



CANDLE LIGHTING 5:44 PM | 3 MARCHESHVAN | OCTOBER 25, 2025 | HAVDALA 6:46 PM

שבת פרשת נח SHABBAT PARSHAT NOACH

Haftorah is Isaiah 54:1-55:5.

FRIDAY EVENING

MINCHA 5:50 PM

SHKIA 6:02 PM

TZAIT HAKOCHAVIM 6:42 PM

SHABBAT

HASHKAMA 7:45 AM

SHACHARIT - MAIN 9:00 AM

POST-HASHKAMA SHIUR 9:30 AM

LAST KRIAT SHEMA 10:00 AM

FUNDAMENTALS SHIUR 11:30 AM

PRE-MINCHA SHIUR 4:55 PM

MINCHA 5:35 PM

SHKIA 6:01 PM

MAARIV 6:46 PM

NEWSLETTER

The Shul's newsletter is attached to the online version of this bulletin. Enjoy!

KIDDUSH



Kiddush is sponsored by Chava & Chayim Goldberg Like Noach we trust in Hashem for protection, so let us rejoice in another year's beginning and raise our heads with this great underpinning. Let's kindle candles of holiday simcha, and attend weekday Mincha/Maariv minyonim to keep in good spirits and feeling ethereal. Start Marcheshvan off right with some Cheerios cereal as you sally forth in your personal Teiva.

SEUDAH SHLISHIT

Seudah Shlishit is sponsored by David & Lori Garfunkel in memory of Jonathan ע"ה and Lori's mother רחל ע"ה, Tootsie Markovitz ע"ה, and by Betsy & Marty Sonnenblick on the Yahrzeit of Betsy's father חיים ע"ה, יהודה בן ירמיהו, Howard Perlmutter ע"ה.

HALACHA SHIUR FOR WOMEN

Mon. nights, 8:15 PM, at the Garfunkel home. Series 1: Mezuzah.

ETROG COMPOSTING DROP-OFF DEADLINE

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

COMEDY NIGHT

4th Annual Comedy Night featuring Mike Fine, Sat. night, Nov. 8!



Purchase Tickets in advance here: [LAUGH A LOT!](#)

TODAH RABBAH

Thank you to the disassemblers of the shul's Sukkah: Adam Brooks, Avi Cohen, Benji Cooper, David Garfunkel, Isaac Rozenfeld, Andrew Wigod, Eitan Sufian, & Aaron Czinn.



SUNDAY
10/26

MONDAY
10/27

TUESDAY
10/28

WEDNESDAY
10/29

THURSDAY
10/30

FRIDAY
10/31

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	5:48 PM	5:46 PM	5:45 PM	5:44 PM	5:42 PM	5:40 PM

ZMANIM

Earliest Talit	6:25 AM	6:26 AM	6:27 AM	6:28 AM	6:29 AM	6:31 AM
Gedolah	1:07 PM	1:07 PM	1:06 PM	1:06 PM	1:06 PM	1:06 PM
Shkia	6:00 PM	5:58 PM	5:57 PM	5:56 PM	5:54 PM	
Tzait	6:40 PM	6:38 PM	6:37 PM	6:36 PM	6:34 PM	

Rabbi Ely Shestack

President Jay Herman

UPCOMING EVENTS

Nov. 1 - Birthday/Anniversary Kiddush.

Nov. 8 - 4th Annual Comedy Night featuring Mike Fine

Nov. 12 - Israeli Bond Event. Details below. Register here: [Bonds](#).

Dec. 6 - Birthday/Anniversary Kiddush.

IN OUR FUTURE

Nov. 1 - Seudah Shlishit is sponsored by Brett Norton in memory of his mother, Leah bat Meyer (Lynne Norton^{נ"י}).

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

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 November list (next Kiddush on Shabbat, Nov. 1), click here: [SIMCHA](#). Listings/sponsorships are \$36 per family per month. RSVP for the November birthday by Saturday night, October 25.

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.
- SEDER ON THE SIDDUR, at Seudah Shlishit - **AKEIDAH (R. Donin - p. 198, 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

TBA - TBA

GITA COOPERWASSER^{נ"י} SHABBAT YOUTH INFO



- **SHABBAT YOUTH LEADERS: 3RD - 5TH GRADE: ZOE & LETIZIA; K - 2ND GR.: ABBY & ARNELLA; AND 3 YRS OLD - PRE K: ISABELLA & SOPHIA.**
- 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. Register here: [Bonds](#). For more info, contact Danielle Ross at danielle.ross@israelbonds or 973-712-1408.

REFLECTIONS AFTER CHAGIM

Given the start of a new year and the start of my time as president, I want to take the opportunity to send some thoughts and observations on our wonderful shul and community. I hope they serve to spark communal reflection and conversation and shine light on aspects of the shul that deserve amplification.

Shana tova! If I haven't met you (let's fix that!), I am Jay Herman. My wife, Rebecca, and I came to Fair Lawn with our (at the time) one son (now three, B"H), and joined Ahavat Achim in November 2021 after a Shabbat visit and series of phone and zoom calls that convinced us we need not look anywhere else. One of our top priorities in finding a place to raise our children was a community where members **roll up their sleeves and make things happen**.

Rebecca and I wanted this because it was our experience in college and then in our Riverdale community that every task, project, and committee is a privilege in its own way, not just because you get the program or initiative you wanted, but because you emerge, as a person, with so much more.

Before taking on this role as president, I had the opportunity to participate on four committees. With your permission (if you continue reading I assume you are giving it), I'd like to use this newsletter to illustrate in my experience how the work of "getting in the weeds" has translated to the outcomes we sought, of:

- **Building interpersonal connection across ages and backgrounds**, and
- **Cultivating a sense of responsibility, or "skin in the game."**

First, on the Youth Committee - led by Kira and Andrew Wigod, and supported so ably by Rabbi Shestack, Shifra Caruso, and now Britty Cohen, Jordana Cohen, Tamar Gorelick, and Nicole Sufian (not to mention the ad hoc programmatic support from so many others!) - I got a front row seat that few others get into how complex it is to deliver what our shul does for its young member families and visiting grandchildren, without a paid youth director, and how it has adapted to a staggeringly **rapid influx of children**.

One meeting, we decided to meet in person at the Wigod's (what a concept!), and it was one of the most fun and memorable meetings I have had since moving here. That meeting illustrated perfectly this idea that the **process is the product** that we seek in volunteerism. Yes, we need the outputs of the discussions (What time should each group use the playground? How can we make this event appropriate for all ages? etc.), but the friendships we make and the "sweat equity" we derive from the work - that's what I hoped for when I imagined the year 2025 back in 2021.

As an important aside, that outcome is so much stronger with in-person participation. We can "check all the boxes" on the agenda through zoom calls and emails, sure, but we can't get much more. This is why board meetings are now in person (with a zoom

REFLECTIONS AFTER CHAGIM

option). Now in addition to moving forward the business of the shul, each attendee also gets to walk away with a monthly experience of each other that isn't possible in virtual meetings.

Second, through my work with the Membership Recruitment Committee, I've had the privilege to collaborate on getting the word out about our community, and seen the **heart of hospitality** at the core of our shul. Warmth and innovation from Aaron Czinn, Sara and Natan Santacruz, Sharon Brooks, Rabbi Shestack, and Esther Zimmelman (and now Eitan Sufian) are the reason we have exploded the last 4-6 years, and have built on the foundations for growth laid by Rabbi Shestack, Steve Winchester, Arnie & Randi Spier, Eli Greenbaum, Michael Dworkis, Aryeh Brenenson, Beth Wechsler, and others. Because of that core value, well over half of prospective families who have visited Ahavat Achim in the past three to five years have moved to town or are actively looking for housing.

Furthermore, many of the families who have landed since 2021 have "caught the bug," rolled up their own sleeves, and continued the cycle. Benji and Erica Cooper have already hosted two prospective families for shabbat since moving less than six months ago (one of whom is moving into the neighborhood next week), and they themselves stayed with Yoni and Tamar Gorelick, another arrival within the last two years, when they visited! It's amazing to see not just the growth, but alignment of values that helps bolster the community.

Third, through the saga of the playground (there's truly no other word for it!), I've seen how much work and dedication went into what is now such a special part of so many members' weeks. Rabbi Shestack, John Caruso, and Ron Dworkis worked tirelessly to turn an idea into reality, along with support from Liz Jacob, Kira & Andrew Wigod, Rich Mayer, Natasha Borsuk, Stephen Agress, Robert Safren, and others. There is no question that with the playground installed, families stick around at shul after kiddush, deepening their social ties, for at least 30 minutes longer per week than before the playground. For me, this was certainly the project that ate the most time and caused the most stress, but if I'm honest with myself, it is probably also the greatest contributor to the **sense of responsibility** I have developed towards Ahavat Achim since moving here.

Finally, the Strategic Planning Committee came along and another illustrious group of members stepped up to the plate to think methodically and comprehensively about Ahavat Achim's future. Steve Winchester, Melanie Kwestel, Aaron Czinn, Liz Jacob, and Matt Zimmelman gathered dozens of times over 18 months - often warmly in Melanie's home, energized by mandelbread and seltzer - developing surveys, reports, and ideas which will set the stage for the shul's next 50 years. This is certainly still an ongoing process and I don't know what will come from it five, ten, twenty years from now, but I know that I am much closer with those individuals for it, and that through this process I

REFLECTIONS AFTER CHAGIM

was able to learn about what so many other members care about, appreciate, or hope to see for themselves and their peers in the future.

Before closing (if it's this long anyway, what's another few paragraphs?!), I did an exercise in writing this, trying to think of all the individuals who put some "skin in the game" to make a "just" a regular Shabbat at Ahavat Achim what it is. With apologies to anyone left off, here it is:

- Davening leaders, leiners, and gabbaim: Rabbi Shestack, Marty Sonnenblick, Rich Mayer, Steve Winchester, Stu Oppenheim, Zach Oppenheim, Mark Follender, Yeshayahu Ginsberg, Daniel Borsuk, John Frank, John Caruso, Aaron Czinn, Stephen Agress, Matt Zimmelman, Barry Weinreb, and Andrew Wigod (to name a few)
- Shabbat communications: Steve Plotnick (coordinating the bulletin), Joan Goldberg (sending emails in a very narrow "crunch time"), Aaron Czinn, Liz Jacob, Shifra Caruso, Kira Wigod and others (for event flyers); Deborah Kempin, Steve Winchester, and the Israel Action Committee (drafting the IAC Newsletter); Jordana Bickel, Esther Zimmelman, and Julie Kaufman (drafting the Youth Newsletter); and Aaron Czinn (updating the TV screen in the foyer)
- Programming prep. and support: David Garfunkel and Marty Sonnenblick (getting the build ready before Shabbat); Andrew Wigod (sets up youth rooms); David Garfunkel (orders or personally purchases all food for kiddush, seudat shlishit, and groups snacks); Margo Heda (does frequent sweeps of the premises)
- In the David Schwitzer z"l Social Hall: David Garfunkel, Daniel Borsuk, and Steve Wechsler (set up for kiddush); Barry Weinreb, Abby Kira, Ariella Jacob, Perri Mayer and others (lead Tefillah for groups);
- Safety: Margo Heda, Eliot Greene, Vivian Lerner, Adam Nudelman, Howard Schultz, Avi Cohen, and Chava Wernick rotate through supporting our guard ensuring we balance welcoming all with ensuring safety;
- And, of course, Rabbi Shestack prepares multiple classes and shiurim every week for the various "slots" where he enhances our tefillah with learning.
- If I have left anyone off, please tell me - I am but a fallible human!

This note - which only includes the committees I was a part of (and there are many, many more committees, see last year's Purim shpiel) and surely left off many deserving mentions of shabbat contributors (and did not attempt to enumerate all our peers who have done these roles in the *past*) - numbers over **fifty names**. That's an unbelievable number and an even more unbelievable percentage of our small congregation that step up regularly, week after week, to put their mark on all of our experience.

At this point (or far earlier), Rebecca would say, "Jay, you made your point. Wrap it up."

Experience seems to bear out that Ahavat Achim is a place where people roll up their

REFLECTIONS AFTER CHAGIM

sleeves. You can see that in the outputs, but you can see that even more in the relationships and the stake that so many of us have in holding this edifice up.

Rebecca and I (and by extension Yonah, Ami, and Ayal) feel so privileged to have landed in this somewhat hidden gem in Bergen County, and look forward to another year growing together.

Bli neder, there will be more newsletters in the future and they will include updates as well, and not just me patting Ahavat Achim's back (probably that too, though), but a thousand words is enough for the premier. I'll end with a request to hear from you.

What is something you hope for yourself in 5786 in which Ahavat Achim could play a role? [Click here to share your answer.](#)

Ahavat Achim Presents



AHAVAT ACHIM

THE GARFUNKEL

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 Presents

Annual **COMEDY** Night!

WITH WINE AND DESSERT



Saturday, Nov. 8
8:00 PM/Doors Open at 7:30

18-25
Saddle River
Road
Fair Lawn



FEATURING
the comedy of
MIKE FINE



Purchase Advance Tickets online before Nov 6
www.ahavatachim.org/aa-events/comedy

Members: \$25
Non-Members: \$30
At the door: \$36

Sponsorships available!
\$150 for 4 up-front seats!



Etrog Composting with GrowTorah!

Are you wondering what to do with your etrog after Sukkot? Instead of letting it go to waste, join the GrowTorah Community Etrog Composting Program!

This initiative is a beautiful way to return your etrog to the earth, enriching our GrowTorah gardens' soil and fostering new growth.

Last Day for Drop Off: November 7, 2025

For more information about Etrog
Composting and Bal Tashchit:
www.growtorah.org/etrog



Register Your
Etrog Here



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

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!



Covenant & Conversation

Jonathan Sacks
THE RABBI SACKS LEGACY

NOACH • נח

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.

True Morality

Is there such a thing as an objective basis of morality? For some time, in secular circles, the idea has seemed absurd. Morality is what we choose it to be. We are free to do what we like so long as we don't harm others.

Moral judgments are not truths but choices. There is no way of getting from "is" to "ought", from description to prescription, from facts to values, from science to ethics. This was the received wisdom in philosophy for a century after Nietzsche had argued for the abandonment of morality – which he saw as the product of Judaism – in favour of the "will to power".

Recently, however, an entirely new scientific basis has been given to morality from two surprising directions: neo-Darwinism and the branch of mathematics known as Games Theory. As

we will see, the discovery is intimately related to the story of Noach and the covenant made between God and humanity after the Flood.

Games theory was invented by one of the most brilliant minds of the 20th century, John von Neumann (1903–1957). He realised that the mathematical models used in economics were unrealistic and did not mirror the way decisions are made in the real world. Rational choice is not simply a matter of weighing alternatives and deciding between them. The reason is that the outcome of our decision often depends on how other people react to it, and usually we cannot know this in advance. Games theory, von Neumann's invention in 1944, was an attempt to produce a mathematical representation of choice under conditions of uncertainty. Six years later, it yielded its most famous

paradox, known as the Prisoner's Dilemma.

Imagine two people, arrested by the police under suspicion of committing a crime. There is insufficient evidence to convict them on a serious charge; there is only enough to convict them of a lesser offence. The police decide to encourage each to inform against the other. They separate them and make each the following proposal: if you testify against the other suspect, you will go free, and he will be imprisoned for ten years. If he testifies against you, and you stay silent, you will be sentenced to ten years in prison, and he will go free. If you both testify against one another, you will each receive a five-year sentence. If both of you stay silent, you will each be convicted of the lesser charge and face a one-year sentence.

It doesn't take long to work out that the optimal strategy for each is to inform against the other. The result is that each will be imprisoned for five years. The paradox is that the best outcome would be for both to remain silent. They would then only face one year in prison. The reason that neither will opt for this strategy is that it depends on collaboration. However, since each is unable to know what the other is doing – there is no communication between them – they cannot take the risk of staying silent. The Prisoner's Dilemma is remarkable

because it shows that two people, both acting rationally, will produce a result that is bad for both of them. Eventually, a solution was discovered. The reason for the paradox is that the two prisoners find themselves in this situation only once. If it happened repeatedly, they would eventually discover that the best thing to do is to trust one another and co-operate.

In the meantime, biologists were wrestling with a phenomenon that puzzled Darwin. The theory of natural selection – popularly known as the survival of the fittest – suggests that the most ruthless individuals in any population will survive and hand their genes on to the next generation. Yet almost every society ever observed values individuals who are altruistic: who sacrifice their own advantage to help others. There seems to be a direct contradiction between these two facts.

The Prisoner's Dilemma suggested an answer. Individual self-interest often produces bad results. Any group which learns to cooperate, instead of compete, will be at an advantage relative to others. But, as the Prisoner's Dilemma showed, this needs repeated encounters – the so-called "Iterated (= repeated) Prisoner's dilemma". In the late 1970s, a competition was announced to find the computer program that did best at playing the Iterated Prisoner's Dilemma against itself and other opponents.

The winning programme was devised by a Canadian, Anatole Rapoport, and was called Tit-for-Tat. It was dazzlingly simple: it began by co-operating, and then repeated the last move of its opponent. It worked on the rule of “What you did to me, I will do to you”, or “measure for measure”. This was the first time scientific proof had been given for any moral principle.

What is fascinating about this chain of discoveries is that it precisely mirrors the central principle of the covenant God made with Noah:

Whoever sheds the blood of man,
By man shall his blood be shed;
For in the image of God has God made man.

This is measure for measure [in Hebrew, *middah keneged middah*], or retributive justice: As you do, so shall you be done to. In fact, at this point the Torah does something very subtle. The six words in which the principle is stated are a mirror image of one another: [1] Who sheds [2] the blood [3] of man, [3a] by man [2a] shall his blood [1a] be shed. This is a perfect example of style reflecting substance: what is done to us is a mirror image of what we do. The extraordinary fact is that the first moral principle set out in the Torah is also the first moral principle ever to be scientifically demonstrated. Tit-for-Tat is the

computer equivalent of (retributive) justice:

Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed.

The story has a sequel. In 1989, the Polish mathematician Martin Nowak produced a programme that beats Tit-for-Tat. He called it Generous. It overcame one weakness of Tit-for-Tat, namely that when you meet a particularly nasty opponent, you get drawn into a potentially endless and destructive cycle of retaliation, which is bad for both sides. Generous avoided this by randomly but periodically forgetting the last move of its opponent, thus allowing the relationship to begin again. What Nowak had produced, in fact, was a computer simulation of forgiveness.

Once again, the connection with the story of Noah and the Flood is direct. After the Flood, God vowed: “I will never again curse the ground for man’s sake, although the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.” This is the principle of Divine forgiveness.

Thus the two great principles of the Noachide covenant are also the first two principles to have been established by computer simulation. There is an objective basis for morality after all. It rests on two key ideas: justice and forgiveness, or what the Sages called

middat ha-din and *middat rachamim*. Without these, no group can survive in the long run.

In one of the first great works of Jewish philosophy – *Sefer Emunot ve-Deot* (*The Book of Beliefs and Opinions*) – R. Saadia Gaon (882–942) explained that the truths of the Torah could be established by reason. Why then was revelation necessary? Because it takes humanity time to arrive at truth, and there are many slips and pitfalls along the way.

It took more than a thousand years after R. Saadia Gaon for humanity to demonstrate the fundamental moral truths that lie at the basis of God's covenant with humankind: that co-

operation is as necessary as competition, that co-operation depends on trust, that trust requires justice, and that justice itself is incomplete without forgiveness. Morality is not simply what we choose it to be. It is part of the basic fabric of the universe, revealed to us by the universe's Creator, long ago.



Around the Shabbat Table

1. Do you think people are naturally selfish or naturally cooperative? Why?
2. In the Prisoner's Dilemma, would you stay silent or tell on your partner? What would influence your choice?
3. How does the story of Noach show both justice and forgiveness?

● 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/noach/true-morality/>