



**COMEDY NIGHT
POSTPONED. NEW DATE
AND TIME WILL BE
ANNOUNCED SOON.**

CANDLE LIGHTING 5:35 PM | 10 MARCHESHVAN | NOVEMBER 1, 2025 | HAVDALA 6:37 PM

שבת פרשת לך לך

SHABBAT PARSHAT LECH LECHA

Haftorah is Isaiah 40:27-41:16. The regular final time for Kiddush Levanah of MarCheshvan is all Tuesday night, November 4 until the following daybreak (based on the final calculated time in Jerusalem being Wednesday, November 5 (15 MarCheshvan), at 7:16 PM).

FRIDAY EVENING

MINCHA	5:40 PM
SHKIA	5:53 PM
TZAIT HAKOCHAVIM	6:33 PM

SHABBAT

HASHKAMA	7:45 AM
SHACHARIT - MAIN	9:00 AM
POST-HASHKAMA SHIUR	9:30 AM
LAST KRIAT SHEMA	10:04 AM
FUNDAMENTALS SHIUR	11:30 AM
PRE-MINCHA SHIUR	4:45 PM
MINCHA	5:25 PM
SHKIA	5:52 PM
MAARIV	6:37 PM

BIRTHDAY/ANNIVERSARY KIDDUSH

Kiddush is sponsored to celebrate November birthdays and anniversaries! **Happy birthday** to Aryeh Frank, Josef Goldberg, Yoni Gorelik, Jay Herman, Yonah Herman, Azriel Nudelman, Ezra Santacruz, Ilana Silver, & Westley Wexler. **Happy anniversary** to Eliana Kaplowitz & Aaron Czinn, Rachel & Jon Frank, Rebecca Berger & Jay Herman, Michele & Brett Norton, & Nicole & Eitan Sufian.



SEUDAH SHLISHIT

Seudah Shlishit is sponsored by Brett Norton in memory of his mother, Leah bat Meyer (Lynne Norton נ"ע), and by Marty Reichardt in memory of Cary נ"ע.

SIGN-UP FOR NEXT SHABBAT'S FRIDAY NIGHT DINNER

Our first standard time community dinner will be next Friday night after Maariv (around 6:00 PM). RSVP here: [Dinner](#).

VETERAN'S DAY KIDDUSH

Next Shabbat is our kiddush honoring our community's veterans. To be a sponsor or list a veteran, click here: [Veterans](#).

ETROG COMPOSTING DROP-OFF DEADLINE



November 7 is the Deadline: For info, click here: [Drop-Off](#). Also, we are offering the service of picking up your etrog from you, click here: [Pickup](#).

MONDAY NIGHT SHIUR FOR WOMEN

This Monday night the shiur will be at 8:15 PM at the home of Rebecca Berger.



SUNDAY
11/2

MONDAY
11/3

TUESDAY
11/4

WEDNESDAY
11/5

THURSDAY
11/6

FRIDAY
11/7

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	4:39 PM	4:38 PM	4:36 PM	4:35 PM	4:34 PM	4:30 PM

ZMANIM

Earliest Talit	5:33 AM	5:34 AM	5:35 AM	5:36 AM	5:37 AM	5:38 AM
Gedolah	12:06 PM	12:06 PM	12:05 PM	12:05 PM	12:05 PM	12:05 PM
Shkia	4:51 PM	4:50 PM	4:48 PM	4:47 PM	4:46 PM	
Tzait	5:31 PM	5:30 PM	5:28 PM	5:27 PM	5:26 PM	

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Nov. 8** - Kiddush in honor of our veterans.
Nov. 12 - Israeli Bond Event. Details below.
 Registration required, click here: [Bonds](#).
Dec. 6 - Birthday/Anniversary Kiddush.

IN OUR FUTURE

- Nov. 15** - Kiddush & Seudah Shlishit are sponsored by Liz & Joel Brauser to celebrate Shalom's Auf Ruf and upcoming marriage to Miri Granik.
Dec. 6 - Seudah Shlishit is sponsored by Gerry & Howard Kessel on the first yahrtzeit of Gerry's father שלמה בן שמואל, Bernard Roth^{נ"י}.

BOARD MEETINGS 8:15 PM

- Nov. 18** - At shul w/Zoom option.
Dec. 29 (Monday), Jan. 27, Feb. 24, Mar. 24, Apr. 28, May 26, & June 30

COMMUNITY EVENTS

- Dec. 6** - The Fair Lawn Mikvah Association's 3rd Annual Women-Only Community Evening of Inspiration, Saturday night, at Shomrei Torah. For further details, click here: [Inspiration](#).

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? Email 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.

BIRTHDAY & ANNIVERSARY KIDDUSH

To add a birthday or anniversary to our December list (next Kiddush on Shabbat, Dec. 6), click here: [SIMCHA](#). Listings/sponsorships are \$36 per family per month. RSVP for the December birthday/anniversary kiddush by Sat. night, Nov. 29.

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.
- 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. This week: **Chapter 19**.
- SHABBAT SHIUR, **Sanhedrin Ch. 8**, 40 minutes prior to mincha.
- 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).
- HALACHA SHIUR FOR WOMEN, Monday nights, 8:15 PM.
 - **Nov. 3** - Rebecca Berger's home.
 - **Nov. 10** - Betsy Sonnenblick's home.
- SEDER ON THE SIDDUR, at Seudah Shlishit - **L'Olam Yehei Adam (R. Donin - p. 198-199, R. Munk - N/A)**.

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

GITA COOPERWASSER^{נ"י} YOUTH EVENTS

- Dec. 6** - Parent-Child Learning.
Jan. 3 - Parent-Child Learning.
Feb. 7 - Parent-Child Learning.

GITA COOPERWASSER^{נ"י} SHABBAT YOUTH INFO



- **SHABBAT YOUTH LEADERS: 3RD - 5TH GRADE: ISABELLA & LETIZIA; K - 2ND GR.: ARIELLA, BELANA, & ARNELLA; AND 3 YRS OLD - PRE K: ABBY & DANIELLE.**
- 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.

ISRAEL BONDS

Join Israel Bonds on November 12, at 7:30 PM, as we welcome Israeli artist and elite combat soldier Albert Levi. Albert served in the IDF in an elite combat unit and will speak about his experiences serving, as well as how he became an artist. He has created beautiful works of art that showcase the beauty and strength of Israel. His artwork and merchandise will be available for purchase at the event. Attendees will also enjoy a very special Israeli wine tasting. Please consider donating an Israel bond to Belev Echad, a 501(c)(3) that provides life saving support to wounded IDF soldiers, which is very important to Albert. **REGISTRATION REQUIRED**, Click Here: [Bonds](#). For more information, contact Danielle Ross at danielle.ross@israelbonds.com or 973-712-1408.



AHAVAT ACHIM
— קהלת אהבת אחים —
THE FAMILY SHUL

November

Simcha Kiddush

Honorees

Birthdays

Aryeh Frank	Azriel Nudelman
Josef Goldberg	Ezra Santacruz
Yoni Gorelik	Ilana Silver
Jay Herman	Westley Wexler
Yonah Herman	

Anniversaries

Eliana Kaplowitz & Aaron Czinn
Rachel & Jon Frank
Rebecca Berger & Jay Herman
Michele & Brett Norton
Nicole & Eitan Sufian

Mishlei/Proverbs

Post-Hashkama Shiur 7 – Wisdom is Foundational to Creation

[illegible]

19The Lord founded the earth with wisdom, established the heavens with insight. 20With His knowledge the depths were split, and the heavens drip dew. 21My son, let them not depart from your eyes; guard sound resourcefulness and thought, 22and they shall be life for your soul, and grace for your neck. 23Then you shall go securely on your way, and your foot shall not stumble. 24If you lie down, you shall not fear, and when you lie down, your sleep shall be sweet. 25Be not afraid of sudden terror, or of the darkness of the wicked when it comes. 26For the Lord shall be your trust, and He shall keep your foot from being caught. 27Do not withhold good from the one who needs it when you have power in your hand to do it. 28Do not say to your fellow, "Go and return, and tomorrow I will give," though you have it with you. 29Devise no harm against your fellow, when he dwells securely with you. 30Do not quarrel with anyone without cause, if he did you no harm. 31Do not envy a man of violence and do not choose any of his ways; 32for the perverse is an abomination to the Lord, but His counsel is with the upright. 33The curse of the Lord is in the wicked man's house, but He shall bless the dwelling of the righteous. 34If [one goes] to the scoffers, he will scoff; but [if he goes] to the humble, he evokes grace. 35The wise shall inherit honor, but fools take disgrace as their portion.¹

A. The Alshich, Sfas Emet, and others see the references to wisdom, insight, and knowledge as being foundational to creation as supporting the pasuk at Bereshit Rabbah 1:2 that Hashem looked into the Torah and used it as a blueprint for creation. In that regard, at Bereshit 1:31, it states that “וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם הַשִּׁשִּׁי:” “it was evening and it was morning, **the** sixth day”. None of the other days in the creation story have the definitive article ה preceding it, and Rashi says the ה represents the five books of the Torah, and the need for the Jews to accept the Torah as a condition for creation.

B. Similarly, Bezazel who constructed the Mishkan was “וַיִּמְלֵא אֹתוֹ רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים – בְּחָכְמָה וּבִתְבוּנָה וּבְדַעַת וּבְקִלְמָלְאָהָהּ:”, “imbued him with the spirit of God, with wisdom, with insight, with knowledge, and with [talent for] all manner of craftsmanship” – so Mishlei use of these terms in the context of earth’s creation seems to parallel the attributes relied on to create the Mishkan.²

C. The following pasukim then hit on a series of themes/recommendations:

- Trusting in Hashem allows one to sleep well, and be unafraid.
- Advice to not procrastinate when it comes to doing good deeds, especially as it relates to giving Tzedakah.
- Avoid quarrels.
 - o There seems to be a two-prong test to be granted “permission” to quarrel, namely: (1) do you have “cause” and, if so, (2) did the counterparty harm you.
 - o Rashi interprets this pasuk as allowing quarreling with a person you are arguing with that “transgressed a commandment written in the Torah, as the Torah states (Lev. 19:18): ‘And you shall love your fellow as yourself,’ but one who is wicked, you may hate.”
 - o R. Yonah sees the reference to “no harm” as clarifying the phrase “without cause.”
- Don’t envy a man of violence [per Rashi, even if that violence makes such man prosperous].
- It is better to seek out the company of the humble, than it is to enjoy the company of scoffers.

¹ Mishlei Chapter 3

² Shemot 31:3.

D. Some parallels from other philosophical works:

- Shlomo proclaims at Kohelet 7:21-22 that you should “take no heed of all the words that others speak, lest you hear your servant curse you. For your heart knows that many times you too cursed others.” How many times to we hold others to standards we don’t live up to. If you follow this, then words won’t be hurtful, and no harm will be caused. Taking us to the advice above to not quarrel without harm.
- Both Plato (*Timaeus*) and Aristotle (*Metaphysics XII*) see the universe as intelligible only due to it being created rationally, which compares nicely with the idea of creation occurring with “wisdom”.
- Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics*) discusses courage not resulting from the absence of fear, but from clarity of thought. Compare this to the above pasukim that discussed fear subsiding when you trust in Hashem.
- Iyov reinforces Hashem’s thoughtful plan for creation, but dismisses man’s ability to comprehend its rationality or to argue with it: “Where were you when I founded the Earth? Tell if you know understanding. Who placed its measures if you know, or who extended a line over it?”³ “In [all] your days, did you command the morning? Did you tell the dawn its place?”⁴ “Have the gates of death been revealed to you, and do you see the gates of the shadow of death? Do you understand [everything] until the expanses of the Earth? Tell if you know it all.”⁵

³ Iyov 38:4-5.

⁴ Iyov 38:12-13.

⁵ Iyov 38:17-18.

Mishlei/Proverbs

Post-Hashkama Shiur 6 – Hashem Reinforces the Father

[illegible]

1My son, forget not My instruction, and may your heart keep My commandments; 2for they shall add length of days and years of life and peace to you. 3Kindness and truth shall not leave you; bind them upon your neck, inscribe them upon the tablet of your heart; 4and find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man. 5Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not rely upon your understanding. 6Acknowledge Him in all your ways, and He will direct your paths. 7Do not be wise in your own sight; fear the Lord and turn away from evil. 8It shall be healing for your navel and marrow for your bones. 9Honor the Lord from your substance and from the first of all your grain, 10and your barns shall be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine. 11My son, despise not the discipline of the Lord, and do not abhor His chastening, 12for the Lord chastens the one He loves, as a father placates a son. 13Fortunate is the man who has found wisdom and a man who gives forth insight, 14for its commerce is better than the commerce of silver, and its gain [is better] than fine gold; 15it is more precious than pearls, and all your desirable things cannot be compared to it. 16Length of days is in its right hand; in its left hand are riches and honor. 17Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace. 18It is a tree of life for those who grasp it, and those who draw near it are fortunate.¹

A. The above translation of the first pasuk follows the opinion of the Metzudos and assumes that the father/Shlomo is here speaking in Hashem's voice (hence the capitalized "M" in my).² Even if the father is speaking in his own voice, it seems apparent that he is using Hashem's wisdom/understanding to backstop the father's previous discussion of the benefits of following down proper paths. This would be consistent with the father's earlier warnings being backstopped by the warnings of Lady Wisdom. Different/additional benefits are addressed, which (if you assume Hashem is speaking) could be viewed as rewards to proper choices (*e.g.*, long life, peace, kindness and truth, finding favor, etc.).

B. The father then turns to potential roadblocks emanating from his son's own cognition, imploring the son to "not rely upon his own understanding", to let Hashem "direct your paths", and to "not be wise in your own sight".³

- Compare this with Kohelet: “All this I probed with wisdom; I thought I could become wise, but it was far from me.”⁴
- We can see these warnings being particularly relevant today in a world where it seems that most individuals believe *everyone else* suffers from cognitive dissonance and the information sought is out of confirmation bias, but that they themselves are wise.

C. Previously, when the value of wisdom was being given over by the father from his perspective, the sole tangible benefit (perhaps intangible as well if post-resurrection) was the land of Eretz Yisrael. Perhaps because

¹ From Mishlei Chapter 3.

² See Metzudat David commentary to this Pasuk at <https://www.sefaria.org/Proverbs.3.1?lang=bi&with=Metzudat%20David&lang2=en>

³ Mishlei 3:5-7.

⁴ Kohelet 7:23.

we are to see these words as emanating from Hashem, or perhaps because they are coupled with the mitzvot, the physical rewards are expressed in a more grandiose manner. But then shortly thereafter downplayed.

- “Honor the Lord from your substance and from the first of all your grain, and your barns shall be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.”⁵
- “Fortunate is the man who has found wisdom and a man who gives forth insight, for its commerce is **better than** the commerce of **silver**, and its gain [is better] than fine **gold**; it is **more precious** than **pearls**, and all your desirable things cannot be compared to it.”⁶ But nevertheless, “Length of days is in its right hand; in its left hand are riches and honor.”⁷

D. In Gan Eden, Adam and Chava ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and the result was death.

R. Hirsch points out that the opposite is true for Jews, as the Torah, the embodiment of the knowledge of good and evil, has in essence become the Tree of Life for those that grasp it.

⁵ Mishlei 3:9-10.

⁶ Mishlei 3:13-15.

⁷ Mishlei 3:16.

BUILDING TOMORROW, TOGETHER

ISRAEL BONDS
BERGEN COUNTY REGION

*An Evening with Israeli Artist &
Elite Combat Soldier **Albert Levi***

FROM THE BATTLEFIELD to the Studio

REGISTER HERE

**Wednesday, November 12
7:30pm EST | Fair Lawn, NJ**

**Location will be provided prior to event*

Enjoy a live painting demonstration by Albert!

We encourage you to consider donating an Israel Bond to Belev Echad, a non-profit that helps provide life saving care to wounded IDF soldiers.

Wine tasting and light refreshments will be served.
Dietary Laws Observed

Event Chairs:
Howard and Gerry Kessel

TO SEE MORE OF ALBERT

 albertlevi.com

 Albert Levi

 [@albert.art5](https://www.instagram.com/albert.art5)

 Fineart@albertlevi.com

 Danielle.ross@israelbonds.com

 973.712.1408



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Ahavat Achim Presents



Halacha Shiur for Women

Mondays 8:15pm

1st Series: Mezuzah

In-Person with Rabbi Shestack at the Garfunkel home
Follow on the "Torah for your Commute" Whatsapp group
& Shul's Spotify page



AHAVAT ACHIM

קהלת אהבת אחים

THE FAMILY SHUL

FALL INTO EARLY SHABBAT WITH US!



Join us for the first early Shabbat dinner of the year as we *fall* into the Shabbat spirit!

**Friday, November 7th after davening
(~6:00pm)**

ADULTS (12 YEARS OLD +) - \$30

CHILDREN AGES 6 - 11 - \$13

CHILDREN AGES 3 - 5 - \$5

FAMILY MAX - \$85

RSVP by 11/4!



events@ahavatachim.org



CONGREGATION AHAVAT ACHIM

PRESENTS

VETERAN'S DAY KIDDUSH



**WE INVITE YOU TO HONOR THOSE
WHO SERVED IN THE US ARMED
FORCES BY ADDING A STAR TO
OUR BOARD AND DONATING IN
THEIR NAME TO OUR SPECIAL
KIDDUSH ON NOVEMBER 8TH.**

Since 1926, November 11th has been a day to remember both living veterans and those who have passed on. Join us as we honor and celebrate the selfless service of millions of veterans who have defended our freedoms and way of life by sharing the names of those who have served. The names will be displayed at the Kiddush.

SUBMIT NAMES OF VETERANS
OR SPONSORSHIPS HERE.



AHAVAT ACHIM
— קהלת אהבת אחים —
THE FAMILY SHUL



Covenant & Conversation

Jonathan Sacks
THE RABBI SACKS LEGACY

LECH LECHA • לך לך

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 5773 (2012–2013). These timeless messages are accompanied by a new [Family Edition](#) created to inspire intergenerational learning on the Parsha and Haftara.

Our Children Walk on Ahead

The call to Abraham, with which Lech Lecha begins, seems to come from nowhere:

"Leave your land, your birthplace, and your father's house, and go to a land which I will show you."

Nothing has prepared us for this radical departure. We have not had a description of Abraham as we had in the case of Noah ("Noah was a righteous man, perfect in his generations; Noah walked with God"). Nor have we been given a series of glimpses into his childhood, as in the case of Moses. It is as if Abraham's call is a sudden break with all that went before. There seems to be no prelude, no context, no background.

Added to this is a curious verse in the last speech delivered by Moses' successor Joshua:

And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the river (Euphrates), Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nachor; and they served other gods.

Joshua 24:2

The implication seems to be that Abraham's father was an idolater. Hence the famous midrashic tradition that as a child, Abraham broke his father's idols. When Terah asked him who had done the damage, he replied, "The largest of the idols took a stick and broke the rest".

"Why are you deceiving me?" Terah asked, "Do idols have understanding?"

"Let your ears hear what your mouth is saying," replied the child.

Bereishit Rabbah 38:8

On this reading, Abraham was an iconoclast, a breaker of images, one who rebelled against his father's faith.

Maimonides, the philosopher, put it somewhat differently. Originally, human beings believed in one God. Later, they began to offer sacrifices to the sun, the planets and stars, and other forces of nature, as creations or servants of the one God. Later still, they worshipped them as entities – gods – in their own right. It took Abraham, using logic alone, to realise the incoherence of polytheism:

After he was weaned, while still an infant, his mind began to reflect. Day and night, he thought and wondered, how is it possible that this celestial sphere should be continuously guiding the world, without something to guide it and cause it to revolve? For it cannot move of its own accord. He had no teacher or mentor, because he was immersed in Ur of the Chaldees among foolish idolaters. His father and mother and the entire population worshipped idols, and he worshipped with them. He continued to speculate and reflect until he achieved the way of truth, understanding what was right through his own efforts. It was then that he knew that there is one God who guides the heavenly bodies, who created everything, and besides whom there is no other god.

Laws of Idolatry 1:2

What is common to Maimonides and the Midrash is discontinuity. Abraham represents a radical break with all that went before.

Remarkably however, the previous chapter gives us a quite different perspective:

These are the generations of Terah. Terah fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran fathered Lot . . . Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan, but when they came to Haran, they settled there. The days of Terah were 205 years, and Terah died in Haran.

Gen 11:31

The implication seems to be that far from breaking with his father, Abraham was continuing a journey Terah had already begun.

How are we to reconcile these two passages? The simplest way, taken by most commentators, is that they are not in chronological sequence. The call to Abraham (in Gen. 12) happened first. Abraham heard the Divine summons, and communicated it to his father. The family set out together, but Terah stopped halfway, in Haran. The passage recording Terah's death is placed before Abraham's call, though it happened later, to guard

Abraham from the accusation that he failed to honour his father by leaving him in his old age (Rashi, Midrash).

Yet there is another obvious possibility. Abraham's spiritual insight did not come from nowhere. Terah had already made the first tentative move toward monotheism. Children complete what their parents begin.

Significantly, both the Bible and rabbinic tradition understood divine parenthood in this way. They contrasted the description of Noah ("Noah walked with God") and that of Abraham ("The God before whom I have walked", Gen. 24:40). God Himself says to Abraham "Walk ahead of Me and be perfect" (Gen. 17:1). God signals the way, then challenges His children to walk on ahead.

In one of the most famous of all Talmudic passages, the Babylonian Talmud (Baba Metzia 59b) describes how the Sages outvoted Rabbi Eliezer despite the fact that his view was supported by a Heavenly Voice. It continues by describing an encounter between Rabbi Natan and the Prophet Elijah. Rabbi Natan asks the Prophet: What was God's reaction to that moment, when the law was decided by majority vote rather than following that Heavenly Voice? Elijah replies, "He smiled and said, 'My children have defeated Me! My children have defeated Me!'"

To be a parent in Judaism is to make space within which a child can grow. Astonishingly, this applies even when the

parent is God (*Avinu*, "our Father") Himself. In the words of Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik:

"The Creator of the world diminished the image and stature of creation in order to leave something for man, the work of His hands, to do, in order to adorn man with the crown of creator and maker."

Halachic Man, p. 107

This idea finds expression in *halachah*, Jewish law. Despite the emphasis in the Torah on honouring and revering parents, Maimonides rules:

Although children are commanded to go to great lengths [in honouring parents], a father is forbidden to impose too heavy a yoke on them, or to be too exacting with them in matters relating to his honour, lest he cause them to stumble. He should forgive them and close his eyes, for a father has the right to forgo the honour due to him.

Hilchot Mamrim 6:8

The story of Abraham can be read in two ways, depending on how we reconcile the end of chapter 11 with the beginning of chapter 12. One reading emphasises discontinuity. Abraham broke with all that went before. The others continuity. Terah, his father, had already begun to wrestle with idolatry. He had set out on the long walk to the land which would eventually become holy, but stopped

halfway. Abraham completed the journey his father began.

Perhaps childhood itself has the same ambiguity. There are times, especially in adolescence, when we tell ourselves that we are breaking with our parents, charting a path that is completely new. Only in retrospect, many years later, do we realise how much we owe our parents – how, even at those moments when we felt most strongly that we were setting out on a journey uniquely our own, we were, in fact, living out the ideals and aspirations that we learned from them. And it began with God Himself, who left – and continues to leave – space for us, His children, to walk on ahead.



Around the Shabbat Table

1. What does it take to leave something familiar behind for something unknown?
2. What is the difference between courage and rebellion?
3. They didn't always agree with each other, but what lessons do you think Abraham learned from Terah?

● 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/lech-lecha/our-children-walk-on-ahead/>