

Starting this Shabbat, Zach Doberman will be taking over the pre-Mincha shiur and will start a fascinating topic in Sanhedrin Ch. 8: "Haba Bamachteret: The Jewish Version of "Stand Your Ground".



SHABBAT CANDLE LIGHTING 6:40 PM | 27 ELUL | SEPTEMBER 20, 2025

### שבת פרשת נצבים

#### SHABBAT PARSHAT NITZAVIM

Haftorah is Isaiah 61:10-63:9 (שוש אשיר). Pirkei Avot Ch. 5/6 Don't bless month of Tishrei. No after Shabbat.

#### FRIDAY EVENING

**MINCHA 6:45 PM**

TZAIT HAKOCHAVIM 7:38 PM

#### SHABBAT

**HASHKAMA 7:45 AM**

**MAIN 9:00 AM**

LAST KRIAT SHEMA 9:46 AM

PRE-MINCHA SHIUR 5:50 PM

**MINCHA 6:30 PM**

MAARIV/HAVDALAH 7:42 PM

### ראש השנה

#### ROSH HASHANAH

1 & 2 TISHREI/SEPT. 22 - 24

#### MONDAY EVENING

CANDLE LIGHTING 6:35 PM

**MINCHA 6:40 PM**

TZAIT HAKOCHAVIM 7:33 PM

#### TUESDAY

**SHACHARIT 7:45 AM**

LAST KRIAT SHEMA 9:47 AM

**MINCHA/TASHLICH 6:15 PM**

SHKIA 6:51 PM

**MAARIV 7:20 PM**

CANDLE LIGHTING > 7:36 PM

#### WEDNESDAY

**SHACHARIT 7:45 AM**

LAST KRIAT SHEMA 9:47 AM

**MINCHA 6:35 PM**

SHKIA 6:50 PM

**MAARIV/HAVDALAH 7:35 PM**

### SEUDAH SHLISHIT

Seudah Shlishit is sponsored to commemorate Yahrzeits by the Agress family for Amy's father, הרב ישראל יהודה בן אפרים מיכל הלוי ז"ל, and the Greene family for Elliot's father, Harold Greene ז"ל (Tzvi Hersch ben Shimon).

### FROM THE RABBI

- Rosh Hashana Drasha #1: "Come As You Are" and/or "Guilty By Association": Yishmael vs. the Ben Sorer U'moreh".
- Shiur After Tashlich: By Rabbi Rafi Mandelstam.
- Rosh Hashana Drasha #2: "Does our Hope Come from the Minority Report or the Majority Report?"
- Shiur after 2nd day Mincha: by Chayim Goldberg.
- Cannot come to shul to hear the shofar? Contact Marty Sonnenblick at thegabbai@aol.com.

### SIMCHAT TORAH KIDDUSH

To become a Platinum sponsor (\$180), Gold Sponsor (\$118) or a general sponsor (\$54), please email Steve at seplotnick@gmail.com. We also need donations of single malt Scotch.

### התרת נדרים - HATARAT NEDARIM

After Shacharit on Monday. For halachic commentary, see page 4.

### TODAH RABBAH

Thank you to Aaron Czin, Sharon Brooks, Natan Santacruz, Eitan Sufian, and all others that helped make Sunday's Backyard BBQ a success!

### WELCOME!



Welcome our newest members Anna & Yoni Hochbaum (and sons Adin (4) and Matan (2)).

### MIKVAH CHAVA FAIGA OF FAIR LAWN/MEN'S HOURS

- Erev Rosh Hashanah, Mon., Sept. 22, 5:00 - 1:30 PM (communal 1:30 - 2:30 PM).
- Erev Yom Kippur, Wednesday, October 1, 4:30 AM - 3:00 PM.
- All men must shower at home and bring their own towel.
- Book a time slot: Mens Mikvah. \$30/ Fair Lawn resident (family discounts).
- Walk-ins will be accommodated when possible. Cost will be \$40/per person.



	SUNDAY 9/21	MONDAY 9/22	TUESDAY 9/23	WEDNESDAY 9/24	THURSDAY 9/25	FRIDAY 9/26
<b>WEEKDAY MINYONIM AT AHAVAT ACHIM</b>						
SHACHARIT	6:20 AM	5:30 AM			5:45 AM	5:55 AM
2nd SHACHARIT	8:00 AM	7:00 AM*			7:00 AM*	7:00 AM*
MINCHA/MAARIV	6:43 PM				6:36 PM	6:30 PM
<b>ZMANIM</b> *NOTE THAT YISHTABACH IS EXPECTED TO BE AT 7:40 AM FOR THESE INDICATED SHACHARIT MINYONIM						
Fast Begins					5:32 AM	
Earliest Talit	5:49 AM	5:50 AM			5:53 AM	5:54 AM
Gedolah	1:20 PM	1:19 PM			1:18 PM	1:17 PM
Shkia	6:55 PM				6:48 PM	
Tzait/Fast Ends	7:35 PM				7:28 PM	



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Sept. 27** - Scholar-In-Residence R. Josh Blass, who will be giving the Shabbat Shuva Drasha, a Women's shiur, and be part of a special Seudah Shlishit Panel.

**Sept. 28** - Sukkah assembly after Shacharit.

**Oct. 4** - Birthday/Anniversary Kiddush.

**Oct. 11** - Kohelet Round Robin. Click here to sign up to discuss a chapter: [KOHELET](#).

**Oct 19** - Sukkah dismantling after Shacharit.

**Nov. 1** - Birthday/Anniversary Kiddush.

**Nov. 12** - Israeli Bond Event - Save the Date. Details to come.

**Dec. 6** - Birthday/Anniversary Kiddush.

## IN OUR FUTURE

**Oct. 8** - Kiddush is sponsored on the second day of Sukkot by the Winchester family on the Yahrzeit of Steve's mother Helen Winchester<sup>נ"י</sup>, Miriam Hendl bas Shimon.

## BOARD MEETINGS 8:15 PM

**Oct. 28** - At shul w/Zoom option.

**Nov. 18, Dec. 29 (Monday), Jan. 27,**

**Feb. 24, Mar. 24, Apr. 28, May 26, & June 30**

## 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](mailto:rabbishestack@gmail.com).

- POST-HASHKAMA SHIUR, alternates between examining the development of Halachot and analyzing Mishlei (Proverbs)
- FUNDAMENTALS OF JEWISH THOUGHT, after Kiddush, discussing Majesty and Humility by Rav Soloveitchik.

- SHABBAT SHIUR, 40 minutes pre-mincha.
- SEDER ON THE SIDDUR, at Seudah Shlishit.
- TZURBA M'RABANAN w/ Zack Doberman, Wednesdays at 8:30 PM. In-person at the shul and via Zoom.
- MISHNA CHABURAH, w/Jeff Safier, after 7:25 AM Shacharit minyan (≈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](mailto:dmgarfunkel@gmail.com).
- Want to know the menu for Kiddush? Email [dmgarfunkel@gmail.com](mailto:dmgarfunkel@gmail.com) to be put on the WhatsApp group. To sponsor Seudah Shlishit for \$136 (or in the case of multiple sponsors, \$100 per sponsor), email [dmgarfunkel@gmail.com](mailto:dmgarfunkel@gmail.com).

## BIRTHDAY & ANNIVERSARY KIDDUSH

- To add a birthday or anniversary to our September list (next Kiddush on Shabbat, Oct. 4), click here: [SIMCHA](#). Listings/ sponsorships are \$36 per family per month. RSVP for the October birthday by Saturday night, September 27.

## GITA COOPERWASSER<sup>נ"ע</sup> YOUTH EVENTS

**Sept. 20** - High Holiday Youth Program.

**Sept. 24** - 2nd Day of Rosh Hashanah, Shul Playground and Snacks, 4:00 PM.

**Sept. 28** - Sukkot Decoration & Donuts, 10:00 AM.

**Oct. 12** - Kids Sukkah Hop, 3:00 PM.

## GITA COOPERWASSER<sup>נ"ע</sup> SHABBAT YOUTH INFO



- **SHABBAT YOUTH LEADERS: 3<sup>RD</sup> - 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE: ZOE & SEBASTIAN; K - 2<sup>ND</sup> GR.: PERRI & ARNELLA; AND 3 YRS OLD - PRE K: ABBY & MAYA**
- 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 9:00 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.

### TORAT ACHIM

- Halacha: Tzurba M'rabanen, Wed. evenings with Zack Doberman.
- Summer Book Club: Majesty and Humility by Rav Soloveitchik, Ch. 14, at Fundamentals Shiur.
- Women's Chabura, Shabbat at 6 PM, studying Yehoshua.
- Gemara: Sanhedrin Ch. 8 - Pre-Mincha Shiur.
- "Seder on the Siddur" at Seudah Shlishit - Berachot Part I: R. Donin pp. 191-197, R. Monk pp. 23-37.

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

<http://www.ahavatachim.org>



NAME	HEBREW DATE	CANDLE EVENING OF	DEDICATOR	RELATIONSHIP
Starinsky-Kutovsky Family	1	September 22	Seymour Wigod	Family
Jerry Pruzansky	2	September 23	Amy Agress	Father
Andzia Zuckerberg	6	September 27	Sophie Infield	Mother
Lenore Bickel	9	September 30	Jack Bickel	Mother
David & Augusta Cahn Maier	10	October 1	Audrey Bickel	Grandparents
Sofie Maier & Children	10	October 1	Audrey Bickel	Great-Grandmother & Family
Blanche Mueller	11	October 2	Joyce Heller	Mother
Nathan Arthur Weinflash	11	October 2	Joan Goldberg	Father
Herschel Israel Frankel	13	October 4	Elyce Smedresman	Uncle
Ronald Heller	13	October 4	Joyce Heller	Husband
Helen Wincheshter	16	October 7	Steve Winchester	Mother
Walter A. Rothschild	19	October 10	Audrey Bickel	Father
Philip Goldberg	20	October 11	Barry Goldberg	Father
Ellen Hope Rosenberg	21	October 12	Joyce Heller	Sister
Max Smedresman	22	October 13	Steve Smedresman	Father
Max Heller	26	October 17	Joyce Heller	Father-In-Law
Musia Krakow	26	October 17	Seymour Wigod	Aunt

## DAVID SCHWITZERד"ר SOCIAL HALL

Contact Lori at [garfmom@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:chesed@ahavatachim.org).

## 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 [yahrzeit@ahavatachim.org](mailto:yahrzeit@ahavatachim.org) to arrange.

## DONATE A SEFER, ETC.

Donate Siddurim & Machzorim (\$40), and Chumashim (\$60). Contact Jeff Safier at [jeff.Safier@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:seplotnick@gmail.com).

## SINGLES SHIDDUCH GROUP

Reach out to Rabbi Shestack or Sara Levine ([saralevine06@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:MensClub@AhavatAchim.Org) to join the Men's Club.

## EREV ROSH HASHANAH

The Shofar is not blown on Erev Rosh Hashanah to distinguish between the voluntary shofar blowing of Elul and the obligatory shofar blowing of Rosh HaShana. One should take a haircut and bathe. Men immerse in a Mikvah. Candle-lighting Brachot are "להדליק נר של יום טוב" and "שהחיינו".

## HATARAT NEDARIM - התרת נדרים

After Shacharit on Monday we separate into two groups, one for English speakers and for those fluent in Hebrew, to effectuate hatarat nedarim, the annulment of vows. To be valid, hatarat nedarim must be said in a language one understands.

## א' דראש השנה - FIRST NIGHT ROSH HASHANAH

First night, after services we bless each other with: "לשנה טובה תכתב ותחתם", "May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year". According to the Vilna Gaon we do not say "ותחתם" ('and sealed') on Rosh HaShanah. At home to symbolize a sweet year we dip challah in honey. We also dip a piece of apple in honey and eat it after making the Bracha פרי העץ הבורא. We then say, "May it be Your will our G-D and G-D of our fathers that You renew for us a good, sweet year." Other symbolic foods are eaten such as meat of a ram's head, or the head of a fish or fowl, followed by statements like, "May it be Your will that we be raised high and proud like the head and not lowly like the tail." We eat grated carrots (Yiddish word for carrots 'Mehren' can be translated as multiplying) and say, "May it be Your will that we be fruitful and multiply" and "May it be Your will that our merits increase."

## ב' דראש השנה - SECOND NIGHT ROSH HASHANAH

It is proper for women to wear a new garment or display a new fruit at candle-lighting so that the שהחיינו applies to these as well (do not eat the fruit before Kiddush). On the 2nd night bring to the table a new fruit or wear a new garment so that the שהחיינו that we recite at the end of Kiddush applies to these as well. (If one forgot to prepare a new fruit or garment he still makes the שהחיינו).

## BOTH DAYS - SOUNDING THE SHOFAR - תקיעת שופר

Before sounding the Shofar, we recite "למנצח" (Psalm 47) seven times, followed by the verses whose first letters spell out "קרע שטן" "destroy Satan." The Baal T'kiah makes the Brachot: "לשמוע קול שופר" and "שהחיינו" bearing in mind that the Brachot and sounding the Shofar also are on behalf of all those listening. Baal T'kiah blows three sets each of תשר"ת, תשר"ת, and תשר"ת. **One absolutely must not talk during the first thirty sounds, and even afterwards one cannot talk until the conclusion of all one hundred sounds at the end of services unless absolutely necessary.** After the first thirty blasts the Baal T'kiah leads the congregation in: אשרי; and לדוד. We return the Sifrei Torah to the ark.) One may not eat before hearing the Shofar sounded. However, if one feels weak, he may make Kiddush and taste some food immediately after the first thirty blasts – the תקיעות דמיושב. the prohibition against speaking during the Chazzan's repetition of ShemonEh Esrei is a very serious one.

## צום גדלי - FAST OF GEDALIAH SEPT. 25, 3 TISHREI

Fast is observed from 5:32 AM until 7:28 PM. The chazzan says the prayer Anenu in the repetition of the Shachrit amidah. At Shacharit Thirteen Divine Attributes are said. Passages of Vayechal are read from the Torah (Shemot 32: 14 & 34: 1-10).

## 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) 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 become part of our community security service, email Margo at [security@ahavatachim.org](mailto: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 JOSH BLASS**

**SHABBAT, SEPTEMBER 27**

Save the date and join us for  
an uplifting and moving  
Shabbat!



**Friday Night  
Tisch @ the Shestack's**

**Shabbat Shuva  
Drasha by R' Blass**

**Shabbat Afternoon  
Women's Shiur @ the  
Nudelman's**

**Seudat Shlishit**

**"3 Therapists and a Lawyer: a panel on Judaism and Mental Health" w/  
Rabbi and Rebbetzin Blass and Rabbi and Rebbetzin Shestack**

Rabbi Josh Blass has served for the past 21 years as a Mashgiach Ruchani in Yeshiva University. In this role R' Blass gives personal and spiritual guidance and mentorship to YU students of all stripes. Rabbi Blass has been involved professionally both in a Rabbinic and Mental Health capacity with a number of organizations including Project Tikvah, My Extended Family, Keshet Family and Project Ezra.

He will be joined by his wife Ilana who has been practicing law for over twenty years, including having worked for many years as the in-house attorney for the Beth Din of America.

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

# KIDS PLAYGROUND

Meet Up!

**2<sup>ND</sup> DAY OF  
ROSH  
HASHANAH  
9/24 @ 4 PM**

**@ the Ahavat Achim Playground**



**Snacks will  
be provided!**



**AHAVAT ACHIM**  
קהלת אהבת אחים  
THE FAMILY SHUL

**Ahavat Achim Youth  
invites children of all ages to**

# **Celebrate Rosh Hashana together!**

**RSVP by  
9/17**

**Saturday  
9/20  
@ 3:30 PM**

**\$5/child  
\$12 Family  
max**

**Join us for fun on  
the playground at  
3:30 followed by  
a pre- Rosh  
Hashana program  
and dinner**



**AHAVAT ACHIM**  
קהלת אהבת אחים



Sponsorship  
opportunities  
are available!

E-mail

youth@ahavatachim.org  
to learn more.

JOIN US FOR

DONUTS



SUKKAH  
DECORATIONS

CHILDREN OF ALL AGES ARE INVITED TO MAKE  
SUKKAH DECORATIONS!

Sunday, September 28<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM

Bring a photo of your child  
for a special project!



AHAVAT ACHIM  
קהלת אהבת אחים  
THE FAMILY SHUL

RSVP by 9/21:

<https://forms.gle/iDUdhCnRAn9wj7WE6>





## Officers

Elul 5785 / September 2025

Shira  
Teichman  
*President*  
Debbie Yuster  
*Vice President*  
Rivky Bergstein  
Aliza Gabay  
Chava Goldberg  
Daniella Holzer  
Elianna Kaplowitz  
Hendel Rosenfeld  
Raizel Rusanov  
Aliza Strassman  
Stacey Zanjirian

Talia Furleiter  
*Administrator*

## Member Synagogues

Ahavat Achim  
Anshei Lubavitch  
Bris Avrohom  
Darchei Noam  
Shomrei Torah  
Young Israel  
Sephardic Center

Dear esteemed members of the Fair Lawn community,

We are writing with some reminders about our mikvah's operation, as well as information on men's mikvah usage before the *Yamim Nora'im*.

First, some general reminders for both men and women:

- **Men may not park in the back lot of Shomrei Torah after 7:00 PM.** The back lot is reserved for mikvah parking only. You may park in the side lot, on Boyd Avenue, in front of the Yudins' house, or on side streets. **PLEASE SEE DIAGRAM ATTACHED.**
- To the extent possible, women should schedule mikvah appointments in advance on our website [fairlawnmikvah.org](http://fairlawnmikvah.org). Signups close three hours before tevilah. We will do our best to accommodate, however **last minute appointments will incur a \$10 late fee.**

Please see the attached flier for notification about our facility's **availability to men on Erev Rosh Hashana** and stay tuned for further details about Erev Yom Kippur. Please note the following:

- On Erev Rosh Hashana (Monday 9/22), the mikvah will be open for men's usage from 5:00 am - 2:30 pm. **The keilim mikvah will be closed all day.**
- Women looking to schedule an appointment for Rosh Hashana evening should text the mikvah hotline at 201-468-0098.
- Advance registration is strongly encouraged. Registration on our website [fairlawnmikvah.org](http://fairlawnmikvah.org) will open on the morning of Monday, September 15.
- **Pricing is as follows:**
  - Individual appointments: \$30 for Fair Lawn residents, \$35 for nonresidents
  - Family appointments (3 people maximum): \$60 for Fair Lawn residents, \$70 for nonresidents
  - Large Family appointments (4+ people): \$70 for Fair Lawn residents, \$80 for nonresidents
  - Walk-in usage will incur an additional \$10 fee
- **Timing is as follows:**
  - From 5:00 AM - 1:30 PM, men will be able to use the mikvah individually and privately, with appointments taking precedence over walk-ins. Each man (or family) will have a private changing room and will use the mikvah privately. Staff will be present to help facilitate a smooth operation.
  - From 1:30 - 2:30 PM (no entry after 2:15 PM), individual changing rooms will not be available, and mikvah usage will be communal. The keilim mikvah will be available as a group changing room.
- **Bring your own towel.** Towels and showers will NOT be provided or available.

Wishing you and your families a year filled with health, happiness, and holiness.  
*Kesivah v'Chasimah Tovah,*

Shira Teichman  
President of the Fair Lawn Mikvah Association

P.S. If you'd like to receive updates and announcements directly from the FLMA, you may join our mailing list here: <https://bit.ly/flma-mailing-list>

# HIGH HOLIDAY CHILDCARE

Drop off groups for children ages 2-12

Rosh Hashana @ 8:45 AM

Kol Nidre

Yom Kippur @ 8:45 AM

Neilah

All groups end when davening ends

Shofar blowing for youth after mussaf.  
Davening will take place during groups.

sign up [Here!](#)

Early bird (By September 7th): \$15

After September 7th: \$25

No prior registration: \$30

Use of the parent & me room is free for  
those who only have child(ren) under 2

\*must purchase seats to sign up





# EREV ROSH HASHANA 5786 MEN'S MIKVAH HOURS



Open to Men Only

***Keilim mikvah closed all day***

All patrons must shower at home and bring your own towel



Pricing for FL Residents:

\$30 pre-register; \$40 at door

Check, Zelle, or cash (exact change)

See website for non-resident pricing



Shomrei Torah

19-10 Morlot Ave, Fair Lawn, NJ

Enter at back



Monday, September 22nd

5:00 AM - 1:30 PM by appointment

1:30 - 2:30 PM "communal hour"

Doors close at 2:15 PM sharp

**Registration begins 9/15**  
**Register at:**

[www.fairlawnmikvah.org](http://www.fairlawnmikvah.org)

Kesiva V'Chasima Tova,  
The Fair Lawn Mikvah Association

Mikvah Chava Faiga  
of Fair Lawn



# Men of Fair Lawn, Friendly Reminder:



**DO NOT PARK HERE**  
**After 7pm**

- The Fair Lawn  
Mikvah Association







AHAVAT ACHIM

קהלת אהבת אחים

THE FAMILY SHUL

Ahavat Achim invites  
you to join us for a fun

# Monthly

*Simcha Kiddush*

Have a birthday, anniversary, or  
another reason to say Mazel Tov?  
For \$36, you can co-sponsor that  
month's simcha kiddush!

Click HERE to get  
your sponsorship in!



**Deadline: 1 week before each kiddush!**

**AHAVAT ACHIM YOUTH INVITES CHILDREN OF ALL AGES TO  
OUR ANNUAL**

# **YOUTH SUKKAH HOP**

## **SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12<sup>TH</sup>**

**REACH OUT  
TO SPONSOR  
A STOP!**



**3:00 - 3:40 PM**

**John and Shifra Caruso**



**3:50 - 4:30 PM**

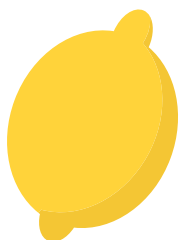
**Tzahi and Jordana Cohen**



**4:40 - 5:30 PM**

**Andrew and Kira Wigod**

**Dairy dinner served at this stop!**



**5:40-6:20 PM**

**Ahavat Achim Playground**

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**TUESDAY OCTOBER 14TH  
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# Covenant & Conversation

Jonathan Sacks  
THE RABBI SACKS LEGACY

NITZAVIM • נצבים

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

This year's series of essays were originally written and recorded by Rabbi Sacks זצ"ל in 5772 (2011–2012). These timeless messages are accompanied by a new [Family Edition](#) created to inspire intergenerational learning on the Parsha and Haftara.

## Why Be Jewish?

In the last days of his life, Moses renews the covenant between God and Israel. The entire book of Devarim has been an account of the covenant – how it came about, what its terms and conditions are, why it is the core of Israel's identity as an *am kadosh* (a holy people) and so on. Now comes the moment of renewal itself, a national rededication to the terms of its existence as a holy people under the sovereignty of God Himself.

Moses, however, is careful not to limit his words to those who are actually present. About to die, he wants to ensure that no future generation can say, "Moses made a covenant with our ancestors but not with us. We didn't give our consent. We are not bound." To preclude this, he says these words:

"It is *not with you alone* that I am making this sworn covenant, but with whoever is standing here with us today before the Lord our God, and *with whoever is not here with us today.*"

Deut. 29:13–14

As the commentators point out, the phrase "whoever is not here" cannot refer to Israelites alive at the time who happened to be somewhere else. That condition would not have been necessary since the entire nation was assembled there. Moses can only mean "generations not yet born." The covenant bound all Jews from that day to this. As the Talmud says: we are all *mushba ve-omed meHar Sinai*, "foresworn from Sinai" (Yoma 73b, Nedarim 8a). By agreeing to be God's people, subject to God's laws, our ancestors obligated us all.

Hence one of the most fundamental facts about Judaism. Converts excepted, we do not choose to be Jews. We are born as Jews. We become legal adults, subject to the commands and responsible for our actions, at the age of twelve for girls, thirteen for boys. But we are part of the covenant from birth. A bat or bar mitzvah is not a “confirmation.” It involves no voluntary acceptance of Jewish identity. That choice took place more than three thousand years ago when Moses said, “It is *not with you alone* that I am making this sworn covenant, but with ... *whoever is not here* with us today,” meaning all future generations, including us.

But how can this be so? Surely a fundamental principle of Judaism is that *there is no obligation without consent*. How can we be bound by an agreement to which we were not parties? How can we be subject to a covenant on the basis of a decision taken long ago and far away by our distant ancestors?

The Sages, after all, raised a similar question about the Wilderness Generation in the days of Moses who were actually there and did give their assent. The Talmud suggests that they were not entirely free to say ‘No.’

“The Holy One, blessed be He, suspended the mountain over them like a barrel and said: If you say ‘Yes,’ all will be well, but if

you say ‘No’, this will be your burial-place.”

Shabbat 88b

On this, R. Acha bar Yaakov said: “This constitutes a fundamental challenge to the legitimacy of the covenant.” The Talmud replies that even though the agreement may not have been entirely free at the time, Jews asserted their consent voluntarily in the days of Ahasuerus, as suggested by the Book of Esther.

This is not the place to discuss this particular passage, but the essential point is clear. The Sages believed with great force that an agreement must be made freely in order to be binding. Yet we did not agree to be Jews. We were, most of us, born Jews. We were not there in Moses’ day when the agreement was made. We did not yet exist. How then can we be bound by the covenant?

This is not a small question. It is the question on which all others turn. How can Jewish identity be passed on from parent to child? If Jewish identity were merely racial or ethnic, we could understand it. We inherit many things from our parents – most obviously our genes. But being Jewish is not a genetic condition, it is a set of religious obligations. There is a halachic principle: *zachin le-adam shelo be-fanav*, “You can confer a *benefit* on someone else



without their knowledge or consent” (Ketubot 11a). And though it is doubtless a benefit to be a Jew, it is also in some sense a liability, a restriction on our range of legitimate choices, with grave consequences if we transgress. Had we not been Jewish, we could have worked on Shabbat, eaten non-kosher food, and so on. You can confer a benefit upon someone without their consent, *but not a liability*.

In short, this is the question of questions of Jewish identity. How can we be bound by Jewish law, without our choice, merely because our ancestors agreed on our behalf?

In my book *Radical Then, Radical Now*<sup>1</sup> I pointed out how fascinating it is to trace exactly when and where this question was asked. Despite the fact that everything else depends on it, it was not asked often. For the most part, Jews did not ask the question, ‘Why be Jewish?’ The answer was obvious. My parents are Jewish. My grandparents were Jewish. So I am Jewish. Identity is something most people in most ages take for granted.

It did, however, become an issue during the Babylonian exile. The prophet Ezekiel says, “What is in your mind shall never happen – the thought, ‘Let us be like the

nations, like the tribes of the countries, and worship wood and stone’” (Ez. 20:32). This is the first reference to Jews actively seeking to abandon their identity.

It happened again in rabbinic times. We know that in the second century BCE there were Jews who Hellenised, seeking to become Greek rather than Jewish. There were others who, under Roman rule, sought to become Roman. Some even underwent an operation known as *epispasm* to reverse the effects of circumcision (in Hebrew they were known as *meshuchim*) to hide the fact that they were Jews.<sup>2</sup>

The third time was in Spain in the fifteenth century. That is where we find two Bible commentators, Rabbi Isaac Arama and Rabbi Isaac Abarbanel, raising precisely the question we have raised about how the covenant can bind Jews today. The reason they ask it while earlier commentators did not was that in their time – between 1391 and 1492 – there was immense pressure on Spanish Jews to convert to Christianity, and as many as a third may have done so (they were known in Hebrew as the *anusim*, in Spanish as the *conversos*, and derogatively as *marranos*, “swine”). The question “Why stay Jewish?” was real.

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Sacks, *Radical Then, Radical Now*, London: HarperCollins, 2000, (published in North America as *A Letter in the Scroll*, New York: Free Press, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> This is what R. Elazar of Modiin means in Mishnah Avot 3:15 when he refers to one who “nullifies the covenant of our father Abraham.”

The answers given were different at different times. Ezekiel's answer was blunt: "As I live, declares the Lord, God, surely with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out I will be King over you" (Ezek. 20:33). In other words, Jews might try to escape their destiny but they would fail. Even if it were against their will, they would always be known as Jews. That, tragically, is what happened during the two great ages of assimilation, fifteenth century Spain and in Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In both cases, racial antisemitism persisted, and Jews continued to be persecuted.

The Sages answered the question mystically. They said that even the souls of Jews not-yet-born were present at Sinai and ratified the covenant (Exodus Rabbah 28:6). Every Jew, in other words, *did* give their consent in the days of Moses even though they had not yet been born. Demystifying this, perhaps the Sages meant that in their innermost hearts, even the most assimilated Jew knew that they were Jewish. That seems to have been the case with public figures like Heinrich Heine and Benjamin Disraeli, who lived as Christians but often wrote and thought as Jews.

The fifteenth-century Spanish commentators found this answer problematic. As Arama said, we are each of us both body and soul. How then is it

sufficient to say that our soul was present at Sinai? How can the soul obligate the body? Of course the *soul* agrees to the covenant. Spiritually, to be a Jew is a privilege, and you can confer a privilege on someone without their consent. But for the body, the covenant is a burden. It involves all sorts of restrictions on physical pleasures. Therefore if the souls of future generations were present but not their bodies, this would not constitute consent.

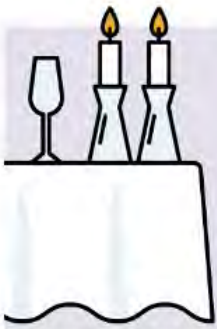
*Radical Then, Radical Now* is my answer to this question. But perhaps there is a simpler one. Not every obligation that binds us is one to which we have freely given our assent. There are obligations that come with birth. The classic example is a crown prince or princess. To be the heir to a throne involves a set of duties and a life of service to others. It is possible to neglect these duties. In extreme circumstances it is even possible for a monarch to abdicate. But no one can choose to become heir to a throne. That is a fate, a destiny, that comes with birth.

The people of whom God Himself said, "My child, My firstborn, Israel" (Ex. 4:22) knows itself to be royalty. That may be a privilege. It may be a burden. It is almost certainly both. It is a peculiar post-Enlightenment delusion to think that the only significant things about us are those we choose. For the truth is that we do not choose some of the most important facts

about ourselves. We did not choose to be born. We did not choose our parents. We did not choose the time and place of our birth. Yet each of these affects who we are and what we are called on to do.

We are part of a story that began long before we were born and will continue long after we are no longer here, and the question for all of us is: Will we continue the story? The hopes of a hundred generations of our ancestors rest on our willingness to do so. Deep in our collective memory the words of Moses continue to resonate. “It is not with you alone that I am making this sworn covenant, but with ... *whoever is not here with us today.*”

**We are each a key player in this story. We can live it. We can abandon it. But it is a choice we cannot avoid, and it has immense consequences. The future of the covenant rests with us.**



## Around the Shabbat Table

1. Which aspects of you were pre-determined? Which aspects did you choose?
2. How do you see your role in the eternal Jewish story that began thousands of years ago?
3. Why do you think the temptation to “be like the nations” was so strong in the days of Babylon, and is it still strong today?

● 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/nitzavim/why-be-jewish/>