



**AHAVAT ACHIM**  
קָהָלָת אֶחָדִים  
THE FAMILY SHUL

CANDLE LIGHTING 4:12 PM | 30 KISLEV | DECEMBER 20, 2025 | HAVDALA 5:16 PM

שבת פרשת מקץ  
א' דראש חדש טבת  
ו' דchanukah

**SHABBAT PARSHAT MIKEITZ**  
**1ST DAY ROSH CHODESH**  
**SIXTH DAY CHANUKAH**

Three Sifrei Torah. In first, six Aliyahs from Mikeitz. In second, distinguished Ba'al Tefillah, a graduate of Yeshiva University, and a Brooklyn one Aliyah from Parshat Pinchas native. (Numbers 28:9-15). Maftir is from Parshat Naso (Numbers 7:42-7:47). Haftorah is Zechariah 2:14-4:7. Do not say either אב צדקה or הרחמים.

**FRIDAY EVENING**

<b>MINCHA</b>	<b>4:15 PM</b>
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SHKIA	4:31 PM
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TZAIT HAKOCHAVIM	5:11 PM
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**SHABBAT**

<b>HASHKAMA</b>	<b>7:45 AM</b>
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<b>SHACHARIT - MAIN</b>	<b>9:00 AM</b>
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POST-HASHKAMA SHIUR	HIATUS
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LAST KRIAT SHEMA	9:36 AM
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FUNDAMENTALS SHIUR	~11:30 AM
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GEDOLAH	12:17 PM
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PRE-MINCHA SHIUR	3:25 PM
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<b>MINCHA</b>	<b>4:05 PM</b>
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SHKIA	4:31 PM
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<b>MAARIV</b>	<b>5:16 PM</b>
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SUNDAY  
12/21

MONDAY  
12/22

TUESDAY  
12/23

WEDNESDAY  
12/24

THURSDAY  
12/25

FRIDAY  
12/26

**WEEKDAY MINYANIM AT AHAVAT ACHIM**

<b>SHACHARIT</b>	<b>6:20/8:00 AM</b>	<b>6:10 AM</b>	<b>6:25 AM</b>	<b>6:25 AM</b>	<b>6:20/8:00 AM</b>	<b>6:20/8:00 AM</b>
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2ND SHACHARIT MINYON -  
YISHTABACH AT 7:40 AM

**7:25 AM**

**7:25 AM**

**7:25 AM**

**MINCHA/MAARIV**

**4:20 PM**

**4:20 PM**

**4:21 PM**

**4:21 PM**

**4:22 PM**

**4:20 PM**

**ZMANIM**

Earliest Talit

6:17 AM

6:18 AM

6:18 AM

6:19 AM

6:19 AM

6:20 AM

Gedolah

12:18 PM

12:18 PM

12:19 PM

12:19 PM

12:20 PM

12:20 PM

Shkia

4:32 PM

4:32 PM

4:33 PM

4:33 PM

4:34 PM

Tzait

5:12 PM

5:12 PM

5:13 PM

5:13 PM

5:14 PM

Rabbi Ely Shestack

President Jay Herman

**SHABBAT CHANUKAH DINNER**

Thank you to everyone that helped arrange this Friday night's Chanukah dinner.

**CHAZZAN-IN-RESIDENCE**

Please welcome our Chazzan-In-Residence Akiva Abramowitz. Akiva is a distinguished Ba'al Tefillah, a graduate of Yeshiva University, and a Brooklyn one Aliyah from Parshat Pinchas native.

**GITA COOPERWASSER נ"ע YOUTH EVENTS**

On Shabbat, December 20, there will be a Children's Seudah Shlishit/ Chanukah program, at 4:15 PM, followed by a glow-in-the-dark musical havdala!

**BOKER TOV CHANUKAH EVENT**



On Sunday, December 21, join us for our Boker Tov Chanukah event, with musical Hallel, kids activities, and breakfast (no charge). RSVP here: [Breakfast](#).

**HALACHOT OF CHANUKAH**

Selected laws of Chanukah may be found on page 4.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Dec. 21** - Boker Tov Chanukah Event, with musical Hallel, kids activities, and breakfast (no charge). RSVP here: [Breakfast](#).

**Feb. 14** - Scholar-In-Residence Rabbi Shlomo Brody, from Ematali.

**Feb. 21** - 4th Annual Comedy Night featuring Mike Fine, Sat. night, Nov. 8, Doors

 Open 7:30 PM, show starts at 8:00 PM! Buy Tickets here: [LAUGH A LOT!](#)

**Feb. 22** - Journal Dinner.

## IN OUR FUTURE

**Jan. 3** - Kiddush is sponsored by the Riskin family as a **חכמת הטוב לה' for** keeping Greg's long-term memory intact and allowing him to still recite his Bar Mitzvah parsha, and as a **תודה רבה** to the community for supporting Greg and his entire family as he continues his battle with Frontotemporal Dementia.

**Jan. 31** - Seudah Shlishit is sponsored by Amy & Stephen Agress to commemorate the **הירש בן מאיר** Yahrtzeit of Amy's stepfather.

**Feb. 14** - Seudah Shlishit is sponsored by Amy & Stephen Agress commemorating the Yahrtzeit of Rabbi Hyman Agress זצ"ר, Stephen's father, **הרב חיים בן הרב יהושע**.

## BOARD MEETINGS 8:15 PM

**Dec. 29 (Mon.)** - At shul w/Zoom option.

**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](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).

## SHIURIM



- PESHAT OF 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).
- TORAH PODCAST FOR YOUR COMMUTE is available on Spotify or on other applications with an RSS code. Click here: [PODCASTS](#).
- POST-HASHKAMA SHIUR, alternates between examining the development of Halachot and analyzing Mishlei (Proverbs)
- FUNDAMENTALS OF JEWISH THOUGHT, after Kiddush, discussing the Political Philosophy of our Patriarchs.
- 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 minyon (≈10 minutes).
- HALACHA SHIUR FOR WOMEN, Monday nights, 8:15 PM. **ON HIATUS!**
- SEDER ON THE SIDDUR, at Seudah Shlishit - **Korbonot Part V (R. Donin - pp. 199-200, R. Munk - pp. 61-73)**.

## 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 January birthday/anniversary kiddush by Sat. night, Jan. 3.

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

## GITA COOPERWASSER ג"ה YOUTH EVENTS

**Jan. 3** - Parent-Child Learning.

**Feb. 7** - Parent-Child Learning.

## GITA COOPERWASSER ג"ה SHABBAT YOUTH INFO



### • SHABBAT YOUTH LEADERS:

**3RD - 5TH: SOPHIA & ABBY**

**K - 2ND: ARIELLA & BELANA**

**3 YEARS - PRE-K: DANIELLE & LYLA.**

- Youth group for 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.



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

Contact Lori at [garfmom@gmail.com](mailto:garfmom@gmail.com) to book the David Schwitzer<sup>ר"ע</sup> 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).

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

## DONATE A SEFER, ETC.

Donate Siddurim & Machzorim (\$40), and Chumashim (\$60). Contact David at [dmgarfunkel@gmail.com](mailto:dmgarfunkel@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 Yahrtzeits, 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.

## **הנוכה - CHANUKAH (SUN., DEC. 14 - MON., DEC. 22)**

One should light Chanukah candles as close to 10 minutes after sunset as possible (excepting Sat. night). However, it is preferable for the family to light together rather than have a portion of the family light earlier. Everyone in the household is encouraged to light Chanuka candles. (The matriarch of the household should follow the family custom.) There must be enough oil/wax to last one half hour past the time when the stars appear. If one is lighting after the appearance of the stars there must still be enough oil to burn for half an hour.

Under extenuating circumstances, one may light even after midnight if any members of the family are awake to see the lights. If the Chanukah lights are accidentally extinguished prior to their having burned the requisite time, one is not obligated by Halacha to rekindle them; it is, however, permissible to rekindle them, but without a Bracha.

There is a custom to give children Chanukah Gelt as part of publicizing the miracle.

In Shemonei Esrei and Bircat HaMazon add **וְעַל הַנְּסִים** (do not repeat if omitted). At Shacharit we recite the complete Hallel even on Rosh Chodesh.

### **וְיִדְחָנוּכָה - SIXTH DAY OF CHANUKAH FRIDAY EVENING - DECEMBER 19 (29 KISLEV)**

We light the Chanukah Menorah at home before lighting the Shabbat candles. One must be careful to use enough oil (or light a large enough candle) to remain lit until thirty minutes after the appearance of three stars. There is a minhag to daven Mincha before lighting the Menorah, but one should not delay the welcoming of Shabbat because of this. One may not light Chanukah or Shabbat candles earlier than Plag HaMincha (3:33 PM).

### **מַוְצָּאי שַׁבָּת - MOTZEI SHABBAT**

There are two approaches concerning the order of Havdalah and Chanukah Menorah lighting in the home. If one has a family minhag, they should continue to follow that practice, otherwise the psak (ruling) of the Rabbi is to make Havdalah first, and then to light the Chanukah Menorah.

## **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](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100091322384429)

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

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

## **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.]





Be on the lookout  
for RSVP forms  
and sponsorship  
opportunities!

# CHANUKAH

5786/2025



## Parent Child Learning - Chanukah Edition

*"Oily Miracles vs. Winning Wars"*

December 6th at 6pm | Nudelman Home  
Pizza Dinner to be Served



## Chanukah Shiur at the Shestack Home

*"8 Ways to make Chanukah a Richer Experience"*

December 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm  
Shiur to begin at 8:00pm



## Friday Night Dinner

*Dinner following Ma'ariv*

December 19th at 5:30pm



## Youth Chanukah Celebration

*Kids program followed by Seudah Shelishit  
and a musical glow in the dark havdallah*

December 20<sup>th</sup> starting at 4:15pm



## Boker Tov Chanukah

*Shacharit with Musical Hallel followed by  
Kids Activities and Breakfast*

December 21st starting at 9:15am



## ANNUAL BERGEN COUNTY CHANUKAH TOY DRIVE

*Drop off new, unwrapped gifts for children and teens  
in the designated box in the shul lobby from November 17-28*





# Chazzan in Residence

## Akiva Abramowitz

Join us for a very special Shabbat with our Chazzan in Residence, Akiva Abramowitz, on **Shabbat Chanukah, December 19-20!**



Akiva Abramowitz is a distinguished Ba'al Tefillah, a graduate of Yeshiva University, and a Brooklyn native. He has inspired congregations by leading davening for Shabbat and Chagim in shuls throughout the country and overseas, fostering participatory davening and communal singing. Beyond the bimah, Akiva is a vocalist for major Jewish a cappella groups, including The Maccabeats and Y-Studs A Cappella, and has performed at numerous bar mitzvahs and concert venues worldwide. When not leading davening or performing, he practices law as an attorney at Goldberg Miller and Rubin.



# CHANUKAH CELEBRATION



SEUDAH SHLISHIT DINNER FOR CHILDREN, AN  
INTERACTIVE CHANUKAH PROGRAM FOLLOWED BY  
GLOW IN THE DARK MUSICAL HAVDALA!

DECEMBER 20TH  
STARTING AT 4:15 PM

[RSVP HERE](#) BY 12/14  
\$5/CHILD, \$12/FAMILY MAX

**Sponsorship  
welcome!**

# BOKER TOV CHANUKAH

- MUSICAL HALLEL
- KIDS ACTIVITIES
- FREE BREAKFAST

**SUNDAY DEC. 21ST**

**9:15 AM SHACHARIT (Hallel at 9:40)**

**10:00 AM ARTS & CRAFTS for Kids 0-5**

**MACCABEE GAMES for Kids 6+**

**10:30 AM BREAKFAST**

RSVP AT [TINYURL.COM/BOKERTOVCHANUKAH](https://tinyurl.com/bokertovchanukah)



AHAVAT ACHIM  
קָהָלָת אֶחָדָת אֶחָדִים  
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 Presents...

★ Annual ★



# COMEDY



Night!



**WITH WINE AND DESSERT**

Saturday, February, 21

8:00 PM/Doors Open at 7:30

Address to be  
given after  
**RSVP**



FEATURING

the comedy of

MIKE FINE



Purchase Advance Tickets online before Feb. 18

[www.AhavatAchim.org/events/comedy](http://www.AhavatAchim.org/events/comedy)



Members: \$25

Non-Members: \$30

At the door: \$36



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



# Covenant & Conversation

MIKKETZ • מיכץ

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

Jonathan Sacks  
THE RABBI SACKS LEGACY

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

## Disguise

Joseph is now the ruler of Egypt. The famine he predicted has come to pass. It extends beyond Egypt to the land of Canaan. Seeking to buy food, Joseph's brothers make the journey to Egypt. They arrive at the palace of the man in charge of grain distribution:

*Now Joseph was governor of the land [Egypt]; it was he who dispensed food to all its people. When Joseph's brothers arrived, they bowed down to him, their faces to the ground. Joseph recognised his brothers as soon as he saw them, but he acted like a stranger and spoke harshly to them . . . Joseph recognised his brothers, but they did not recognise him.*

Gen. 42:6-8

We owe to Robert Alter the idea of a 'type-scene', a drama enacted several times

with variations; and these are particularly in evidence in the book of Bereishit. There is no universal rule as to how to decode the significance of a type-scene. One example is boy-meets-girl-at-well, an encounter that takes places three times, between Abraham's servant and Rebecca, Jacob and Rachel, and Moses and the daughters of Jethro. Here, the setting is probably not significant (wells are where strangers met in those days, like the water-dispenser in an office). What we must attend to in these three episodes is their variations: Rebecca's activism, Jacob's show of strength, Moses' passion for justice. How people act toward strangers at a well is, in other words, a test of their character. In some cases, however, a type-scene seems to indicate a recurring theme. That is the case here. If we are to understand what

is at stake in the meeting between Joseph and his brothers, we have to set it alongside three other episodes, all of which occur in Bereishit.

The first takes place in Isaac's tent. The patriarch is old and blind. He tells his elder son to go out into the field, trap an animal, and prepare a meal so that he can bless him. Surprisingly soon, Isaac hears someone enter. "Who are you?" he asks. "I am Esau, your elder son," the voice replies. Isaac is not convinced. "Come close and let me feel you, my son. Are you really Esau or not?" He reaches out and feels the rough texture of the skins covering his arms. Still unsure, he asks again, "But are you really my son Esau?" The other replies, "I am." So Isaac blesses him: "Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field blessed by God." But it is not Esau. It is Jacob in disguise.

Scene two: Jacob has fled to his uncle Laban's house. Arriving, he meets and falls in love with Rachel, and offers to work for her father for seven years in order to marry her. The time passes quickly: the years "seemed like a few days because he loved her." The wedding day approaches. Laban makes a feast. The bride enters her tent. Late at night, Jacob follows her. Now at last he has married his beloved Rachel. When morning comes, he discovers that he has been the victim of

a deception. It is not Rachel. It is Leah in disguise.

Scene three: Judah has married a Canaanite girl and is now the father of three sons. The first married a local girl, Tamar, but died mysteriously young, leaving his wife a childless widow. Following a pre-Mosaic version of the law of levirate marriage, Judah married his second son to Tamar so that she could have a child "to keep his brother's name alive." Tamar's second husband was loathe to have a son that would, in effect, belong to his late brother so he "spilled his seed," and for this he too died young. Judah is then reluctant to give Tamar his third son, so she is left an *agunah*, "chained," bound to someone she is prevented from marrying, and unable to marry anyone else.

The years pass. Judah's own wife dies. Returning home from sheep-shearing, he sees a veiled prostitute by the side of the road. He asks her to sleep with him, promising, by way of payment, a kid from the flock. She asks him for his "seal and its cord, and his staff" as security. The next day he sends a friend to deliver the kid, but the woman has disappeared. The locals deny all knowledge of her. Three months later, Judah hears that his daughter-in-law Tamar has become pregnant. He is incensed. Bound to his youngest son, she was not allowed to have

a relationship with anyone else. She must have been guilty of adultery. “Bring her out so that she may be burnt,” he says.

She is brought to be killed, but she asks one favour first. She tells one of the people to take to Judah the seal, and cord, and staff. “The father of my child,” she says, “is the man to whom these things belong.

Immediately, Judah understands. Tamar, unable to marry yet honour-bound to have a child to perpetuate the memory of her first husband, has tricked her father-in-law into performing the duty he should have allowed his youngest son to do. “She is more righteous than I,” Judah admits. He thought he had slept with a prostitute. But it was Tamar in disguise.

That is the context against which the meeting between Joseph and his brothers must be understood. The man the brothers bow down to bears no resemblance to a Hebrew shepherd. He speaks Egyptian. He is dressed in an Egyptian ruler’s robes. He wears Pharaoh’s signet ring and the gold chain of authority. They think they are in the presence of an Egyptian prince, but it is Joseph – their brother – in disguise. Four scenes, four disguises, four failures to see behind the mask. What do they have in common? Something very striking indeed. It is only by not being recognised

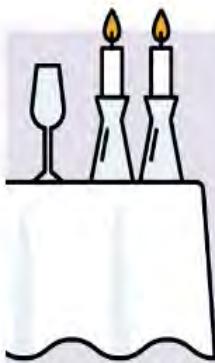
that Jacob, Leah, Tamar and Joseph can be recognised, in the sense of attended, taken seriously, heeded. Isaac loves Esau, not Jacob. He loves Rachel, not Leah. Judah thinks of his youngest son, not the plight of Tamar. Joseph is hated by his brothers. Only when they appear as something or someone else can they achieve what they seek – for Jacob, his father’s blessing; for Leah, a husband; for Tamar, a son; for Joseph, the non-hostile attention of his brothers. The plight of these four individuals is summed up in a single poignant phrase: “Joseph recognised his brothers, but they did not recognise him.”

Do the disguises work? In the short term, yes; but in the long term, not necessarily. Jacob suffers greatly for having taken Esau’s blessing. Leah, though she marries Jacob, never wins his love. Tamar had a child (in fact, twins) but Judah “was not intimate with her anymore.” Joseph – well, his brothers no longer hated him but they feared him. Even after his assurances that he bore them no grudge, they still thought he would take revenge on them after their father died. What we achieve in disguise is never the love we sought.

But something else happens. Jacob, Leah, Tamar and Joseph discover that, though they may never win the affection of those from whom they seek it, God is with them; and that, ultimately, is enough. A disguise is an act of hiding – from others,

and perhaps from oneself. From God, however, we cannot, nor do we need to, hide. He hears our cry. He answers our unspoken prayer. He heeds the unheeded and brings them comfort.

In the aftermath of the four episodes, there is no healing of relationship but there is a mending of identity. That is what makes them, not secular narratives but deeply religious chronicles of psychological growth and maturation. What they tell us is simple and profound: those who stand before God need no disguises to achieve self-worth when standing before humankind.



## Around the Shabbat Table

1. Why might someone feel they need to hide who they truly are to be seen?
2. Where else in Tanach do we see leaders disguising themselves? Why do you think they did it?
3. How can we hide from God, who is omnipresent and omniscient? Do you feel you are your true self when you stand before - or pray - to God?

● These questions come from this week's **Family Edition** to Rabbi Sacks' Covenant & Conversation. For an interactive, multi-generational study, check out the full edition at [rabbisacks.org/covenant-conversation-family-edition/mikketz/disguise/](http://rabbisacks.org/covenant-conversation-family-edition/mikketz/disguise/)