

The Bulletin is sponsored by Saragail Glessin Garpe in memory of her wonderful sister and brother-in-law, Judith Glessin Blake (born 12/7/1934) and Stanley Blake (born 12/8/1929). Their memory and love will always be a blessing.



CANDLE LIGHTING 4:10 PM | 26 KISLEV 5784 | DECEMBER 9, 2023 | HAVDALA 5:13 PM

שבת פרשת וישב ב' דחנוכה

SHABBAT PARSHAT VAYEISHEV SECOND DAY OF CHANUKAH

Two Sifrei Torah. Maftir is Bamidbar 7:18-7:23, וביום השני, נתנאל בן צוּר. Haftarah is Zechariah 2:14-4:7. We bless the month of Tevet. Do not say either צדקתך or אב הרחמים.

FRIDAY EVENING

MINCHA	4:15 PM
SHKIA	4:28 PM
TZAIT HAKOCHAVIM	5:08 PM

SHABBAT

HASHKAMA	8:00 AM
MAIN	9:00 AM
LAST KRIAT SHEMA	9:29 AM
POST-HASHKAMA SHIUR	10:00 AM
FUNDAMENTALS SHIUR	11:15 AM
PRE-MINCHA SHIUR	3:20 PM
MINCHA	4:00 PM
MAARIV	5:13 PM

החדש הזה לכם



Molad for Tevet is Tuesday, Dec. 12, 8:01 PM & 3 Chalokim.

ראש חדש טבת יהיה ביום רביעי
הבא עלינו ועל כל ישראל לטובה

MUSICAL KABBALAT SHABBAT



This Friday night join us for another musical Kabbalat Shabbat.

TEEN LUNCH

6th-9th graders are invited to enjoy Shabbat lunch with Teen Mentor, Shalom Brauser, at the Mayer home, followed by games at the shul.



FAMILY SEUDAH SHLISHIT/GLOW IN THE DARK MUSICAL CHANUKAH HAVDALAH



Please join us for a special Family Seudah Shlishit sponsored by Rebecca Berger & Jay Herman in honor and support of chayalim and their families, which will be followed by a Glow-in-the-Dark Musical Hanukkah Havdalah.

TODAH RABAH

Thank you to Farnaz Gorelik and Ron Dworkis for overseeing the repainting of the Sanctuary, and Ron Dworkis for overseeing the completion of the ramp.



BARUCH DAYAN HA'EMET

We regret to inform you of the passing of Karla Spier, beloved mother of Arnie Spier. Shiva observance shall continue Motzei Shabbat and Sunday morning at Arnie's home, 40-04 Terhune Place. Shacharit on Sunday, 8:00 AM.

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים



SUNDAY
12/10

MONDAY
12/11

TUESDAY
12/12

WEDNESDAY
12/13

THURSDAY
12/14

FRIDAY
12/15

WEEKDAY MINYANIM AT AHAVAT ACHIM

SHACHARIT	8:00 AM	6:10 AM	6:10 AM	6:00 AM	6:10 AM	6:10 AM
MINCHA/MAARIV	4:16 PM	4:16 PM	4:17 PM	4:17 PM	4:17 PM	4:15 PM

ZMANIM

Earliest Talit	6:10 AM	6:11 AM	6:11 AM	6:12 AM	6:13 AM	6:14 AM
Gedolah	12:12 PM	12:13 PM	12:13 PM	12:14 PM	12:14 PM	12:15 PM
Shkia	4:28 PM	4:28 PM	4:29 PM	4:29 PM	4:29 PM	
Tzait	5:08 PM	5:08 PM	5:09 PM	5:09 PM	5:09 PM	

Rabbi Ely Shestack

President Stephen Agress

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 15 - (Post) Chanukah Shabbat Dinner, as we create authentic connections within our local Jewish community during these challenging times. RSVP: <https://forms.gle/4NvqZPPuwTyj8N9F7>

January 2 - Dr. Nava Siltan Lecture, "Parenting & Mental Health in the Modern World", Part 2 - "Grit/Effortful Perseverance". 8:30 PM, via Zoom.

March 9 - Dr. Nava Siltan Lecture, "Parenting & Mental Health in the Modern World", Part 3 - "Creativity, w/ Interactive Game". 8:30 PM, at the Shul.

IN OUR FUTURE

December 8 - Musical Kabbalat Shabbat

December 16 - Kiddush is sponsored by Esther & Matt Zimmelman to celebrate the births of Tara & Kira and a thank you to the Ahavat Achim community.

December 19 - Board Meeting

December 23 - Seudah Shlishit is sponsored by Natasha & Daniel Borsuk to commemorate the Yahrzeit of Natasha's father **הרב הנדלר** Henry Nadler.

January 5 - Musical Kabbalat Shabbat

January 6 - Seudah Shlishit is sponsored by Betsy & Marty Sonnenblick to commemorate the yahrzeit of Marty's mother, Helene Sonnenblick **הרבנית**, and Steven Plotnick in honor of a siyum on Yerushalmi Meshech Shevi'it.

January 27 - Seudah Shlishit is sponsored by the Plotnicks on the yahrzeit of Gail's father, **אברהם נחום בן משה**, Alan Hodes **הרב**.

February 2 - Musical Kabbalat Shabbat

February 3 - Kiddush is sponsored by Gail & Steven Plotnick on the conclusion of Gail's aveilus for her father, **אברהם נחום בן משה**, Alan Hodes **הרב**.

March 8 - Musical Kabbalat Shabbat

KIDDUSH & SEUDAH SHLISHIT

• THIS WEEK'S KIDDUSH IS DAIRY.

- To sponsor a Kiddush (prices start at \$318, plus a bottle of scotch) email dmgarfunkel@gmail.com to coordinate details and budget.
- To sponsor for \$136 Seudah Shlishit (or in the case of multiple sponsors, \$100 per sponsor), email David at dmgarfunkel@gmail.com.

SHIURIM



- SAMSON RAFAEL HIRSCH** ON THE PARSHA, Tuesdays at 1:00 PM, in person and on zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/7291311899> (PW: 112233).

- 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.



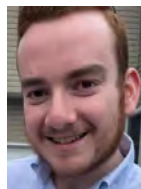
- SHABBAT GEMARA SHIUR**, 40 minutes before mincha.
- SHABBAT ONEG SERIES**.
- FUNDAMENTALS OF JEWISH THOUGHT**, after Shabbat kiddush.
- MESORAH-IN-REVERSE** lecture series at Seudah Shlishit.
- Tzurba M'Rabanan discussing Shabbat: Tuesdays, 7:30 PM, on Zoom with Shalom Brauser.
- Tzurba M'Rabanan on Kashrut, Wednesday, 8:30 PM by Rebetzin Chana, at her home.

REVERSE

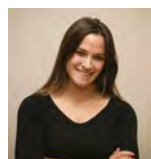
SHALOM BRAUSER, OUR TEEN MENTOR/ADULT EDUCATOR

Middle school Chabura will take place every third shabbat. Upcoming Chabura dates are as follows:

December 8/9, January 5/6, February 2/3



DR. NAVA R. SILTON LECTURES



The second of a 3-part series entitled "Parenting & Mental Health in the Modern World", will be held on January 2 at 8:30 PM via Zoom, on the topic of "Grit/Effortful Perseverance", and then again on March 9 at 8:30 PM at the shul on "Creativity" with an interactive game she created! RSVP to: <https://forms.gle/aAxVZKFohfSSBAyc7>.

GITA COOPERWASSER **הרבנית** YOUTH EVENTS

December 24 - Dr. Shnitzel, 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM, David Schwitzer **הרב** Social Hall. Early Bird (until 12/20) \$12/child, \$28 max/family. After \$15/child, \$35 max/family. Under 2 are free.

December 30 - Parent Child Learning, 6:15 - 7:00 PM, hosted by Farnaz & David Gorelik

GITA COOPERWASSER **הרבנית** YOUTH PROGRAM



- SHABBAT YOUTH LEADERS, 1ST - 4TH GRADE: LYLA & AVIGAYIL AND 3 YRS - K: ANNA & BROOKE**
- Youth group for children in 1st to 4th Grades starts at 9:00 AM (Drop Off) in the Youth Room on the left upon entering the social hall.
- Youth group for children 3 years old through Kindergarten starts at 9:30 AM (Drop Off) in the Youth Room on the right upon entering the social hall.
- Parent & Me room opens at 9:30 AM in the Beit Midrash.
- 5th through 9th graders will meet for Torah and games at 10:00 AM in the David Schwitzer Social Hall.
- Rabbi Meet & Greet, every Friday night, kids can come over to the Rabbi after davening to receive a cup of grape juice and a ticket!
- Children's corner at Seudah Shlishit, 1st to 4th graders will get 10 Torah questions in 10 minutes from Rabbi Shestack, with special snacks, tickets and more.
- Children 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 prizes.



18-25 Saddle River Road
Fair Lawn, NJ 07410
201.797.0502
<http://www.ahavatachim.org>



NAME	HEBREW DATE	CANDLE EVENING OF	DEDICATOR	RELATIONSHIP
Sylvia Eis	4	December 15	Jacob Eis	Mother
Blima Jablon	8	December 19	The Schwitzer Family	Grandmother
Samuel Eis	12	December 23	Jacob Eis	Father
Benjamin H. Sokoloff	12	December 23	Ron Sokoloff	Father
Andrew Leeb	13	December 24	Janie Kirschenbaum	Father
Lester Plotnick	13	December 24	Steven Plotnick	Father
Ida Freilich	15	December 26	Eita Latkin	Mother
Udel Chedva Schaeffer	16	December 27	Mimi Weinraub	Mother
Sarah Brody	19	December 30	Ron Sokoloff	Grandmother
Leonore Sokoloff	22	January 2	Ron Sokoloff	Mother
Abraham Rotberg	25	January 5	Ellen Chass	Father

DAVID SCHWITZER ע"ה SOCIAL HALL

Please contact Lori Garfunkel at garfmom@gmail.com to book the David Schwitzer ע"ה 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 additional clean up (and a \$150 security/cleaning deposit refunded when the social hall is returned in its original condition). Private caterers must be approved in by the Rabbi.

DONATE A SEFER, ETC.

Siddurim & Machzorim (\$40), and Chumashim (\$60), are available for donation. Please contact Jeff Safier at jeff.Safier@gmail.com for details.

SCRIP

Men's Club scrip is available. Email dmgarfunkel@gmail.com for details.

HONORARIA

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

MISHEBAYRACH

With a Mishebayerach you've pledged to give Tzedakah on behalf of those for whom you asked Hashem's blessing. Contributions to the shul can be made using Paypal's Giving Fund (with 100% of the proceeds going to the Shul), by clicking here: [Ahavat Achim Donations](#). If by check, please indicate on its face "Aliyah Donation."

YAHRTZEIT PLAQUES

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

MEN'S CLUB

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

SPONSORSHIPS

Sponsorships opportunities for Yahrzeits, Refuahs, and Hodahs (thanks), are available for regular shiurim, youth events and similar activities (but not for established honorariums or sponsorship funded events). Cost of sponsorship (shiur or youth event) is \$100 per sponsor. Multiple sponsors for an event will be accepted. Sponsorships will be listed in the bulletin and announced at the event (and, if possible, a placard with the sponsorship will be prepared and displayed at the event).

Sponsorships do not include any extra amenities (such as food). Please contact either Stephen Agress or Steve Plotnick for questions or clarifications.

הנוכה - CHANUKAH (THURSDAY, DEC. 7 - FRIDAY, DEC. 15)

One should light Chanukah candles as close to 10 minutes after sunset as possible (excepting Sat. night). However, it is preferable for the family to light together rather than have a portion of the family light earlier. Everyone in the household is encouraged to light chanuka candles. (The matriarch of the household should follow the family custom.) There must be enough oil/wax to last one half hour past the time when the stars appear. If one is lighting after the appearance of the stars there must still be enough oil to burn for half an hour.

Under extenuating circumstances, one may light even after midnight if any members of the family are awake to see the lights. If the Chanukah lights are accidentally extinguished prior to their having burned the requisite time, one is not obligated by Halacha to rekindle them; it is, however, permissible to rekindle them, but without a Bracha.

There is a custom to give children Chanukah Gelt as part of publicizing the miracle.

In Shemonei Esrei and Birkat HaMazon add ועל הנסים (do not repeat if omitted). At Shacharit we recite complete full Hallel.

בי דחנוכה - SECOND DAY OF CHANUKAH FRIDAY EVENING - DECEMBER 8 (26 KISLEV)

We light the Chanukah Menorah at home before lighting the Shabbat candles. One must be careful to use enough oil (or light a large enough candle) to remain lit until thirty minutes after the appearance of three stars. There is a minhag to daven Mincha before lighting the Menorah, but one should not delay the welcoming of Shabbat because of this. One may not light Chanukah or Shabbat candles earlier than Plag HaMincha (3:35 PM).

מוצאי שבת - MOTZEI SHABBAT

There are two approaches concerning the order of Havdalah and Chanukah Menorah lighting in the home. If one has a family minhag, they should continue to follow that practice, otherwise the psak (ruling) of the Rabbi is to make Havdalah first, and then to light the Chanukah Menorah.

AHAVAT ACHIM MEMBERSHIP/ HOSPITALITY

Email Sara at membership@ahavatachim.org for membership details or Shabbat hospitality.

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 (\$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. Go to <http://www.fairlawnmikvah.org/> for online booking.

TWITTER: AhavatAchimFL

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100091322384429

INSTAGRAM: www.instagram.com/ahavatachim/

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

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).

COMMUNITY SECURITY

To volunteer and become part of our community security service, email Margo at security@ahavatachim.org.



Musical Kabbalat Shabbat Series

WINTER 2023 - 2024

**NOV
10**

**DEC
08**

**JAN
05**

**FEB
02**

**MAR
08**


AHAVAT ACHIM
— קהלת אהבת אחים —
THE FAMILY SHUL

Join us for an uplifting Kabbalat Shabbat on Friday nights coinciding with Shabbat Mevarchim throughout the winter!

Congregation Ahavat Achim Youth Department Presents:

DEC 9TH

SEUDAH SHLISHIT

STARTING 4:30 PM FOLLOWED BY

GLOW IN THE DARK

HANUKKAH MUSICAL

HAVDALLAH

Family Seudat Shlishit in the David Schwitzer social hall, followed by Maariv and musical havdallah

DINNER

GLOW STICKS

DANCING

MENORAH LIGHTING

DOUGHNUTS

RSVP to youth@ahavatachim.org



AHAVAT ACHIM
— קהלת אהבת אחים —
THE FAMILY SHUL



JOIN US FOR (POST) CHANUKAH SHABBAT DINNER

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15

5:00 PM

4:30 PM - KABBALAT SHABBAT

We invite you to join us on the Shabbat after Chanukah, as we break down barriers between neighbors and create authentic connections within our local Jewish community during these challenging times.

RSVP BY 12/10!



PRICING:

ADULTS (12 YEARS OLD +) - \$25

CHILDREN AGES 6 - 11 - \$13

CHILDREN AGES 3 - 5 - \$5

FAMILY MAX - \$72



NEW TO THE AHAVAT
ACHIM FAMILY?
DINNER FOR OUR
NEIGHBORS IS FREE!



DR. SHNITZEL WACKY SCIENCE SHOW

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24
DOORS OPEN AT 10 AM, SHOW AT 10:30 AM



KIDS OF ALL AGES WELCOME!

EARLY BIRD (UNTIL 12/20): \$12/CHILD, \$28MAX/FAMILY
AFTER 12/20: \$15/CHILD, \$35 MAX/FAMILY
CHILDREN 2 AND UNDER: FREE

CONGREGATION AHAVAT ACHIM
18-25 SADDLE RIVER ROAD, FAIR LAWN, NJ

QUESTIONS? EMAIL YOUTH@AHAVATACHIM.ORG



CHILDREN'S CORNER @ SEUDAH SHLISHIT 1ST-4TH GRADERS

10
questions
in 10
minutes!

EXCLUSIVE KIDS TABLE

FEATURING

TORAH QUESTIONS WITH RABBI SHESTACK

SPECIAL SNACKS, TICKETS & MORE!

FOLLOWED BY FREE PLAY

Starting 11/25 until Pesach



AHAVAT ACHIM
SEUDAH SHLISHIT

11/25/2019 - 3/27/2020



PARENTING & MENTAL HEALTH IN THE MODERN WORLD

A LECTURE SERIES BY
DR. NAVA R. SILTON, PH.D.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13TH @ 8:30PM ON ZOOM:
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

TUESDAY, JANUARY 2ND @ 8:30PM ON ZOOM:
GRIT / EFFORTFUL PERSEVERANCE

SATURDAY, MARCH 9TH @ 8:30PM AT AHAVAT ACHIM:
CREATIVITY (W/ INTERACTIVE GAME!)

Nava R. Siltan, Ph.D. is a Developmental Psychologist and a Full Professor at Marymount Manhattan College, where she teaches classes in Child Development, Cognition, Personality, Creativity, Children's Media. Learn more here: <https://www.drnavasilton.com/>



AHAVAT ACHIM
קהלת אהבת אחים
THE FAMILY SHUL

MOTZEI SHABBAT PCI!

Parent Child Learning

WITH RABBI SHESTACK

DECEMBER 30 ~ 6:15-7:00 PM

PIZZA



DAVID & FARNAZ GORELIK HOME

1ST - 4TH GRADE



LEARNING



COME LEARN WITH US IN A COMFORTABLE ENVIRONMENT,
EARN TICKETS AND PRIZES, AND ENJOY PIZZA!

RSVP BY DEC 26 TO
YOUTH@AHAVATACHIM.ORG FOR ADDRESS



AHAVAT ACHIM
קהלת אהבת אחים

The Family Bond



Covenant & Conversation

Jonathan Sacks
THE RABBI SACKS LEGACY

VAYESHEV • וַיֵּשֶׁב

FROM THE TEACHINGS AND WRITINGS OF RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS זצ"ל

With thanks to the Schimmel Family for their generous sponsorship of Covenant & Conversation, dedicated in loving memory of Harry (Chaim) Schimmel. "I have loved the Torah of R' Chaim Schimmel ever since I first encountered it. It strives to be not just about truth on the surface but also its connection to a deeper truth beneath. Together with Anna, his remarkable wife of 60 years, they built a life dedicated to love of family, community, and Torah. An extraordinary couple who have moved me beyond measure by the example of their lives." — Rabbi Sacks

Sibling Rivalry

From Vayeshev to the end of the book of Bereishit we read the story of Joseph and his brothers. From the very beginning we are plunged into a drama of sibling rivalry that seems destined to end in tragedy.

All the elements are there, and it begins with ominous parental favouritism. Jacob loved Joseph more than his other sons. The Torah says this was because "he had been born to him in his old age." But we also know it was because Joseph was the first son of his beloved Rachel, who had been infertile for many years.

Jacob gave this favouritism a visible symbol, the richly ornamented robe or coat of many colours that he commissioned for him. The mere sight of this coat served as constant provocation to the brothers. In addition there were the bad reports Joseph brought to his father about his half-brothers, the children of the handmaids. And by the fourth verse of the parsha we read the following:

When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him, *velo yachlu dabro le-shalom*.

Gen. 37:4

What is the meaning of this last phrase? Here are some of the standard translations:

They could not speak a kind word to him.
They could not speak peacefully to him.
They could not speak to him on friendly terms.

Rabbi Yonatan Eybeschütz, however, recognised that the Hebrew construction is strange. Literally it means, "they could not speak him to peace." What might this mean? Rabbi Eybeschütz refers us to the command in Vayikra 19:17:

You shall not hate your brother in your heart.
You shall surely reprimand your neighbour and not bear sin because of him.

Lev. 19:17

This is how Maimonides interprets this command as it relates to interpersonal relations:

When a person sins against another, the injured party should not hate the offender and keep silent . . . it is his duty to inform the offender and say to him, why did you do this to me? Why did you sin against me in this matter? . . . If the offender repents and pleads for forgiveness, he should be forgiven.

Hilchot Deot 6:6

Rabbi Eybeschütz's point is simple. Had the brothers been able to speak to Joseph they might have told him of their anger at his talebearing, and of their distress at seeing the many-coloured coat. They might have spoken frankly about their sense of

humiliation at the way their father favoured Rachel over their mother Leah, a favouritism that was now being carried through into a second generation. Joseph might have come to understand their feelings. It might have made him more modest or at least more thoughtful. But *lo yachlu dabro le-shalom*. They simply couldn't bring themselves to speak. As Nachmanides writes, on the command: You shall not hate your brother in your heart:

“Those who hate tend to hide their hate in their heart.”

We have here an instance of one of the Torah's great insights, that conversation is a form of conflict resolution, whereas the breakdown of speech is often a prelude to violent revenge.

The classic case is that of Absalom and Amnon, two half-brothers who were sons of king David. In a shocking episode, Amnon rapes Absalom's sister Tamar:

Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the ornate tunic that she wore; she put her hand to her head and went off, weeping as she went.

And Absalom, her brother, said to her, “Has your brother Amnon been with you? For now, my sister, be silent; he is your brother. Do not take this affair to heart.”

And Tamar remained, forlorn, in the house of her brother Absalom. When King David heard all about this affair, he was absolutely livid. And Absalom would not speak a word to Amnon, neither good nor bad, for Absalom despised Amnon for having violated Tamar, his sister.

2 Samuel 13:19–22

Absalom maintained his silence for two years. Then he invited all of David's sons for a feast at the time of sheep-shearing, and ordered his servants to wait until Amnon was drunk and then kill him, which they did.

Hate grows in silence. It did with Absalom. It did with Joseph's brothers. Before the chapter ends, we see them plot to kill Joseph, then throw him into a pit, and then sell him into slavery. It is a terrible story and led directly to the Israelites' exile and slavery in Egypt.

The Talmud (Brachot 26b) uses the phrase, *ein sichah ela tefillah*, which literally means, “Conversation is a form of prayer,” because in opening ourselves up to the human other, we prepare ourselves for the act of opening ourselves up with the Divine Other, which is what prayer is: a conversation with God.

Conversation does not, in and of itself, resolve conflict. Two people who are open with one another may still have clashing desires or competing claims. They may simply not like one another. There is no law of predetermined harmony in the human domain. But conversation means that we recognise one another's humanity. At its best it allows us to engage in role reversal, seeing the world from the other's point of view. Think of how many real and intractable conflicts, whether in the personal or political domain, might be transformed if we could do that.

In the end Joseph and his brothers had to live through real trauma before they were able to recognise one another's humanity, and much of the rest of their story – the longest single narrative in the Torah – is about just that.

Judaism is about the God who cannot be seen, who can only be heard; about the God who created the universe with words and whose first act of kindness to the first human being was to teach him how to use words. Jews, even highly secular Jews, have often been preoccupied with language. Wittgenstein understood that philosophy is about language.

Levi Strauss saw cultures as forms of language. Noam Chomsky and Steven Pinker pioneered study of the language instinct. George Steiner has written about translation and the limits of language.

The Sages were eloquent in speaking about the dangers of *lashon hara*, “evil speech,” the power of

language to fracture relationships and destroy trust and goodwill. But there is evil silence as well as evil speech. It is no accident that at the very beginning of the most fateful tale of sibling rivalry in Bereishit, the role – specifically the failure – of language is alluded to, in a way missed by virtually all translations. Joseph’s brothers might have “spoken him to peace” had they been open, candid and willing to communicate. Speech broke down at the very point where it was needed most.

Words create; words reveal; words command; words redeem. Judaism is a religion of holy words. For words are the narrow bridge across the abyss between soul and soul, between two human beings, and between humanity and God.

Language is the redemption of solitude, and the mender of broken relationships. However painful it is to speak about our hurt, it is more dangerous not to do so. Joseph and his brothers might have been reconciled early on in their lives, and thus spared themselves, their father, and their descendants, much grief. Revealing pain is the first step to healing pain.

Speech is a path to peace.



Around the Shabbat Table

1. Can you relate to a time when you found it challenging to communicate your feelings? Did it impact a relationship? How was that tension resolved?
2. Can you think of other times in the Torah where communication, or lack thereof, played a crucial role in the narrative?
3. How might the brothers have used open communication to resolve their conflict with Yosef, if we were to reimagine their story?

● These questions come from this week’s **Family Edition** to Rabbi Sacks’ Covenant & Conversation. For an interactive, multi-generational study, check out the full edition at www.RabbiSacks.org/covenant-conversation-family-edition/vayeshev/sibling-rivalry/