



*The kitchen and food closets will be closed on Pesach. Do not go into these areas. Groups will be providing Pesach snacks.*

**SHABBAT CANDLE LIGHTING 7:23 PM**

**12 NISAN**

**APRIL 20, 2024**

**שבת פרשת מצורע/שבת הגדול  
SHABBAT PARSHAT METZORA  
SHABBAT HAGADOL**

Haftorah is Malachi 3:4-24 (repeating verse 23). Don't say צדקתך צדק or אב הרחמים or ויהי נועם or ואתה קדוש. Final time for Kiddish Levanah of Nisan is Sun. night, Apr. 21 (14 Nisan), but if needed, Monday night (15 Nisan) as well.

**FRIDAY EVENING**

MINCHA 7:25 PM  
TZAIT HAKOCHAVIM 8:21 PM

**SHABBAT**

HASHKAMA 8:00 AM  
MAIN 9:00 AM  
LAST KRIAT SHEMA 9:32 AM  
GEMARA SHIUR 6:20 PM  
MINCHA 7:00 PM  
MAARIV/HAVDALAH 8:27 PM

**פסח/ח  
15/16 NISAN, APRIL 22/23**

**MONDAY EVENING**

CANDLE LIGHTING 7:26 PM  
MINCHA 7:30 PM  
TZAIT HAKOCHAVIM 8:24 PM

**TUESDAY**

SHACHARIT 8:45 AM  
LAST KRIAT SHEMA 9:30 AM  
MINCHA 7:30 PM  
MAARIV 8:10 PM  
CANDLE LIGHTING >8:30 PM

**WEDNESDAY**

SHACHARIT 8:45 AM  
LAST KRIAT SHEMA 9:29 AM  
MINCHA 7:30 PM  
MAARIV/HAVDALAH 8:31 PM

**PRE-PESACH COMMUNITY LUNCHEON/KIDDUSH**

Thank you to our volunteer chefs Aliza Mayer & Chana Shestack, and to our sponsors: **Tzafun (\$180)**: Winchester; **Maggid (\$118)**: Spier; **Karpas (\$72)**: Agress, Brooks, Garfunkel, Goldberg, Herman, Plotnick, & Riskin; **Kadesh (\$54)**: Borsuk, J&I Cohen, L&Y Cohen, Czinn, I&M Dworkis, Gorelick, Greene, Jacob, Kempin, Mihailevsky, Norton, Oppenheim, Sokoloff, Sonnenblick, Wechsler & S. Wigod.

**SHIR HASHIRIM ROUND ROBIN PEREK-BY-PEREK SHIUR**

This Seudah Shlishit: Ch. 1 (Steve Plotnick), Ch. 2 (Shamai Bernstein), Ch. 3 (Aaron Czinn), Ch. 4 (Margo Heda), Ch. 5 (Eli Greenbaum), Ch. 6 (Ilana Schwitzer), Ch. 7 (Richie Mayer), and Ch. 8 (Dasi Vann).

**STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE SURVEY**

The Strategic Planning Committee is seeking input [via this 15-minute survey](#) from all adult members. Please complete the survey by April 28. Focus group opportunities will follow in May - stay tuned!

**FROM THE RABBI**

- (1) Shabbat Hagadol Drasha, ~11:30AM - 12PM, "...To Ge'ulah: The Essence of Redemption and Why That Matters; For Mashiach, the State of Israel and Each Other".
- (2) Time for Bedikat Chametz is Sunday, April 21, after 8:23 PM.
- (3) Siyum Bechorim, Monday, April 22, after Shacharit.
- (4) Last time to eat Chometz is Monday, April 22, 10:39 AM.
- (5) Last time to possess Chometz is Monday, April 22, 11:47 AM.
- (6) Chometz burning at the Norton home, 20-11 Hunter Pl., Fair Lawn, Mon., April 22, 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM. No lulav, plastic, foil, paper, pasta, sauces or liquids. Bread, cereal, crackers and dry items only (plan accordingly).



	SUNDAY 4/21	MONDAY 4/22	TUESDAY 4/23	WEDNESDAY 4/24	THURSDAY 4/25	FRIDAY 4/26
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**WEEKDAY MINYONIM AT AHAVAT ACHIM**

	8:00 AM	6:15 AM		6:00 AM	6:00 AM
SHACHARIT					
MINCHA/MAARIV	7:31 PM			7:35 PM	7:30 PM
<b>ZMANIM</b>					
Earliest Talit	5:09 AM	5:07 AM		5:03 AM	5:01 AM
Gedolah	1:29 PM	1:29 PM		1:29 PM	1:29 PM
Shkia	7:43 PM			7:47 PM	
Tzait	8:23 PM			8:27 PM	

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**May 5** - Yom Hashoah Event at 8:15 PM, dedicated in memory of Cary Reichart<sup>ת"ו</sup>

**May 11** - Prospective Family Shabbaton

**May 18** - Mental Health Awareness Discussion at Seudah Shlishit.

**May 26** - Lag B'Omer Community Event  
Doors Open at Noon. BBQ at 12:30 PM, with special activities for youth.

**June 8** - Rut Round Robin

## IN OUR FUTURE

**April 27** - Seudah Shlishit sponsored by the Sonnenblicks for the yahrzeit of Marty's father, Moshe Yehuda ben Yosef Dov Halevi<sup>ת"ו</sup>, and the Farajuns to commemorate the yahrzeit of Daphna's father, Isaac<sup>ת"ו</sup> ben Chaya Rachel.

**May 25** - Kiddush is sponsored by the Mayers in honor of Sophie's Bat Mitzvah.

## CHAMETZ SALES

**April 20** - 30 minutes after Shabbat ends.

**April 21** - After Shacharit.

## KIDDUSH & SEUDAH SHLISHIT

- **THIS WEEK'S KIDDUSH IS MEAT.**

## 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. To join email Rabbi Shestack at [rabbishestack@gmail.com](mailto:rabbishestack@gmail.com).
- SHABBAT SHIUR, 40 minutes before mincha.
- FUNDAMENTALS OF JEWISH THOUGHT, after Kiddush.
- MESORAH-IN-REVERSE lecture series at Seudah Shlishit.
- Tzurba M' Rabanan on Shabbat, Wednesdays at 7:30 PM (to be adjusted as Maariv time changes), on Zoom with Shalom Brauser.

## CONTACTING THE RABBI

The Rabbi is always available for halachic and pastoral issues. For less exigent matters, text, call, or drop by during the Rabbi's office hour, Tuesdays, 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM, or feel free to reach out to the Rabbi to make other meeting arrangements.



## GITA COOPERWASSER<sup>ת"ה</sup> YOUTH EVENTS

**April 20** - Shabbat HaGadol Pesach Program For Kids, at 4:15 PM.

## GITA COOPERWASSER<sup>ת"ה</sup> YOUTH PROGRAM

- **SHABBAT YOUTH LEADERS: 1ST - 4TH GRADE: LETIZIA & DASI; 3 YRS - K: NICOLE & ABBY**
- **1ST & 2ND DAY PESACH YOUTH LEADERS: 1ST - 4TH GRADE: LETIZIA & ARIELLA; 3 YRS - K: PERRI & ABBY**
- 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 9:15 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<sup>ת"ו</sup> 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.

## Tuesday Evening, April 23



## Wednesday Evening, April 24



## Thursday Evening, April 25



## Friday Evening, April 26



## Saturday Evening, April 27



## Sunday Evening, April 28



## Monday Evening, April 29



18-25 Saddle River Road  
Fair Lawn, NJ 07410  
201.797.0502

<http://www.avatachim.org>

## SHABBAT HAGADOL

(ADAPTED FROM [AISH.COM](http://AISH.COM))

The Shabbat prior to Passover is called Shabbat HaGadol. The source of the term is unclear as it is not found in the Tanach or Talmudic literature, though in the Middle Ages a number of authorities occupied themselves with explaining the origin of the term (see Machzor Vitri, § 259). One approach sees Shabbat HaGadol as originating with the special Haftorah, Malachi 3:23, which says "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the **great** and awesome day of the Lord."

Therefore the Talmud teaches: Rabbi Yehoshua says: "In Nissan the world was created ... the bondage of our ancestors ceased in Egypt; and in Nissan they will be redeemed in time to come." (Talmud Rosh HaShana 11a) The tradition, which accords Elijah a primary role in the Messianic age, calls upon us to read the portion of the prophet which alludes to that "great" day.

Other commentaries look back to the past for an explanation for the term. The Talmud teaches that the day the Jews left Egypt -- the 15th of the month of Nissan -- was a Thursday, and the 10th of the month was the previous Shabbat: "As to Nissan in which the Israelites departed from Egypt, on the fourteenth they killed their Passover sacrifices, on the fifteenth they went forth, and in the evening [of the 15th] the firstborn were smitten... and that day was a Thursday. (Shabbath 87b)."

The significance of the 10th is mentioned in the Torah: Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, "In the tenth day of this month they shall take every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for a house." (Exodus 12:3) Tosfot point out that by taking the lamb, the Jews piqued the interest, and the ire, of the firstborn of Egypt. They pleaded with Pharaoh to release the Jews. When he refused, the firstborn rebelled and attacked their own parents. Therefore the day is considered great, due to the miracle of God which was manifest and the subsequent unraveling of Egyptian society. This explanation though points to the significance of the 10th of Nissan rather than to the Shabbat which precedes Passover. While that 10th of the month in Egypt happened to fall on Shabbat, its significance has apparently no intrinsic connection with Shabbat.

Another idea comes from the Sfat Emet who says that the term "Shabbat HaGadol" results from the Shabbat taking on new significance upon the Jews redemption from Egypt causing Shabbat to acquire an historical identity intertwined with theology. The Sfat Emet explains that Shabbat had now become "greater", with the second aspect of Shabbat, articulated in the repetition of the Ten Commandments, realized.

### DAVID SCHWITZER <sup>ד"ר</sup> SOCIAL HALL

Please contact Lori Garfunkel at [garfmom@gmail.com](mailto:garfmom@gmail.com) to book the David Schwitzer <sup>ד"ר</sup> 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](mailto:jeff.Safier@gmail.com) for details.

### SCRIP

Men's Club scrip is available. Email [dmgarfunkel@gmail.com](mailto:dmgarfunkel@gmail.com) for details.

### HONORARIA

The available Honoraria list will be provided upon request by contacting Steven Plotnick at [seplotnick@gmail.com](mailto:seplotnick@gmail.com).

### 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 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."

### Yahrzeit 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](mailto:aagress@gmail.com) to arrange.

### MEN'S CLUB

Please contact Elliot Greene at [MensClub@AhavatAchim.Org](mailto: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.

## EREV PESACH - SUNDAY NIGHT, APRIL 21

It is forbidden to eat Matzah on Erev Pesach, after the appearance of three stars (the Mishna in Pesachim refers to this as the "Light of the Fourteenth"). Search for chometz everywhere we bring it during the year. Someone not participating in the search places ten pieces of chometz in random locations to which we bring chometz during the year (failure to do so does not invalidate the search, but be very careful to find all ten pieces). Before the search recite the Bracha "אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצוננו" – "על ביעור חמץ" – on the removal of chometz (for the search is the beginning of the process). After the search, one declares "כל חמירא" (preferably in a language that he understands) nullifying all chometz and sourdough of which he is unaware.

## EREV PESACH - MONDAY, APRIL 22

First born have a custom to fast, redeem themselves with money for Tzedakah, or participate in a Seudat Mitzvah such as a siyum. Chometz set aside for breakfast may be eaten until the end of the fourth proportionate hour after dawn (10:39 AM). One may sell chometz, give it away to a non-Jewish acquaintance, or feed it to an animal until the end of the fifth proportionate hour (11:47 AM). The chometz you authorized Rabbi Shestack to sell must be placed in a reserved area. The sale to the non-Jew is considered part of the removal (ביעור) process. Burn the remaining chometz before the end of the fifth proportionate hour (11:47 AM) and say the formula of "כל" חמירא" nullifying and making free all chometz of which we are both unaware and aware, but do not make any Bracha (one should have in mind that if the sale to the non-Jew is found invalid, such Chometz too is nullified and rendered free). One washes (some immerse themselves in a Mikveh) and makes all necessary preparations in honor of Yom Tov. One must complete all of the preparations for the Seder while it is still daytime before Yom Tov. Romaine lettuce must be thoroughly cleansed and then carefully inspected for bugs. The horseradish must be grated.

## PESACH - MONDAY NIGHT, APRIL 22 - FIRST SEDER

Upon the appearance of three small stars, most married men don Kittels and take their place at the table. The leader has someone else pour each of the Four Cups of wine for him (in the manner of a wealthy free man) and begin the Seder with Kiddush, including שהחיינו. We follow the order presented in the Haggadot. All four cups at the Seder must be full, containing at least a רביעית of preferably red wine (a רביעית is a little more than 3 ounces or 86.5 grams). One should drink the entire cup, but must finish at least the majority of a רביעית. The Four Cups, as well as the eating of the Matzah, Hillel's sandwich and Afikomen, must be done in a reclining position to one's left side (בהסיבת שמאל). Women and children are obligated to drink the Four Cups, although children can be given small cups relative to their age and size.

## PRAYER FOR DEW - MUSSAF - APRIL 23

The Chazzan dons a Kittel. We say "משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם" during silent Shemonei Esrei at Mussaf. In his Repetition the Chazzan stops saying "...ומוריד הגשם". The congregation no longer says "ומוריד הגשם..." at Mincha. It is advisable to repeat 101 (or at least 90) times "אתה רב להושיע מכלכל חיים"; so that it becomes fluent and habitual, avoiding any future doubt as to whether one failed to omit "משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם".

## SECOND NIGHT - COUNTING THE OMER - APRIL 23

Wait until Tzait before lighting candles or preparing for the 2nd day. Maariv begins after Tzait. Each night before counting the Omer we recite the Bracha "אשר קדשנו במצותיו... וצוננו על ספירת העומר" and then proclaim the current day of the Omer. Both the Bracha and the count itself must be done while standing. It is best to count the Omer after Tzait. If one counted before then, it is proper to count again after Tzait without a Bracha. If one counted earlier than Plag HaMincha he must count again with a Bracha when the stars appear. If one forgot to count at night, he must count during the day without a Bracha. He may then continue to count again on all of the successive nights with a Bracha. If one failed to count an entire day, one continues to count the following nights without a Bracha.

## AHAVAT ACHIM MEMBERSHIP/ HOSPITALITY

Email Sara at [membership@ahavatachim.org](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100091322384429)

**INSTAGRAM:** [www.instagram.com/ahavatachim/](http://www.instagram.com/ahavatachim/)

**FLICKR:** [flickr.com/photos/ahavatachim/albums](http://flickr.com/photos/ahavatachim/albums)

## BULLETIN DEDICATIONS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND SHUL CALENDAR

Email [seplotnick@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:security@ahavatachim.org).





JOIN US FOR THE  
**SHABBAT HAGADOL**

**DRASHA** w/ R' Shestack  
April 20th 5784

**"...To Ge'ulah"**

**THE ESSENCE OF  
REDEMPTION**

*AND WHY THAT MATTERS; FOR  
MASHIACH, THE STATE OF ISRAEL  
AND EACH OTHER*

- AFTER THE KIDDUSH LUNCHEON
- CHILDCARE PROVIDED THROUGHOUT

# Shabbat HaGadol

Pesach program for kids

April 20 - 4:15 pm

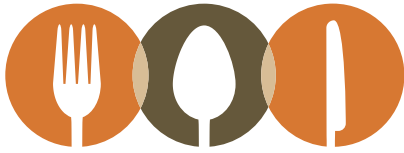
Ages 0- 5 yrs: Kids seder led by Sara Santacruz  
Grades 1-4: Seder Dvar Torah Workshop led by Rabbi Shestack

**Followed by dinner**

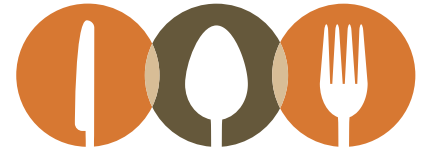
Must RSVP by April 17th  
Youth@ahavatachim.org

**\$5 per child/ \$12 family**

This is not a drop off event



AHAVAT ACHIM  
קהלת אהבת אחים  
THE FAMILY SHUL



**CABINETS BARE BEFORE PESACH?  
JOIN US FOR ONE LAST KIDDUSH!**

# PRE-PESACH COMMUNITY LUNCHEON

**IT'LL BE  
CHAMETZ-ING!**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 20**

SIGN UP TO SPONSOR OR VOLUNTEER TO  
MAKE A CROCKPOT DISH!

## **SPONSORSHIPS:**

KADESH: \$54

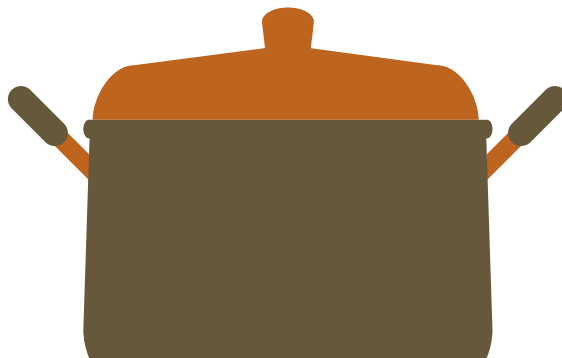
KARPAS: \$72

MAGGID: \$118

TZAFUN: \$180

**SIGN UP BY 4/16!**

[EVENTS@AHAVATACHIM.ORG](mailto:EVENTS@AHAVATACHIM.ORG)



To RSVP or for more information,  
email [AhavatAchimDinner@gmail.com](mailto:AhavatAchimDinner@gmail.com)

*AHAVAT ACHIM OF FAIR LAWN  
INVITES YOU TO OUR*

*Annual Journal Dinner  
Honoring*

*Shirley E. & Avrom R. Vann*

*And A Special  
Young Leadership Award to*

*Kira & Andrew Wigod*

*Sunday May 19th  
from 6pm to 9pm  
Congregation Rinat Yisrael  
389 W Englewood Ave.  
Teaneck, NJ 07666*

*RSVP by May 5th  
\$200 Per Person  
No Charge for Children under 12*



Please check appropriate box:

- PLATINUM PAGE.....\$1800
- GOLD PAGE.....\$1000
- SILVER PAGE.....\$800
- FULL PAGE.....\$400\*\*
- HALF PAGE.....\$300
- QUARTER PAGE.....\$150
- EIGHTH PAGE (business card).....\$75
- LISTING .....\$50

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

SOLICITED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*\$400 donation entitles you to 2 reservations for the dinner\*\***  
*YOUR CONTRIBUTION IS TAX DEDUCTIBLE TO THE EXTENT ALLOWED BY LAW*

**Payment Options:**

**Check:**

**PAYPAL:**

**Visa or Mastercard:**

Payable to Ahavat Achim

[paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/1444321](https://paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/1444321)

Please fill in below

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_; Card #: \_\_\_\_\_; Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Sec Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Billing Address: \_\_\_\_\_; Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this ad blank with your payment to:

**AHAVAT ACHIM, 18-25 SADDLE RIVER ROAD, FAIR LAWN, NJ 07410** [AhavatAchimDinner@gmail.com](mailto:AhavatAchimDinner@gmail.com)

**THE FINAL AD DEADLINE IS MAY 5, 2024**

Ad copy (JPG, PDF, Word, etc...) can be emailed to [AhavatAchimDinner@gmail.com](mailto:AhavatAchimDinner@gmail.com)  
 For hard-copy submissions, please print ad clearly or attach business card *(use a separate ad blank for each ad)*

**Special Recognition Pages:**

Rabbi's page (\$18 per family)

\_\_\_\_\_

Memorial pages for Cary Reichardt & Norman Greenstein (\$18)- Provide text and images for your listings to be added to the pages.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Memorial Listing (\$10 per name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

Children's Listing (\$10 per child)

\_\_\_\_\_  
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Grandchildren's Listing (\$10 per grandchild)

\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

בס"ד



2024 Journal Dinner Honoring

**Shirley & Avrom Vann**

Youth Award Honoring

**Kira & Andrew Wigod**

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**Sunday, May 19, 2024**

**11 Iyar 5784**

**Authorization**

I, the undersigned, fully empower and permit Rabbi Ely Shestack or his designee to act in my place and stead, and on my behalf to sell all chametz possessed by me knowingly or unknowingly, as defined by Torah and rabbinic law, except for chametz designated for burning after the sale, and except for chametz designated for consumption on the upcoming Sabbath meals, and to lease all places in which chametz owned by me may be found, especially at:

(Address) \_\_\_\_\_

(Auxiliary Address\*: work, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

The chametz I possess includes the following: (note chametz in aux. location with '\*'). If you will be away for **all** of Pesach, write "all of the above", "home", in the first line.

	Type of Chametz (groceries, liquor, medicine, toiletries, etc.)	Where Stored	Approximate Value
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

*If you or your Chametz will be in **Europe/Israel** for Pesach, please initial here \_\_\_\_\_ for an earlier sale time.*

*If you or your Chametz will be on the **west coast** for Pesach, please initial here \_\_\_\_\_ for a later buy-back time.*

*Also complete this part **only** if you will be away for all Pesach:*

I specifically authorize Rabbi Ely Shestack or person designated by him to sell all chametz located anywhere in my home at the above address, and to lease my entire home (except for \_\_\_\_\_). The keys to my home can be found with:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Residing at (address): \_\_\_\_\_

**Concise Document of Sale**

I, the undersigned hereby sell all my chametz via Rabbi Ely Shestack or his designee. I also lease the place where such chametz is found at the above address(es) for a period of 10 days. This sale and rental are to take effect on April, 2024 corresponding to     Nissan 5784, before       . Further details concerning all of the above are recorded in the above power of attorney form and lengthier document for authorization of sale.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_



# Covenant & Conversation

Jonathan Sacks  
THE RABBI SACKS LEGACY

METZORA • מצורע

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

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

This year's series of essays and videos were originally written and recorded by Rabbi Sacks ז"ל in 5771 (2010–2011). These timeless messages are accompanied by a new [Family Edition](#) (2023–2024), created to inspire intergenerational learning on the parsha.

## Is there such a thing as Lashon Tov?

The Sages understood *tsara'at*, the theme of this week's parsha, not as an illness but as a miraculous public exposure of the sin of *lashon hara*, speaking badly about people. Judaism is a sustained meditation on the power of words to heal or harm, mend or destroy. Just as God created the world with words, He empowered us to create, and destroy, relationships with words.

The rabbis said much about *lashon hara*, but virtually nothing about the corollary, *lashon tov*, "good speech". The phrase does not appear in either the Babylonian Talmud or the Talmud Yerushalmi. It figures only in two midrashic passages (where it refers to praising God). But *lashon hara* does not mean speaking badly about God. It means speaking badly about human beings. If it is a sin to speak badly about people, is it a mitzvah to speak well about them? My argument will be that it is, and to show this, let us take a journey through the sources.

In Mishnah Avot we read the following:

Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai had five (pre-eminent) disciples, namely Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, Rabbi Joshua ben Chananya,

Rabbi Yose the Priest, Rabbi Shimon ben Netanel, and Rabbi Elazar ben Arach.

He used to recount their praise: Eliezer ben Hyrcanus: a plastered well that never loses a drop. Joshua ben Chananya: happy the one who gave him birth. Yose the Priest: a pious man. Shimon ben Netanel: a man who fears sin. Elazar ben Arach: an ever-flowing spring.

Ethics of the Fathers 2:10-11

However, the practice of Rabban Yochanan in praising his disciples seems to stand in contradiction to a Talmudic principle:

Rav Dimi, brother of Rav Safra said: Let no one ever talk in praise of his neighbour, for praise will lead to criticism.

Arachin 16a

Rashi gives two explanations of this statement. Having delivered excessive praise [*yoter midai*], the speaker himself will come to qualify his remarks, admitting for the sake of balance that the person of whom he speaks also has faults. Alternatively, others will point out his faults in response to the praise. For Rashi, the crucial

consideration is, is the praise judicious, accurate, true, or it is overstated? If the former, it is permitted; if the latter, it is forbidden. Evidently Rabban Yochanan was careful not to exaggerate.

Rambam, however, sees matters differently. He writes: "Whoever speaks well about his neighbour in the presence of his enemies is guilty of a secondary form of evil speech [*avak lashon hara*], since he will provoke them to speak badly about him" (Hilchot Deot 7:4). According to the Rambam the issue is not whether the praise is moderate or excessive, but the context in which it is delivered. If it is done in the presence of friends of the person about whom you are speaking, it is permitted. It is forbidden only when you are among his enemies and detractors. Praise then becomes a provocation, with bad consequences.

Are these merely two opinions, or is there something deeper at stake? There is a famous passage in the Talmud which discusses how one should sing the praises of a bride at her wedding:

Our Rabbis taught: How should you dance before the bride [i.e. what should one sing]? The disciples of Hillel hold that at a wedding you should sing that the bride is beautiful, whether she is or not. Shammai's disciples disagree. Whatever the occasion, don't tell a lie. "Do you call that a lie?" the Hillel's disciples respond. "In the eyes of the groom at least, the bride is beautiful."

What's really at stake here is not just temperament – puritanical Shammaites versus good-natured Hillelites – but two views about the nature of language. The Shammaites think of language as a way of making statements, which are either true or false. The Hillelites understand that language is about more than making statements. We can use language to encourage,

empathise, motivate, and inspire. Or we can use it to discourage, disparage, criticise, and depress. Language does more than convey information. It conveys emotion. It creates or disrupts a mood. The sensitive use of speech involves social and emotional intelligence. Language, in J. L. Austin's famous account, can be performative as well as informative.<sup>1</sup>

The discourse between the disciples of Hillel and Shammai is similar to the argument between Rambam and Rashi. For Rashi, as for Shammai, the key question about praise is: is it true, or is it excessive? For Rambam as for Hillel, the question is: what is the context? Is it being said among enemies or friends? Will it create warmth and esteem or envy and resentment?

We can go one further, for the disagreement between Rashi and Rambam about praise may be related to a more fundamental disagreement about the nature of the command, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Lev. 19:18). Rashi interprets the command to mean: do not do to your neighbour what you would not wish him to do to you (Rashi to Sanhedrin 84b). Rambam, however, says that the command includes the duty "to speak in his praise" (Hilchot Deot 6:3). Rashi evidently sees praise of one's neighbour as optional, while Rambam sees it as falling within the command of love.

We can now answer a question we should have asked at the outset about the Mishnah in Avot that speaks of Yochanan ben Zakkai's disciples. Avot is about ethics, not about history or biography. Why then does it tell us that Rabban Yochanan had disciples? That, surely, is a fact not a value, a piece of information not a guide to how to live.

However, we can now see that the Mishnah is telling us something profound indeed. The very

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<sup>1</sup> See J. L. Austin's *How to Do Things with Words*, Harvard University Press, 1962.

first statement in Avot includes the principle: “Raise up many disciples.” But how do you create disciples? How do you inspire people to become what they could become, to reach the full measure of their potential? Answer: By acting as did Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai when he praised his students, showing them their specific strengths.

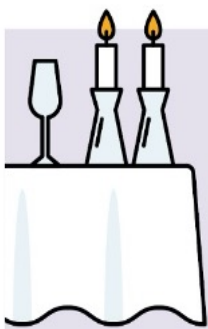
He did not flatter them. He guided them to see their distinctive talents. Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, the “well that never loses a drop”, was not creative but he had a remarkable memory – not unimportant in the days before the Oral Torah was written in books. Elazar ben Arach, the “ever-flowing spring,” was creative, but needed to be fed by mountain waters (years later he separated from his colleagues and it is said that he forgot all he had learned).

Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai took a Hillel-Rambam view of praise. He used it not so much to describe as to motivate. And that is *lashon tov*. Evil speech diminishes us, good speech helps us grow. Evil speech puts people down, good speech lifts

them up. Focused, targeted praise, informed by considered judgment of individual strengths, and sustained by faith in people and their potentiality, is what makes teachers great and their disciples greater than they would otherwise have been. That is what we learn from Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai.

So there is such a thing as *lashon tov*. According to Rambam it falls within the command of “Love your neighbour as yourself.” According to Avot it is one way of “raising up many disciples.” It is as creative as *lashon hara* is destructive.

Seeing the good in people and telling them so is a way of helping it become real, becoming a midwife to their personal growth. If so, then not only must we praise God. We must praise people too.



## Around the Shabbat Table

1. Where else in the Tanach do we see biblical figures using *lashon tov* to lift each other up?
2. How impactful are the words that people have said to you? Have they shaped your choices in a positive way?
3. What is something genuine you can say to someone close to you, to help lift them up?

● 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 [RabbiSacks.org/covenant-conversation-family-edition/metzora/metzora-is-there-such-a-thing-as-lashon-tov/](https://RabbiSacks.org/covenant-conversation-family-edition/metzora/metzora-is-there-such-a-thing-as-lashon-tov/)