebellious son was explained in the Talmud by R. Jose the Galilean on the grounds that: “The Torah foresaw his ultimate destiny.” He had begun with theft. The likelihood was that he would go on to violence and then to murder. “Therefore the Torah ordained: Let him die innocent rather than die guilty.”³

“Law exists not just to regulate but also to educate.”

This is pre-emptive punishment. The child is punished less for what he has done than for what he may go on to do. Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, who said the law never was or would be applied, may have believed that in Judaism there is a contrary principle, that people are only judged for what they have done, not for what they will do. Retributive punishment is justice; pre-emptive punishment is not.

To repeat: this is speculative. There may have been other reasons at work. But it makes sense to suppose that the Sages sought as far as possible to make their individual rulings consistent with the value-structure of Jewish law as they understood it. On this view, the law of the condemned city exists to teach us that idolatry, once accepted in public, is contagious, as we see from the history of Israel’s kings. The law of the stubborn and rebellious child is there to teach us how steep is the downward slope from juvenile delinquency to adult crime. Law exists not just to regulate but also to educate.

In the case of *bal tashchit*, however, there is an obvious fit with much else in Jewish law and thought. The Torah is concerned with what we would nowadays call ‘sustainability.’ This is particularly true of the three commands ordaining periodic rest: the Sabbath, the Sabbatical year, and the Jubilee year.

On the Sabbath all agricultural work is forbidden, “so that your ox and your donkey may rest.” (Ex. 23:12) It sets a limit to our intervention in nature and the pursuit of economic growth. We

² Hilchot Melachim 6:10.

³ Mishnah Sanhedrin 8:5.

become conscious that we are creations, not just creators. The earth is not ours but God's. For six days it is handed over to us, but on the seventh we symbolically abdicate that power. We may perform no 'work', which is to say, an act that alters the state of something for human purposes. The Sabbath is a weekly reminder of the integrity of nature and the boundaries of human striving.

What the Sabbath does for humans and animals, the Sabbatical and Jubilee years do for the land. The earth, too, is entitled to its periodic rest. The Torah warns that if the Israelites do not respect this, they will suffer exile, "then shall the land make appeasement for its Sabbaths, for as long as it lies desolate and you are in your enemies' lands. Then the land will rest and make appeasement for its Sabbaths." (Lev. 26:34)

Behind this are two concerns. One is environmental. As Maimonides points out, land which is overexploited eventually erodes and loses its fertility. The Israelites were therefore commanded to conserve the soil by giving it periodic fallow years, not pursuing short-term gain at the cost of long-term desolation.⁴ The second, no less significant, is theological. "The land," says God, "is Mine; you are merely migrants and visitors to Me." (Lev. 25:23) We are guests on earth.

There is another group of commands which directs us against over-interference with nature. The Torah forbids crossbreeding livestock, planting a field with mixed seeds, and wearing a garment of mixed wool and linen. These rules are called *chukim* or 'statutes'. Nahmanides understood this term to mean *laws that respect the integrity of nature*. To mix different species, he argued, was to presume to be able to improve on creation, and is thus an affront to the Creator. Each species has its own internal laws of development and reproduction, and these must not be tampered with:

"We are guests on earth."

"One who combines two different species thereby changes and defies the work of creation, as if he believes that the Holy One, blessed be He, has not completely perfected the world and he now wishes to improve it by adding new kinds of creatures."⁵

Deuteronomy also contains a law forbidding taking a young bird together with its mother. Nahmanides sees this as having the same underlying concern, namely of protecting species. Though the Bible permits us to use some animals for food, we must not cull them to extinction.

Samson Raphael Hirsch in the nineteenth century gave the most forcible interpretation of biblical law. The statutes relating to environmental protection, he said, represent the principle that "the same regard which you show to humanity you must also demonstrate to every lower creature, to the earth which bears and sustains all, and to the world of plants and animals." They are a kind of social justice applied to the natural world: "They ask you to regard all living things as God's property. Destroy none; abuse none; waste nothing; employ all things wisely ... Look upon all creatures as servants in the household of creation."⁶

Hirsch also gave a novel interpretation to the phrase in Genesis 1, "Let Us make man in Our image after Our own likeness." (Gen. 1:26) The passage is puzzling, for at that stage, prior to the creation of man, God was alone. The 'Us', says Hirsch, refers to the rest of creation. Because man alone would develop the capacity to change and possibly endanger the natural world, nature itself was consulted as to

⁴ Rambam, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, III:39.

⁵ Ramban, *Commentary to Lev. 19:19*.

⁶ S. R. Hirsch, *The Nineteen Letters*, Letter 11.

whether it approved of such a being. The implied condition is that humans may use nature only in such a way as to enhance it, not put it at risk. Anything else is *ultra vires*, outside the remit of our stewardship of the planet.

In this context, a phrase in Genesis 2 is decisive. Man was set in the Garden of Eden "to work it and safeguard it." (Gen. 2:15) The two Hebrew verbs are significant. The first – *le'ovdah* – literally means 'to serve it'. Man is not just a master but also a servant of nature. The second – *leshomrah* – means 'to guard it'. This is the verb used in later Torah legislation to describe the responsibilities of a guardian of property that does not belong to him. He must exercise vigilance in its protection and is liable for loss through negligence. This is perhaps the best short definition of humanity's responsibility for nature as the Bible conceives it.

Man's dominion over nature is thus limited by the requirement to serve and conserve. The famous story of Genesis 2-3 – eating the forbidden fruit, and the subsequent exile from Eden – makes just this point. Not everything we can do, may we do. Transgress the limits, and disaster follows. All of this is summed up by a simple Midrash:

“When God made man, He showed him the panoply of creation and said to him: ‘See all My works, how beautiful they are. All I have made, I have made for you. Take care, therefore, that you do not destroy My world, for if you do, there will be no one left to mend what you have destroyed.’”⁷

We know much more than we once did about the dangers to the earth's ecology by the ceaseless pursuit of economic gain. The guidance of the Oral tradition in interpreting “do not destroy” expansively, not restrictively, should inspire us now. We should expand our horizons of environmental responsibility for the sake of generations not yet born, and for the sake of God, whose guests on earth we are.



AROUND THE Shabbat Table

1. How do you think the Sages knew when to interpret a law as inapplicable, and when to expand it to encompass an entire Jewish principle of ethics?
2. What do you think of this message that we are custodians, caretakers, and guests on this earth?
3. How can we, as a Jewish community, better embrace our own environmental responsibilities?



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⁷ Kohelet Rabbah 7:13.