



CANDLE LIGHTING 6:59 PM | 29 ADAR | MARCH 29, 2025 | HAVDALA 8:04 PM

שבת פרשת פקודי
פרשת החדש/ערב ראש חדש
SHABBAT PARSHAT PEKUDEI
PARSHAT HACHODESH
EREV ROSH CHODESH

Two Sifrei Torah. Maftir reads from Parshat Bo (Exodus 12:1-20). Haftorah is Ezekiel 45:16-46:18. We bless the month of Nissan. Don't say אב הרחמים or צדקתך צדק.

FRIDAY EVENING

MINCHA	7:05 PM
SHKIA	7:17 PM
TZAIT HAKOCHAVIM	7:57 PM

SHABBAT

HASHKAMA	7:45 AM
SHACHARIT - MAIN	9:00 AM
POST-HASHKAMA SHIUR	9:30 AM
LAST KRIAT SHEMA	9:53 AM
FUNDAMENTALS SHIUR	11:30 AM
PRE-MINCHA SHIUR	6:10 PM

MINCHA	6:50 PM
SHKIA	7:19 PM
MAARIV	8:04 PM

החדש הזה לכם

Molad for Nissan was this Shabbat, Mar. 29, 7:46 AM & 1 chelek.

ראש חדש ניסן יהיה ביום ראשון
הבא עלינו ועל כל ישראל לטובה

SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE



Please welcome our Scholar-In-Residence Rabbi Jesse Horn. His speaking schedule is as follows: (1) Following Mussaf: Drasha, (2) After Kiddush: "The Legacy of Jewish Slavery in Egypt: Understanding Why Hashem Chose Egypt and the Religious Value of the Knowing History", (3) Pre-Mincha Shiur: "A Minor Infraction - Theft of Less than a Penny, and (4) At Seudah Shlishit: "Why God Chose Moshe? - A Tale of Two Princes".

SEUDAH SHLISHIT

Seudah Shlishit is sponsored by the Garfunkel family to commemorate the Yahrzeit of David's mother, Edith Garfunkel ע"ה הלוי, פייגא רבקה בת ר' חיים הלוי.

MAOT CHITIM

Donate "wheat monies" for the poor before Pesach here: [Maot Chitmim](#).

SHIR HASHIRUM PEREK-BY-PERK ROUND-ROUND

Happening on Shabbat/7th day of Pesach. There are still chapters left to sign up for. Please sign up here: [Song of Songs](#).

MAZEL TOV!

Mazel Tov to Ilana & Nathen Schwitzer on the birth of a grandson to Debra and Harell Dhari.

גדלוהו לתורה ולחופה ולמעשים טובים ויכניסוהו לבריתו בזמנו ובעתו

May they raise him to Torah, chuppah and good deeds, and may he be entered into the covenant of Abraham.



SUNDAY
3/30

MONDAY
3/31

TUESDAY
4/1

WEDNESDAY
4/2

THURSDAY
4/3

FRIDAY
4/4

WEEKDAY MINYANIM AT AHAVAT ACHIM

SHACHARIT	8:00 AM	6:15 AM	6:25 AM	6:25 AM	6:15 AM	6:25 AM
2ND SHACHARIT MINYON - YISHTABACH AT 7:40 AM		7:25 AM	7:25 AM	7:25 AM	7:25 AM	7:25 AM
MINCHA/MAARIV	7:08 PM	7:09 PM	7:10 PM	7:11 PM	7:12 PM	7:10 PM

ZMANIM

Earliest Talit	5:48 AM	5:46 AM	5:44 AM	5:42 AM	5:41 AM	5:39 AM
Gedolah	1:33 PM	1:33 PM	1:32 PM	1:32 PM	1:32 PM	1:32 PM
Shkia	7:20 PM	7:21 PM	7:22 PM	7:23 PM	7:24 PM	
Tzait	8:00 PM	8:01 PM	8:02 PM	8:03 PM	8:04 PM	

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 6 - Hagolas Kelim/Pesach Kashering, 9:00 - 11:00 AM, at the shul.

April 11 - Seraifat (Burning) Chometz, 8:00 AM to noon, at the Norton residence, 20-11 Hunter Pl. No foil, plastic, paper, cardboard, pasta, sauces or liquids. Bread, cereal, crackers and dry items only.

Apr. 12 - Latest to eat Chometz: 10:45 AM

Apr. 12 - Latest to own Chometz: 11:51 AM

April 19 - Shir HaShirim Perek-By-Perek shiur at Seudah Shlishit. Please sign up to give a shiur here: [Song of Songs](#).

May 3 - Mizrahi Israel 360 Scholar-In-Residence Rabbani Surale Rosen.

IN OUR FUTURE

April 19 - Seudah Shlishit is sponsored by the Sonnenblicks to commemorate the yearzeit of Marty's father, Moshe Yehuda ben Yosef Dov Halevi נ"ע.

May 31 - Seudah Shlishit sponsored by Eli Zefon in memory of בין אליהו ושלמה.

June 14 - Seudah Shlishit sponsored by Eli Zefon in memory of ברוך מפציר בן שמואל.

BOARD MEETINGS

April 29 - 9:00 PM via Zoom.

May 27 - 9:00 PM via Zoom.

June 24 - 9:00 PM via Zoom.

ISRAEL ACTION INITIATIVE

Tzedakah Fund of the Month- Leket Israel, Israel's national food bank. Give now by clicking here: [Leket Israel](#).



MAOT CHITIM

Donate "wheat monies" for the poor before Pesach here: [Maot Chitmim](#).



SHIURIM



- RAV SOLOVEITCHIK ON THE PARSHA, Tuesdays at 1:00 PM (<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.



- SHABBAT SHIUR, 40 minutes pre-mincha.
- FUNDAMENTALS OF JEWISH THOUGHT, after Kiddush, discussing our community's kashrut standards.

- MESORAH-IN-REVERSE lecture series at Seudah Shlishit.



- Tzurba M'Rabanan with Zack Doberman, Wednesdays at 8:30 PM. In-person at the shul and via Zoom.

- Mishna Chaburah, led by Jeff Safier, after 7:25 AM Shacharit minyon (≈10 minutes).

KIDDUSH & SEUDAH SHLISHIT



- Enjoy Scotch at Kiddush, please donate a bottle to the shul from time to time.
- To sponsor a Kiddush (prices start at \$318, plus a bottle of scotch) email dmgarfunkel@gmail.com.
- Want to know the menu for Kiddush? If so, please email dmgarfunkel@gmail.com so he can put you in the WhatsApp group.
- To sponsor Seudah Shlishit for \$136 (or in the case of multiple sponsors, \$100 per sponsor), email dmgarfunkel@gmail.com.

GITA COOPERWASSER נ"ע YOUTH EVENTS

April 19 - Shul Playground and Snacks

April 20 - Edison Playground and Snacks

GITA COOPERWASSER נ"ע SHABBAT YOUTH INFO



- SHABBAT YOUTH LEADERS, 2ND - 5TH GRADE: NICOLE & SEBASTIAN; 4 YRS - 1ST GR.: ARNELLA, PERRI, & ARIELLA

- Youth group for in 2nd - 5th Graders starts at 9:00 AM (Drop Off) in the Youth Room on left on entering the social hall.

- Youth group for children 4 years old through 1st Grade starts at 9:15 AM (Drop Off) in the Youth Room on the right upon entering the social hall.

- Parent & Me, 9:00 AM in the Beit Midrash.

- Rabbi Meet & Greet, Friday night, kids can come over to the Rabbi after davening to receive a cup of grape juice and a ticket!

- 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.

- Children's corner at Seudah Shlishit, 1st to 5th graders will get 10 Torah questions in 10 minutes from Rabbi Shestack, with special snacks, tickets and more.

SHALOM BRAUSER, ADULT EDUCATOR/TEEN MENTOR

April 5 - Teen Mentor

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

<http://www.ahavatachim.org>



NAME	HEBREW DATE	CANDLE EVENING OF	DEDICATOR	RELATIONSHIP
Ruth Lerner	1	March 29	Laurie Phipps	Mother
Joseph Bickel	2	March 30	Jack Bickel	Father
Herbert Sturm	2	March 30	Robyn Safier	Father
Ben Chass	3	March 31	Murray Chass	Father
Aaron Goldstein	3	March 31	Mitchell Goldstein	Father
Limor Adler	4	April 1	Oren Adler	Sister
Edith Garfunkel	4	April 1	David Garfunkel	Mother
Margot Flora Rothschild	5	April 2	Audrey Bickel	Mother
Rachel (Risha) Adler	6	April 3	Oren Adler	Grandmother
Phyllis Chuback Weiner	7	April 4	Randi Spier	Mother
Hania Kirschenbaum	8	April 5	Hyman Kirschenbaum	Mother
Estelle Smedresman	9	April 6	Steve Smedresman	Mother
Daniel Mittelpunkt	13	April 10	Eita Latkin	Cousin
Yetta Mittelpunkt	14	April 11	Eita Latkin	Grandmother
Edith Lazarovici Fontaine	17	April 14	Fred Fontaine	Mother
Bernard Greenbaum	21	April 18	Eli Greenbaum	Father
Leah Schwartz	29	April 26	Kenny Levine	Grandmother

DAVID SCHWITZERד"ר SOCIAL HALL

Contact Lori at garfmom@gmail.com to book the David Schwitzerד"ר Social Hall for an event or occasion. \$250 (members), \$325 (Associates), or \$400 paid in advance for non-members, plus the cost of clean up (and a \$150 refundable security/cleaning deposit). Private caterers must be approved by the Rabbi.

CHESED TEAM

If you or someone you know needs assistance, email us at chesed@ahavatachim.org.

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 to arrange.

DONATE A SEFER, ETC.

Donate Siddurim & Machzorim (\$40), and Chumashim (\$60). Contact Jeff Safier at jeff.Safier@gmail.com for details.

MISHEBAYRACH

For a Mishebayrach pledge 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."

HONORARIA

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

SINGLES SHIDDUCH GROUP

Reach out to Rabbi Shestack or Sara Levine (saralevine06@gmail.com if interested).

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 Steve Plotnick for questions or clarifications.

MEN'S CLUB

Email MensClub@AhavatAchim.Org to join the Men's Club.

PARSHAT HACHODESH

"This month shall be for you the beginning of the months, it shall be for you the first of the months of the year." (Shemot 12:2)

On the Shabbat before Rosh Chodesh Nissan, or on Rosh Chodesh if it falls on the Shabbat, two Torah Scrolls are removed from the Ark (three if on Rosh Chodesh). From the first, the Sidrah of the week is read, and from the second (or third on Rosh Chodesh), the Maftir reads the passage giving the commandments associated with the very first Rosh Chodesh Nissan in Egypt.

The first day of Nissan was and always remains a historic day for the Jewish nation. It was the day when the people received their first commandment as a nation: Sanctify the New Moon.

This ritual has a profound spiritual and historic significance. It is noteworthy that it was one of three commandments that the Syrian Greeks, in the time before the Chanukah miracle, attempted to nullify by force. The other two were the Observance of Shabbat and Circumcision. Clearly, therefore, Israel's enemies understood that the sanctification of the New Moon was basic to the existence of Israel as a nation of Torah.

Commentators explain that, by virtue of this Commandment, G-d gave the Jewish people mastery over time. From that moment onward, the calendar with its cycle of festivals could exist only when the Sages of Israel declared the New Month. This signifies more than control over the reckoning of time, the dating of legal documents, and all the banalities to which man is subject in his everyday life. It represents the potential for renewal.

The Jewish people is symbolized by the moon because, although the moon wanes, it waxes as well. It stands for hope, for the confidence that there is a future as well as a past. This vibrancy assures that any conquest of the Jewish people can never be more than temporary. Israel may seem to disappear from the panorama of history - but so does the moon.

The moon returns - and Israel, by means of the power vested in it by the Torah, sanctifies the New Month. So, too, the nation constantly renews its vigor, constantly defies the laws of history that insist it should have long since become extinct, constantly demonstrates its ability to make itself the vehicle for the prophecies of redemption and a greater spiritual world.

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

BULLETIN DEDICATIONS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND SHUL CALENDAR

Email seplotnick@gmail.com for 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.

HOW TO DONATE TO THE SHUL USING PAYPAL

Please do not simply pay the shul using PayPal, as that incurs a 3% service charge that will get charged to the shul. Instead, please use our fee-free dedicated PayPal link <http://paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/1444321>. PayPal will email you a receipt for your charitable donation and the shul will receive 100% of your donation. [Make sure you click the "SHARE MY NAME" box so the shul will know who paid so that we can credit your account.]





AHAVAT ACHIM
קהלת אהבת אחים
THE FAMILY SHUL

Congregation Ahavat
Achim presents

SCHOLAR IN RESIDENCE

RABBI JESSE HORN

SHABBAT, MARCH 29

Rabbi Jesse Horn is a Senior Ram (Rosh Metivta) at Yeshivat Hakotel and teaches at MMY. He regularly lectures as a scholar-in-residence in communities all over the world. Rabbi Horn is the author of Double Take, a book about Biblical personalities, and numerous other articles for Beis Yitzhak, Arutz Sheva, World Mizrachi, and other scholarly publications. Rabbi Horn resides in Neve Daniel along with his wife and six children.



Join us to hear Rabbi Horn speak:

- Following Musaf: Drasha
- Following Kiddush: "The Legacy of Jewish Slavery in Egypt: Understanding Why Hashem Chose Egypt and the Religious Value of the Knowing History"
- Pre-Mincha Shiur: "A Minor Infraction: Theft of Less than a Penny"
- During Seudah Shlishit: "Why God Chose Moshe?: A Tale of Two Princes"

EVENTS@AHAVATACHIM.ORG

INSPIRATION FROM ISRAEL'S FRONT LINES



AHAVAT ACHIM

PRESENTS A SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE SHABBAT WITH
RABBANIT SURALE ROSEN

SAVE THE DATE
SHABBAT PARASHAT TAZRIA-METZORAH
MAY 2-3, 2025



Rabbanit Surale Rosen heads London School of Jewish Studies' Iyun Halakha programme. She headed Metivta – Matan Jlm Advanced Talmud Programme and founded Shayla – Matan's Halachic Online Responsa where she wrote and edited *Shutim*. Rabbanit Surale is also a certified Rabbinic Arbitrator and has a certificate in mediation for family conflict resolution from The Israeli Centre for Negotiation and Mediation. She holds degrees in Talmud and English Lit, teaches Gemarah in Migdal Oz and Halakha as well as Midrash in various communities and shuls. Rabbanit Surale is on the board of the Rabbinic organization "Beit Hillel" and is actively involved in various programmes for female Orthodox religious leadership, including one with the Ministry of Religious Affairs on creating female Rabbinic examinations authorized by the government. She lives in Jerusalem, Married to Rabbi Dr. Shlomo Dov Rosen, Rabbi of the Yakar community and is a grateful mother of girls and boys.

Mizrachi360 reflects Israel's international reach and Mizrachi's mission of spreading Torat Eretz Yisrael across the world. To celebrate Israel during the month of Iyar, Mizrachi brings inspiring Israeli speakers and thinkers to 360 communities all around the globe. www.mizrachi.org/mizrachi360



Covenant & Conversation

Jonathan Sacks
THE RABBI SACKS LEGACY

PEKUDEI • פקודי

FROM THE TEACHINGS AND WRITINGS OF RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS 7"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 were originally written and recorded by Rabbi Sacks zt"l in 5772 (2011–2012). These timeless messages are accompanied by a new [Family Edition](#) created to inspire intergenerational learning on the Parsha and Haftara.

Encampments & Journeys

Right at the end of the book of Shemot, there is a textual difficulty so slight that it is easy to miss, yet – as interpreted by Rashi – it contains one of the great clues as to the nature of Jewish identity: it is a moving testimony to the unique challenge of being a Jew.

First, the background. The Tabernacle is finally complete. Its construction has taken many chapters to relate. No other event in the wilderness years is portrayed in such detail. Now, on the first of Nissan, exactly a year after Moses told the people to begin their preparations for the Exodus, he assembles the beams and hangings, and puts the furniture and vessels in place. There is an unmistakable parallelism between the words the Torah uses to describe Moses' completion of the work and those it uses of God on the seventh day of Creation:

And God finished [*vayechal*] on the seventh day, the work [*melachto*] which He had done.

Genesis 2:2-3

And Moses finished [*vayechal*] the work [*hamelachah*].

Exodus 40:34

The next verse in Pekudei states the result:

Then the Cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle.

The meaning is both clear and revolutionary. The creation of the Sanctuary by the Israelites is intended to represent a human parallel to the Divine creation of the universe. In making the world, God created a home for humankind. In making the Tabernacle, humankind created a home for God.

From a human perspective, God fills the space we make for His presence. His glory exists where we renounce ours. The immense detail of the construction is there to tell us that throughout, the Israelites were obeying God's instructions rather than improvising their own. The specific domain called "the holy" is where we meet God on His terms, not ours. Yet this too is God's way of conferring dignity on humankind. It is we who build His home so that He may fill what we have made. In the words of a famous film: "If you build it, he will come."

Bereishit begins with God making the cosmos. Shemot ends with human beings making a micro-cosmos, a miniature and symbolic universe. Thus the entire narrative of Genesis-Exodus is a single vast span that begins and ends with the concept of

God-filled space, with this difference: that in the beginning the work is done by God-the-Creator. By the end it is done by man-and-woman-the-creators. The whole intricate history has been a story with one overarching theme: the transfer of the power and responsibility of creation from heaven to earth, from God to the image-of-God called humankind.

That is the background. However, the final verses of the book go on to tell us about the relationship between the “Cloud of Glory” and the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle, we recall, was not a fixed structure. It was made in such a way as to be portable. It could quickly be dismantled and its parts carried, as the Israelites made their way to the next stage of their journey. When the time came for the Israelites to move on, the Cloud moved from its resting place in the Tent of Meeting to a position outside the camp, signalling the direction they must now take. This is how the Torah describes it:

When the Cloud lifted from above the Tabernacle, the Israelites went onward in all their journeys, but if the Cloud did not lift, they did not set out until the day it lifted. So the Cloud of the Lord was over the Tabernacle by day, and fire was in the Cloud by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel in all their journeys.

Ex. 40:36-38

There is a small but significant difference between the two instances of the phrase *bechol mas'ehem*, “in all their journeys”. In the first instance the words are to be taken literally. When the Cloud lifted and moved on ahead, the Israelites knew they were about to travel.

However, in the second instance they cannot be taken literally. The Cloud was not over the Tabernacle in all their journeys. On the contrary: it was there only when they stopped travelling and instead pitched camp. During the journeys, the Cloud went on ahead.

Noting this, Rashi makes the following comment:

A place where they encamped is also called *massa*, “a journey” . . . Because from the place of encampment they always set out again on a new journey, therefore they are all called “journeys”.

Rashi's commentary to Exodus 40:38.

The point is linguistic, but the message is anything but. Rashi has encapsulated in a few brief words – “a place where they encamped is also called a journey” — the existential truth at the heart of Jewish identity. So long as we have not yet reached our destination, even a place of rest is still called a journey – because we know we are not here forever. There is a way still to go. In the words of the poet Robert Frost:

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep.¹

To be a Jew is to travel, and to know that here where we are is a mere resting place, not yet a home. It is defined not by the fact that we are here, but by the knowledge that eventually – after a day, a week, a year, a century, sometimes even a millennium – we will have to move on. Thus, the portable Tabernacle, even more than the Temple in Jerusalem, became the symbol of Jewish life.

Why so? Because the gods of the ancient world were gods of a place: Sumeria, Memphis, Moab, Edom. They had a specific domain. Theology was linked to geography. Here, in this holy place, made magnificent by ziggurat or temple, the gods of the tribe or the state ruled and exercised power over the city or the empire. When Pharaoh says to Moses: “Who is the Lord that I should obey Him and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord and I will not let Israel go” (Exodus 5:2), he means, ‘here, I am the sovereign power. Egypt has its own gods. Within its boundaries, they alone rule, and they have delegated that power to me, their earthly representative. There may indeed be a God of Israel, but His power and authority do not extend to Egypt.’ Divine sovereignty is like political sovereignty. It has

¹ “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening,” in *The Poetry of Robert Frost* (London: Vintage, 2001), p. 224-225.

borders. It has spatial location. It is bounded by a place on the map.

With Israel, an old-new idea (it goes back, according to the Torah, to Adam, Cain, Abraham and Jacob, all of whom suffered exile) is reborn: that God, being everywhere, can be found anywhere. He is what Morris Berman calls the “wandering God.”² Just as in the desert His Cloud of Glory accompanied the Israelites on their long and meandering journey, so, said the rabbis, “when Israel went into exile, the Divine Presence went with them.”³ God cannot be confined to a specific place. Even in Israel, His presence among the people depended on their obedience to His word. Hence there is no such thing as physical security, the certain knowledge that here-I-am-and-here-I-stay. As David said:

When I felt secure, I said,

“I will never be shaken.”

...but when You hid Your face,

I was dismayed.

Psalm 30

Security belongs not to place but to person, not to a physical space on the surface of the earth but to a spiritual space in the human heart.

If anything is responsible for the unparalleled strength of Jewish identity during the long centuries in which Jews were scattered throughout the world, a minority, it is the concept to which Jews and Judaism gave the name *galut*, exile. Unique among nations in the ancient or modern world, with few exceptions they neither converted to the dominant faith nor assimilated to the prevailing culture. The sole reason was that they never mistook a particular place for home, a temporary location for ultimate destination. “Now we are here,” they said at the beginning of the Seder service, “but next year, in the land of Israel.”

In Jewish law, one who rents a house outside Israel is obliged to affix a mezuzah only after thirty days.⁴ Until then it is not yet regarded as a dwelling place. Only after thirty days does it become, de facto, home. In Israel, however, one who rents a house is immediately obligated, *mishum yishuv Eretz Yisrael*, “because of the command to settle Israel.” Outside Israel, Jewish life is a way, a path, a route. Even an encampment, a place of rest, is still called a journey.

In this context, one detail stands out in the long list of instructions about the Tabernacle. It concerns the Ark, in which were kept the Tablets of stone that Moses brought down the mountain, permanent reminders of God’s covenant with Israel. On the side of the Ark were gold rings, two on each side, within which poles or staves were fitted so that the Ark could be carried when the time came for the Israelites to move on (Exodus 25:12-14). The Torah adds the following stipulation:

The poles are to remain in the rings of this Ark; they are not to be removed.

Exodus 25:15

Why so? Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch explained that the Ark was to be permanently ready when the need arose for the Israelites to travel. Why was the same not true about the other objects in the Tabernacle, such as the altar and the menorah? To show supremely, said Hirsch, that the Torah was not limited to any one place.⁵ And so it was. The Torah became, in the famous phrase of Heinrich Heine, “the portable homeland of the Jew.” Throughout history Jews found themselves scattered and dispersed among the nations, never knowing when they would be forced to leave and find a new home. In the fifteenth century alone, Jews were expelled from Vienna and Linz in 1421, from Cologne in 1424, Augsburg in 1439, Bavaria in 1442, Moravia in 1454, Perugia in 1485, Vicenza in 1486, Parma in

² Morris Berman, *Wandering God: A Study in Nomadic Spirituality* (State University of New York Press, 2000).

³ Megilla 29a; Sifrei, Numbers, p. 161.

⁴ Yoreh De'ah 286:22.

⁵ The Pentateuch, translated with commentary by Samson Raphael Hirsch (Gateshead: Judaica Press, 1982), 2:43-35.

1488, Milan and Lucca in 1489, Spain in 1492 and Portugal 1497.⁶

How did they survive, their identity intact, their faith, though sorely challenged, still strong? Because they believed that God was with them, even in exile. Because they were sustained by the line from Psalms (23:4), “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me.” Because they still had the Torah, God’s unbreakable covenant, with its promise that “In spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them or abhor them so as to destroy them completely, breaking my covenant with them. I am the Lord their God” (Leviticus 26:44). Because they were a people used to travelling, knowing that even an encampment is only a temporary dwelling.

Emil Fackenheim, the distinguished theologian, was a Holocaust survivor. Born in Halle, Germany, in 1916, he was arrested on Kristallnacht and interned at the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, from which he eventually escaped. He recalled a picture hanging in his parents’ house when he was a child:

It was not our kind of picture...because what it portrayed was not a German-Jewish experience: Jews fleeing from a pogrom. Even so it moved me deeply, and I remember it well. The fleeing Jews in the picture are bearded old men, terrified, but not so much as to leave behind what is most precious to them. In the view of antisemites these Jews would doubtless be clutching bags of gold. In fact, each of them carries a Torah scroll.

Emil Fackenheim, *What Is Judaism?* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), p. 60.

There is nothing in history quite like this Jewish ability to travel, to move on, accompanied by no more than the Divine word, the promise, the call, the faith in an ultimate destination. That is how Jewish history began, with God’s call to Abraham to

leave his land, his birthplace and his father’s house (Genesis 12:1). That is how Jewish history has continued for most of four thousand years. Outside Israel, Jews’ only security was faith itself and its eternal record in the Torah, God’s love letter to the Jewish people, His unbreakable bond. And during all those centuries, though they were derided as “the wandering Jew,”⁷ they became living testimony to the possibility of faith in the midst of uncertainty, and to the God who made this faith possible, the God of everywhere, symbolised by the Tabernacle, His portable home.

And when the time came for Jews to make one more journey, to the land first promised to Abraham and that Moses spent his life as a leader travelling towards, they did so without hesitation or demur. Scenes of leave-taking were repeated time and again during the years 1948-51, when one after another, the Jewish communities in Arab lands – the Maghreb, Iraq, Yemen – said goodbye to homes they had lived in for centuries and left for Israel. They too knew that those homes were mere encampments, stages on a journey whose ultimate destination lay elsewhere.

In 1990, Dalai Lama, who had lived in exile from Tibet since 1951, invited a group of Jewish scholars to visit him in North India. Realising that he and his followers might have to spend many years in exile before they were allowed back, he had pondered the question, how does a way of life sustain itself far from home? He realised that one group above all others had faced and solved that problem: the Jews. So he turned to them for advice.⁸

Whether the Jewish answer – which has to do with faith in the God of history – is applicable to Buddhism is a moot point, but the encounter was fascinating nonetheless, because it showed that even the Dalai Lama, leader of a group far removed from Judaism, recognised that there is something unparalleled in the Jewish capacity to stay faithful to the terms of its existence despite dispersion, never

⁶ Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982), 2:434-435.

⁷ See Galit Hasan-Rokem and Alan Dundes, *The Wandering Jew: Essays in the Interpretation of a Christian Legend* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

⁸ The full story of the encounter is told in Roger Kamenetz’s book, *The Jew in the Lotus* (HarperOne, 2007).

losing faith that one day the exiles would return to their land.

How and why it happened is contained in those simple words of Rashi at the end of Exodus. Even when at rest, Jews knew that they would one day have to uproot their tents, dismantle the Tabernacle, and move on. “Even an encampment is called a journey.” A people that never stops travelling is one that never grows old or stale or complacent. It may live in the here-and-now, but it is always conscious of the distant past and the still-beckoning future.

But I have promises to keep
and miles to go before I sleep.



Around the Shabbat Table

1. What portable traditions does your family carry with you regardless of where you live?
2. Why do you think being “on the move” inspires resilience?
3. How do you make your temporary space feel sacred and special?

● 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 <https://rabbisacks.org/covenant-conversation-family-edition/pekudei/encampments-journeys/>