



The Bulletin is sponsored by Saragail Chessin Carpe in loving memory of her brother Barnett Chessin<sup>ר"ע</sup> (October 9, 1938~February 9, 2020) with unending love, pride and admiration.



CANDLE LIGHTING 4:53 PM | 13 SHEVAT | JANUARY 31, 2026 | HAVDALA 5:58 PM

**שבת שירה/פרשת בשלח  
SHABBAT SHIRA  
PARSHAT BESHALACH**



Welcome to our Musical Kabbalat Shabbat. Haftorah is Judges 4:4-5:31. Final time for Kiddush Levanah of Shevat is Sun. night, February 1 (15 Shevat) until Monday morning daybreak.

**FRIDAY EVENING**

**MINCHA 4:55 PM**  
SHKIA 5:11 PM  
TZAIT HAKOCHAVIM 5:51 PM

**SHABBAT**

**HASHKAMA 7:45 AM**  
**SHACHARIT - MAIN 9:00 AM**  
POST-HASHKAMA SHIUR ≈9:30 AM  
LAST KRIAT SHEMA 9:39 AM  
FUNDAMENTALS SHIUR ≈11:30 AM  
PRE-MINCHA SHIUR 4:05 PM  
**MINCHA 4:45 PM**  
SHKIA 5:13 PM  
**MAARIV 5:58 PM**

**TU B'SHEVAT (MONDAY,  
FEBRUARY 2, 15 SHEVAT)**



Do not say תחנון on Monday (or at Mincha on Sunday before). Custom is to eat

fruits that grow on trees, for Tu B'Shevat is the "New Year of the Trees". Say שהחיינו on any seasonal fruit that you are eating for the first time this year (but not if artificially preserved or deficient in appearance or taste). Many have the Kabbalistic custom of the Kabbalistic Tu B'Shevav Seder. For details: [Tu B'shvat Seder](#).

**TU B'SHVAT "GREEN"  
KIDDUSH**

Welcome to our annual Tu B'shvat "green" kiddush with cholents made from sustainable ingredients and compostable cutlery! Thank you to our sponsors: Cooper, Cohen/Haddad, Czinn/Kaplowitz, C&C Goldberg, Greene, Herman/Berger, & Kessel. Thank you to our cholent makers: Rebbetzin Chana, Adam Brooks, Britty Cohen, Aliza Mayer, Chayim Goldberg, & Chava Goldberg

**SEUDAH SHLISHIT**

Seudah Shlishit is sponsored by Amy & Stephen Agress to commemorate the Yahrtzeit of Amy's stepfather, הירש בן מאיר<sup>ר"ע</sup>.

**TREE-MENDOUS PRE-TU  
B'SHVAT EVENT**



Sun., Feb. 1, 10 AM, is our Tree-mendous pre-Tu B'Shvat event with GrowTorah.

**WELCOME**

Welcome our new members Rivka & Chaim Lipsitz (and their four children).

**STORIES FROM THE FRONT**

On Sun., Feb. 1, 3:30 PM, come hear Adi Karni, an IDF soldier, share stories of courage from the battlefield.

**MAZEL TOV**



Mazel Tov to Naomi & David Graber on the engagement of their grandson Avi Brandler to Devora Finkel.

עלה הזיווג יפה ויבנו בית נאמן בישראל. May the beautiful couple be elevated in the building of a faithful house of Israel.

**ANNUAL DINNER**



Mazel tov to this year's Dinner Honoree, Dr. Melanie Kwestel, and this year's Young Leadership Awardees Sara & Natan

Santacruz. Dinner is Sun., Feb. 22, 5:00 PM, at Temple Israel in Ridgewood, NJ. Click here to make your reservation and indicate sponsorship level: [Dinner](#). To submit a tribute to the honorees, click here: [Tribute](#).



	SUNDAY 2/1	MONDAY 2/2	TUESDAY 2/3	WEDNESDAY 2/4	THURSDAY 2/5	FRIDAY 2/6
<b>WEEKDAY MINYONIM AT AHAVAT ACHIM</b>						
SHACHARIT	8:00AM	6:15 AM	6:25 AM	6:25 AM	6:15 AM	6:25 AM
2nd SHACHARIT		7:25 AM	7:25 AM	7:25 AM	7:25 AM	7:25 AM
MINCHA/MAARIV	5:02 PM	5:03 PM	5:04 PM	5:06 PM	5:07 PM	5:05 PM
<b>ZMANIM</b>						
Earliest Talit	6:10 AM	6:09 AM	6:08 AM	6:07 AM	6:06 AM	6:05 AM
Gedolah	12:36 PM	12:36 PM	12:36 PM	12:36 PM	12:36 PM	12:37 PM
Shkia	5:14 PM	5:15 PM	5:16 PM	5:18 PM	5:19 PM	
Tzait	5:54 PM	5:55 PM	5:56 PM	5:58 PM	5:59 PM	

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Feb. 1** - A Tree-mendous Tu B'Shvat with GrowTorah, 10:00 AM.

**Feb. 1** - Adi Karni, IDF Combat Engineer.

**Feb. 7** - Super Bowl Kiddush. Sponsor here: [Go Team!](#)

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

**Feb. 14** - Birthday/Anniversary Kiddush.

**Feb. 21** - 4th Annual Comedy Night with Mike Fine, Sat. night, Doors Open at 7:30 PM, show starts at 8:00 PM! Buy Tickets: [LAUGH A LOT!](#)

**Feb. 22** - Journal Dinner.

**Feb. 28** - Esther Chapter-by-Chapter Round-Robin Shiur. To sign up, click: [Esther](#).

**Mar. 7** - Board Game Night, 8:15 PM. RSVP here: [Games](#).

**Mar. 8** - Blood Drive

**Mar. 28** - Shir HaShirim Chapter-by-Chapter Round-Robin Shiur. To sign up, click here: [Song of Songs](#)

## IN OUR FUTURE

**Feb. 14** - Seudah Shlishit is sponsored by Amy & Stephen Agress to commemorate the Yahrzeit of Rabbi Hyman Agress<sup>ר"י</sup>, הרב חיים בן הרב יהושע, Stephen's father.

**Fed. 21** - Seudah Shlishit is sponsored by Dina & Elliot Greene commemorating the Yahrzeit of Elliot's mother, Sylvia Greene<sup>ר"י</sup>, Serah bat Ya'acov Tzvi.

## BOARD MEETINGS 8:15 PM

**Feb. 24** - At shul w/Zoom option.

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

## KIDDUSH & SEUDAH SHLISHIT

- Enjoying Scotch at Kiddush, please consider donating a bottle 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.
- 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.
- HALACHA SHIUR FOR WOMEN, Monday nights, 8:15 PM
- SEDER ON THE SIDDUR, at Seudah Shlishit - **KADDISH D'RABANAN - R. DONIN PP. 220-221, ARTSCROLL'S KADDISH PP. 50-55.**

## BIRTHDAY & ANNIVERSARY KIDDUSH

To add a birthday or anniversary to our February list (next Kiddush on Shabbat, February. 14), click here: [SIMCHA](#). Listings/sponsorships are \$36 per family per month. RSVP for the February birthday/anniversary Kiddush by Sunday night, February. 8.

## GITA COOPERWASSER<sup>ר"י</sup> YOUTH EVENTS

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

**Feb. 28** - Interactive Youth Purim program with dinner.

**May 23** - Interactive Youth Shavuot program with dinner.

## GITA COOPERWASSER<sup>ר"י</sup> SHABBAT YOUTH INFO



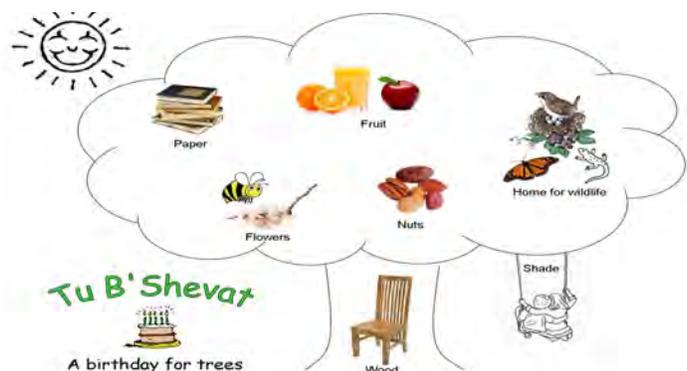
### SHABBAT YOUTH LEADERS:

**3<sup>RD</sup> - 5<sup>TH</sup>: LETIZIA & SOPHIA**

**K - 2<sup>ND</sup>: BELANA & ABBY**

**3 YRS - PRE-K: DANIELLE & 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.



Mishlei/Proverbs  
Post-Hashkama Shiur 18 – Righteousness and Speech

“משלי שלמה פ בו תכם ישמח-אב ובן פסיל תוגת אמו: בלא-יועילו אוצרות גשע וצדקה תציל ממנות: שלא-ירעיב ג-ה-ה-ג נפש צדיק ומנות רשעים יקהר: ז ראש עשה כה-רמיה גז חרוצים תעשיר: אגור בגיז בן משקיל נרדם בקציר בן מביש: ברכות לראש צדיק ופי רשעים יכסה חמס: זכר צדיק לברכה ושם רשעים ירקב: חכמ-לב יקח מצות ואניל שפתים ילבט: הולך בתם ילך בטח ומעקש דרכיו ינדע: קרץ עין יתן עצבת ואניל שפתים ילבט: כמקור חיים פי צדיק ופי רשעים יכסה חמס: שונאה תעורר מדגים ועל כל-רשעים תכסה אהבה: בושפתי נבון תמצא חכמה ושבט לגו חסר-לב: וחכמים יצפנו-דעת ופי-אוייל מהתה קרבה: יהון עשיר קרית עגזו מהתת דלים רישם: מפעלת צדיק לחיים תבואת רשע להטאת: –

1Proverbs of Solomon: A wise son makes his father happy, but a foolish son is the grief of his mother. 2Treasures from wickedness will not avail, but charity (righteousness) will save from death. 3The Lord will not starve the righteous, but denies the wicked what they crave. 4One who makes a deceitful scale becomes a poor man, and the hand of those who make true determinations will make [them] rich. 5An intelligent son gathers in the summer, whereas an embarrassing son slumbers through the harvest. 6Blessings [shall come] upon the head of a righteous man, but violence smothers the mouth of the wicked. 7The memory of a righteous man is for a blessing, but the name of the wicked shall rot. 8The wise-hearted accepts commandments, but a prating fool will come to grief. 9He who walks in innocence walks securely, but he who perverts his ways will be broken. 10He who winks his eye causes sorrow, and he who talks foolishly shall fall. 11The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals [their intended] violence. 12Hatred arouses strife, but love covers up all transgressions. 13Wisdom is found on the lips of the intelligent, but a rod is ready for the back of one devoid of sense. 14Wise men store up knowledge, but the mouth of a fool [causes] imminent ruin. 15A rich man's wealth is his fortress of strength; [but] the ruin of the poor is their poverty. 16The deed of the righteous brings life; [but] the produce of the wicked makes for want.<sup>1</sup>

A. משלי שלמה - “Proverbs of Solomon”.

- The next major section of Mishlei begins with the phrase משלי שלמה, “Proverbs of Solomon”, and it is from here that the name of the book is derived both in Hebrew and in English. While not every proverb in this section follows the exact same pattern, commonly each proverb/aphorism/maxim is a couplet expressing the same idea antithetically, *i.e.*, with a positive precept followed by a related negative precept, or vice versa, each designed to support the same proposition.
- Even where the antithetical pattern is not followed, nevertheless there usually is a connection between the second part of a couplet to the first part, *e.g.*, the subject of the second part of the couplet is usually akin to an antonym, synonym or there is a parallelism of or to the subject of the first part.
- While each pasuk stands alone, there are times that certain closely grouped pasukim have thematic similarities.

B. Throughout chapter 10, righteousness, the righteous person, and charity, are a subject that is often invoked by Shlomo to express the benefits therefrom. In the first half of the chapter, we see it six times (always at the beginning of the couplet except the first time): v2 – “. . . but charity (righteousness) will save from death” (**existential**), v3 – “Hashem will not starve the righteous” (**sustenance**), v6 – “Blessings [shall come] upon the head of a righteous man” (**blessings**), v7 - “The mention of a righteous man is for a blessing” (**legacy**), v11 – “The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life” (**societal benefit**), and v16 – “The deed of the righteous brings life” (**ultimate outcome**).

The corresponding antithesis of these couplets stress that for the wicked: (a) they will either not acquire what they crave, or it will prove to be lacking or of no avail, (b) they will find that violence will be their undoing, and (c) their reputations will wither and words from their lips won't be trusted.

<sup>1</sup> Mishlei Chapter 10.

## Post-Hashkama Shiur 18

C. When speech/mouth/lips are mentioned as part of the couplet in the first half of this chapter, it often forms the negative part of the antithesis set forth in the couplet (or reinforces the negative if stated in parallel), but not always. For example: v6 – “but violence smothers the mouth of the wicked”, v8 – “but a prating fool will come to grief”, v10 – “and he who talks foolishly shall fall”, v11 – “The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals [their intended] violence”<sup>2</sup>, v13 – “Wisdom is found on the lips of the intelligent”, and v14 – “but the mouth of a fool [causes] imminent ruin.”

- Notwithstanding my use of differing translations for readability sake, note that relevant portions of verses 6 and 11 are identical, “רשעים יכסה חמס”, as well as the relevant portions of verses 8 and 10. “אָויל שְׁפֹתַיִם יִלְבֹּט”.

D. A few notes on individual pasukim:

- (1) The first verse references only the father having joy from the wise son, and only the mother feeling grief from the actions of the son that chooses foolishness. Some possible explanations: (a) Meiri - the fear of the father prevents the foolish son from acting other than wise in his presence, while he perhaps has no such fear of his mother (compare this to how Yitzhak viewed Esav, as compared to how Rivka viewed him), (b) Vilna Gaon – the wise son remains by his father’s side, but the foolish son remains at home with his mother, and (c) Malbim – the wise son is credited to the discipline imposed by the father, while the foolish son is blamed on the excessive compassion of the mother.
- (2) The second verse’s statement that *וְצִדְקָה תַצִּיל מִמָּוֶת* / “Tzedakah saves from death”, is the first of Mishlei’s sources of a principal ethical maxim of Judaism that is stressed as part of our Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur davening (together with teshuvah and tefillah). It is later repeated at Mishlei 11:4.
- (3) According to the Vilna Gaon and Malbim (and others) the fifth verse relates to two brothers who equally inherited. One brother takes the gifts given, and makes it greater through hard work, while the other simply squanders the advantages he was born with.
- (4) The seventh verse’s statement that *זִכְרֹן לְבָרָכָה* / “The memory of the righteous is for a blessing” is the source behind the memorial honorific *זצ"ל* or equivalent after the name of the deceased.
  - o Kohelet at 7:1 provides a similar idea from the perspective of the living person’s legacy, when Kohelet writes that: “A good name is better than good oil”.
- (5) The twelfth verse has common popularity as a result of it being a lynchpin of the Christian bible. That said, love covering up transgressions is an essential Jewish concept, because forgiveness between fellows can wipe away the sins between man and man (Malbim), and repentance out of love for Hashem can not only wipe away the sin, but it will be as if the sin itself after teshuva was meritorious (Vilna Gaon).

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<sup>2</sup> Both parts of the couplets, for good and bad, relate to the “mouth”.



AHAVAT ACHIM

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THE FAMILY SHUL

AHAVAT ACHIM INVITES YOU  
TO JOIN OUR

# ANNUAL DINNER

*Honoring*



DINNER HONOREE  
DR. MELANIE KWESTEL



YOUNG LEADERSHIP AWARD  
SARA & NATAN SANTACRUZ

2026

SUNDAY

22

FEBRUARY

5:00 pm

TEMPLE ISRAEL  
475 GROVE STREET  
RIDGEWOOD, NJ

\$250 per person



AHAVAT ACHIM  
קהלת אהבת אחים  
THE FAMILY SPIRIT

## 45th Annual Dinner Honor Scroll

### Shorashim

*J Greenberg/D Santacruz  
& Family  
J&B Goldberg  
Kwestel*

### Amudim

### Bonim

*Czinn/Kaplowitz  
Brooks  
Herman/Berger  
Garfunkel  
Spier*

### Achim v'Achot

*Winchester  
J&T Cohen  
Coello  
Kessel  
Gorelick  
Wechsler  
Agress  
S&N Samtacruz  
Stock  
Greene*

### Shomrim

*Kestler  
Schwed  
Plotnick  
Hochbaum/Czinn  
Hyman*

### Chaverim

*Bickel  
Bernknopf  
E Jacobson  
Golubtchik*

JAN - FEB

RUN OF SHOW

2026

# START 2026 W/ A BANG

NO CHAGIM. NO PROBLEM.

1/24 → GAME NIGHT FOR ADULTS

1/28 → TZURBA M'RABANAN: R. PODLASHUK

1/30 → SHABBAT SHIRA DINNER

1/31 → SUSTAINABLE KIDDUSH

2/1 → TU B'SHVAT W/ GROWTORAH

2/1 → HEAR FROM A CHAYAL: ADI KARNI

2/7 → SUPERBOWL KIDDUSH

2/7 → PARENT - CHILD LEARNING

2/14 → SIR: R. DR. SHLOMO BRODY (EMATAI)

2/21 → COMEDY NIGHT W/ MIKE FINE

LEADING TO...

2/22 → AHAVAT ACHIM ANNUAL DINNER

Claim your spot!

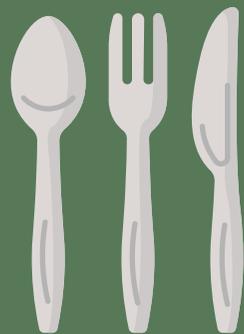


ahavatachim.org

# TU B'SHVAT SUSTAINABLE KIDDUSH SHABBAT JAN 31ST



chulent made w/  
grass-fed beef from  
Grow & Behold and  
recovered ingredients  
via Misfits Market



fully compostable  
plates, cups and  
cutlery



all food waste and  
utensils to be composted  
and picked up by  
Neighborhood Compost

SIGN UP TO SPONSOR OR VOLUNTEER TO BE A  
CHOLENT CHEF AT:

[TINYURL.COM/SUSTAINABLEKIDDUSH2026](https://tinyurl.com/sustainablekiddush2026)



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THE FAMILY SHUL



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join us for our annual

# **SUPER BOWL KIDDUSH**

**ON FEBRUARY 7TH**

SIGN UP HERE  
TO BE A SPONSOR!

**SPONSORSHIPS:**  
KICKOFF: \$54  
HALFTIME SHOW: \$72

**SPONSORSHIPS:**  
MVP: \$118  
SUPER BOWL CHAMP: \$180



[TINYURL.COM/SUPERBOWLKIDDUSH](https://tinyurl.com/superbowlkiddush)



and



TOGETHER PRESENT

# Adi Karni

An IDF soldier who served on the front lines of Gaza and Lebanon.

**Sunday, February 1st at 3:30 pm**

Adi will share powerful stories of courage, miracles, and inspiration from the battlefield – moments that reveal both the pain of loss and the resilience of the human spirit. His reflections will offer a rare, firsthand perspective on the challenges faced and the faith and positivity that carried him through.

All donations collected for this event will be sent directly to "Peace of Mind." This program provides therapeutic intervention in which IDF veterans receive time and space to process their combat experiences.



*Exact location to be shared after RSVP*

<https://forms.gle/psDKKFoAiJx47Qww7>



- *Child care available during the event*
- *No backpacks or large bags permitted*





AHAVAT ACHIM  
קהלת אהבת אחים  
THE FAMILY SHUL



Congregation Ahavat  
Achim presents

SCHOLAR IN RESIDENCE

**RABBI DR  
SHLOMO BRODY**

**SHABBAT, FEBRUARY 14**

Save the date and join us for  
an inspirational and  
meaningful Shabbat!

**Shabbat Drasha**

**Fundamentals  
following kiddush**

**Seudah Shlishit**

Rabbi Dr. Shlomo Brody is the executive director of Ematai, an organization dedicated to helping Jews navigate the dilemmas of aging, end-of-life care, and organ donation. He previously served as the founding director of the Tikvah Overseas Student Institute and co-dean of Tikvah Online Academy, a senior instructor at Yeshivat Hakotel, and as a junior research fellow at the Israel Democracy Institute. Rabbi Brody has been an invited scholar-in-residence at over 40 distinguished congregations and campuses in the United States, Canada, England, and Israel. Originally from Houston, Texas, Rabbi Brody now lives in Modi'in with his wife, Rocky, and five children.

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

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. 10**

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



Before Feb 10:  
Members: \$5  
Non-Members: \$25

After Feb 10  
Members: \$10  
Non-Members: \$30

At the door:  
Members: \$10  
Non-Members: \$36



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



AHAVAT ACHIM  
קהלת אהבת אחים  
THE FAMILY SHUL



# Board Game Night

FOR  
ADULTS!



WITH PIZZA & BEER

**SATURDAY  
MARCH 7**

**8:15 PM**

\$10 per person

RSVP by 3/4

Bring your competitive spirit  
(and your favorite board games!)  
for a night of gaming and fun



RSVP at:

<https://tinyurl.com/AAGameNight>

[events@ahavatachim.org](mailto:events@ahavatachim.org)



# Covenant & Conversation

Jonathan Sacks  
THE RABBI SACKS LEGACY

BESHALLACH • בַּשָּׁלַח

FROM THE TEACHINGS AND WRITINGS OF RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS ז"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 ז"ל in 5773 (2012–2013). These timeless messages are accompanied by a new [Family Edition](#) created to inspire intergenerational learning on the Parsha.

## To be a Leader of the Jewish People

*That day, the Lord saved the Israelites from the Egyptians. And when the Israelites ... witnessed the wondrous power the Lord had unleashed against the Egyptians, the people were in awe of the Lord, and they believed in Him and in Moshe, His servant.*

*And then Moshe and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord...*

Exodus 14:30-15:1

The Song at the Sea was one of the great epiphanies of history. The Sages said that even the humblest of Jews saw at that moment what even the greatest of prophets was not privileged to see. For the first time they broke into collective song – *Az Yashir* – a song we recite every day. There is a fascinating discussion among the Sages as to how exactly they sang. On this, there were four opinions. Three appear in the tractate of Sotah:

Rabbi Akiva expounded: When the Israelites came up from the Red Sea, they wanted to sing a song. How did they sing it? Like an adult who reads the Hallel and they respond after him with the leading word. Moses said, "I will sing to the Lord," and they responded, "I will sing to the Lord." Moses said, "For He has triumphed gloriously," and they responded, "I will sing to the Lord."

Rabbi Eliezer, son of Rabbi Jose the Galilean, said: It was like a child who reads the Hallel and they repeat after him all that he says. Moses said, "I will sing to the Lord," and they responded, "I will sing to the Lord." Moses said, "For He has triumphed gloriously," and they responded, "For He has triumphed gloriously."

Rabbi Nehemiah said: It was like a schoolteacher who recites the Shema in

the synagogue. He begins first and they follow along with him.

Sotah 30b

According to Rabbi Akiva, Moses sang the song phrase by phrase, and after each phrase the people responded, I will sing to the Lord – their way, as it were, of saying Amen to each line. According to R. Eliezer son of R. Jose the Galilean, Moses recited the song phrase by phrase, and they repeated each phrase after he had said it. According to Rabbi Nehemiah, Moses and the people sang the whole song together. Rashi explains that all the people were seized by Divine inspiration and miraculously, the same words came into their minds at the same time.

There is a fourth view, found in the Mechilta:

Eliezer ben Taddai said, Moses began and the Israelites repeated what he had said and then completed the verse.

Moses began by saying, “I will sing to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously,” and the Israelites repeated what he had said, and then completed the verse with him, saying, “I will sing to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously, the horse and its rider He hurled into the sea.” Moses began saying, “The Lord is my strength and my song,” and the Israelites repeated and then completed the verse with him, saying, “The Lord is my strength and my song; He has become my salvation.”

Moses began saying, “The Lord is a warrior,” and the Israelites repeated

and then completed the verse with him, saying, “The Lord is a warrior, Lord is His name.”

Mechilta Beshallah Parsha 1

Technically, as the Talmud explains, the Sages are debating the implication of the (apparently) superfluous words *vayomru lemor*, “they said, saying”, which they understood to mean “repeating”. What did the Israelites repeat? For Rabbi Akiva it was the first words of the song only, which they repeated as a litany. For Rabbi Eliezer, son of Rabbi Jose the Galilean, they repeated the whole song, phrase by phrase. For R. Nehemiah they recited the entire song in unison. For Rabbi Eliezer ben Taddai they repeated the opening phrase of each line, but then completed the whole verse without Moses having to teach it to them. Read thus, we have before us a localised debate on the meaning of a biblical verse.

There is, however, a deeper issue at stake. To understand this, we must look at another Talmudic passage, on the face of it unrelated to the passage in Sotah. It appears in the tractate of Kiddushin, and poses a fascinating question. There are various people we are commanded to honour: a parent, a teacher (i.e. a rabbi), the *nasi*, (religious head of the Jewish community), and a king. May any of these four types renounce the honour that is their due?

Rabbi Isaac ben Shila said in the name of Rabbi Mattena, in the name of Rabbi

Hisda: If a father renounces the honour due to him, it is renounced, but if a rabbi renounces the honour due to him it is not renounced. Rabbi Joseph ruled: Even if a rabbi renounces his honour, it is renounced. . . Rabbi Ashi said: Even on the view that a rabbi may renounce his honour, if a *nasi* renounces his honour, the renunciation is invalid. . . Rather, it was stated thus: Even on the view that a *nasi* may renounce his honour, yet a king may not renounce his honour, as it is said, “You shall surely set a king over you,” meaning, his authority should be over you.

Kiddushin 32a-b

Each of these people exercises a leadership role: father to son, teacher to disciple, *nasi* to the community and king to the nation. Analysed in depth, the passages make it clear that these four roles occupy different places on the spectrum between authority predicated on the person and authority vested in the holder of an office. The more the relationship is personal, the more easily honour can be renounced. At one extreme is the role of a parent (intensely personal), at the other that of a king (wholly official).

I suggest that this was the issue at stake in the argument over how Moses and the Israelites sang the Song at the Sea. For Rabbi Akiva, Moses was like a king. He spoke, and the people merely answered “Amen” (in this case, the words “I will

sing to the Lord”). For Rabbi Eliezer, son of Rabbi Jose the Galilean, he was like a teacher. Moses spoke, and the Israelites repeated, phrase by phrase, what he had said. For Rabbi Nehemiah, he was like a *nasi* among his rabbinical colleagues (the passage in Kiddushin, which holds that a *nasi* may renounce his honour, makes it clear that this is only among his fellow rabbis). The relationship was collegial: Moses began, but thereafter, they sang in unison. For Rabbi Eliezer ben Taddai, Moses was like a father. He began, but allowed the Israelites to complete each verse.

This is the great truth about parenthood, made clear in the first glimpse we have of Abraham:

*Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of Abram, and together they set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. But when they came to Haran, they settled there.*

Bereishit 11:31

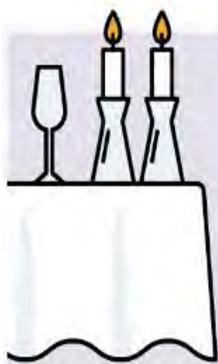
Abraham completed the journey his father began. To be a parent is to want one’s children to go further than you did. That too, for Rabbi Eliezer ben Taddai, was Moses’ relationship to the Israelites.

The prelude to the Song at the Sea states that the people “believed in God, and in His servant Moses” – the first time they are described as believing in Moses’

leadership. On this, the Sages asked: What is it to be a leader of the Jewish people? Is it to hold official authority, of which the supreme example is a king (“The rabbis are called kings”)? Is it to have the kind of personal relationship with one’s followers that rests not on honour and deference but on encouraging people to grow, accept responsibility and continue the journey you have begun? Or is it something in between? There is no single answer.

At times, Moses asserted his authority (during the Korach rebellion). At others, he expressed the wish that “all God’s people were prophets”. Judaism is a complex faith. There is no one Torah model of leadership. We are each called on to fulfil a number of leadership roles: as parents, teachers, friends, team-members, and team-leaders.

There is no doubt, however, that Judaism favours as an ideal the role of parent, encouraging those we lead to continue the journey we have begun, and go further than we did. A good leader creates followers. A great leader creates leaders. That was Moses’ greatest achievement – that he left behind him a people willing, in each generation, to accept responsibility for taking further the great task he had begun.



## Around the Shabbat Table

1. Which kind of leader is Moshe depicted as in the Song at the Sea? Explain.
2. How does bestowing responsibility onto others allow them to grow?
3. How does Moshe’s leadership in the Song at the Sea compare with leaders like Abraham, Joseph, or Joshua?

● 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/beshallach/to-be-a-leader-of-the-jewish-people/>