



CANDLE LIGHTING 5:02 PM | 20 SHEVAT | FEBRUARY 7, 2026 | HAVDALA 6:06 PM

שבת פרשת יתרו
SHABBAT PARSHAT YITRO

Haftorah is Isaiah 6:1-7:6 and 9:5-6.

FRIDAY EVENING

MINCHA 5:05 PM

SHKIA 5:20 PM

TZAIT HAKOCHAVIM 6:00 PM

SHABBAT

HASHKAMA 7:45 AM

SHACHARIT - MAIN 9:00 AM

POST-HASHKAMA SHIUR ≈9:30 AM

LAST KRIAT SHEMA 9:36 AM

FUNDAMENTALS SHIUR ≈11:30 AM

PRE-MINCHA SHIUR 4:15 PM

MINCHA 4:55 PM

SHKIA 5:21 PM

MAARIV 6:06 PM

SUPER BOWL KIDDUSH!

Thank you to our sponsors: SUPER BOWL CHAMP (\$180): **Santacruz**; MVP (\$118): **Garfunkel** and **J&B Goldberg**; HALFTIME SHOW (\$72): **Brooks** and **Spier**; KICKOFF (\$54): **Czinn, Eisman, Greene, Joseph, Kestler, Oppenheim, Plotnick,** and **Strich.**

SEUDAH SHLISHIT

Seudah Shlishit is sponsored by Gail & Steven Plotnick for the Yahrzeit of Gail's father, Alan Hodes ע"ה, Avraham Nachum ben Moshe.

4TH ANNUAL COMEDY NIGHT WITH MIKE FINE

In two weeks, Sat. night, doors open at 7:30 PM, show starts at 8:00 PM! Buy Tickets: [LAUGHS!](#)



MAZEL TOV

Mazel tov to Jewel & Robert Safren on the birth of a grandson to Melanie & Moshe Safren.



גדלוהו לתורה ולחופה ולמעשים טובים ויכניסוהו לבריתו בזמנו ובעתו
May they raise him to Torah, chuppah and good deeds, and may he be entered into the covenant of Abraham.

ANNUAL DINNER



Mazal 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](#).

PARENT - CHILD LEARNING

For Children, 1st grade and up. Join our final parent-child learning of the season this Motzei Shabbat at 6:35 PM! Rabbi Shestack will discuss "How to be a Mensch in Sports & Competition." Pizza will be served! Ask Andrew or Kira for the location.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAY/ ANNIVERSARY KIDDUSH

Next Shabbat is the birthday/ anniversary kiddush! \$36 per family for all February family birthday/anniversary listings. To sponsor/provide names, click here: [SIMCHA](#).

 ORTHODOX UNION תורה ומצוות Enhancing Jewish Life	SUNDAY 2/8	MONDAY 2/9	TUESDAY 2/10	WEDNESDAY 2/11	THURSDAY 2/12	FRIDAY 2/13
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	5:10 PM	5:12 PM	5:13 PM	5:14 PM	5:15 PM	5:15 PM
ZMANIM						
Earliest Talit	6:03 AM	6:02 AM	6:01 AM	6:00 AM	5:59 AM	5:58 AM
Gedolah	12:37 PM	12:37 PM	12:37 PM	12:37 PM	12:37 PM	12:37 PM
Shkia	5:22 PM	5:24 PM	5:25 PM	5:26 PM	5:27 PM	
Tzait	6:02 PM	6:04 PM	6:05 PM	6:06 PM	6:07 PM	

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

Feb. 14 - Birthday/Anniversary Kiddush.

Feb. 20 - Deadline to be part of the Shul's communal Mishloach Manot: [Order here](#).

Feb. 21 - 4th Annual Comedy Night with Mike Fine. Buy Tickets here: [LAUGH A LOT!](#)

Feb. 22 - Journal Dinner.

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

Mar 3 - Deadline to order matzah through the shul from Kerestir: [Matzah Order](#).

Mar 7 - Board Games Night, 8:15 PM: [Games](#)

Mar. 8 - Blood Drive

Mar. 28 - Shir HaShirim Chapter-by-Chapter Round-Robin Sign up 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^{ל"ה}, Stephen's father, הרב חיים בן הרב יהושע.

Fed. 21 - Seudah Shlishit is co-sponsored by the Greenes commemorating the Yahrzeit of Elliot's mother, Sylvia Greene^{ל"ה}, Serah bat Ya'acov Tzvi, and the Garfunkels for the Yahrzeit of משה הכהן ב"ר יהושע פאליק ב"ר דוד, David's father, Shea Garfunkel^{ל"ה}.

KIDDUSH & SEUDAH SHLISHIT

- Enjoying Scotch at Kiddush, please donate a bottle 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 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.

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.
- 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.
- SEDER ON THE SIDDUR, at Seudah Shlishit - **KADDISH D'RABANAN 2 - R. DONIN PP. 220-221, ARTSCROLL'S KADDISH PP. 50-55.**

BOARD MEETINGS 8:15 PM

Feb. 24 - At shul w/Zoom option.

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

GITA COOPERWASSER^{ל"ה} 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^{ל"ה} SHABBAT YOUTH INFO



- **SHABBAT YOUTH LEADERS:**
3RD - 5TH: LETIZIA & ARIELYS
K - 2ND: CASSANDRA & ABBY
3 YRS - PRE-K: ARNELLA & PERRI
- 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.

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

<http://www.ahavatachim.org>

B. A few pasukim in the second half of this chapter seem to focus on the “long game”, for example:

- Verse 24 & 25: We are told that what the wicked man dreads will happen, and the desire of the righteous will be granted, and that when tempest passes (presumably a metaphor for an evil time period) the wicked man will be no more, but the righteous one is the foundation of the world. Bereshit Rabbah 30 equates this to the generation of the flood, who were wiped out while Noach remained standing.
- Verses 28- 30: The righteous shall have joy, but the wicked are doomed. Hashem will be a stronghold for the innocent, but the ruin of evildoers. Eventually it will be only the righteous that will possess the land. Consider whether these could be true before the “end” of days, or to say it differently, does not the “truth” in these statements requires finality.

C. A few notes on individual pasukim:

- (1) Verse 22 tells us that blessings of riches from Hashem do not require that one works for it. There seems to be various understandings as to what the point of this pasuk is. Rashi: it is a statement that one should be satisfied with what he has (similar to Pirkei Avot 4:1’s statement that “Who is rich? One who is happy with his lot.”). Vilna Gaon: seems to understand the pasuk as beginning with the word “if”, *i.e.* if Hashem blesses you with riches they come without toil (but presumably otherwise toil will be necessary). Ibn Ezra understands the word עֲצָב not as toil, but to its actual meaning of sorrow/grief (*i.e.*, riches may come with negative consequences, but if they came from Hashem no sorrow will ensue).
- (2) Verse 27 tells us that “Fear of the Lord will add days [to your life], but the years of [the life of] the wicked will be shortened.”
 - It is not clear why an increased life is reflected in days, but life shortened for the wicked is measured in years. Rabbi Steinsaltz gives two possible explanations: (1) the wicked are often involved in dangerous pursuits [so removing years would not appear to the non-God fearing to be other than from Hashem], or (2) all the days of a God-fearing individual are meaningful, whereas the days of the wicked are without meaning, such that the effect will be that most of their years are spent by wasting them in the pursuit of unrealized lusts and greed.
 - Ramban stresses that this is a miracle and that we don’t know the original allotment of time. This is important, as the statement from our perspective would seem to be on occasion false, and a seemingly opposite viewpoint is discussed elsewhere: (1) Kohelet 7:15 – “In my own brief span of life, I have seen both these things: sometimes someone good perishes despite their goodness, and sometimes someone wicked endures despite their wickedness”, and (2) Iyov 21:7-13 – “Why do the wicked live on, grow strong and powerfully rich? Their children are well established in their sight with them, and their children's children are before their eyes. Their houses have peace from fear, and God's rod is not upon them. His bull impregnates and does not fail; his cow bears young and does not abort. They send forth their infants like sheep, and their children dance. They raise [their voice] with the tambourine and the harp, and they rejoice to the sound of the flute. They end their days in prosperity, and in a moment they descend to the grave.”



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AHAVAT ACHIM INVITES YOU
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ANNUAL DINNER

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DINNER HONOREE
DR. MELANIE KWESTEL



YOUNG LEADERSHIP AWARD
SARA & NATAN SANTACRUZ

2026

SUNDAY

22

FEBRUARY

5:00 pm

TEMPLE ISRAEL
475 GROVE STREET
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\$250 per person



45th Annual Dinner Honor Scroll

Shorashim

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J Greenberg/D Santacruz
& Family
Kwestel
S&N Santacruz

Amudim

Bonim

Brooks
Czinn/Kaplowitz
Garfunkel
Herman/Berger
Spier

Achim v'Achot

Agress	R&S Kwestel
Bickoff	Levine
Brenenson	Riskin
Coello	Smedresman
J&T Cohen	Sonnenblick
Cooper	Steinhart
Eisman	Stock
Graber	Wechsler
Greene	Winchester
Gorelick	Wigod
Jacob	Wolfson
Kessel	Anonymous

Shomrim

Hochbaum/Czinn
C&C Goldberg
Hyman
Kestler
A. Kwestel
Lerner
Plotnick
Reichardt
Schwed
Sokoloff
Anonymous

Chaverim

Bernknopf
Bickel
H. Brooks
Goldstein
Dubin
Golubtchik
Heda/Shanblatt
E Jacobson
Joseph
Kor



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!



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ON FEBRUARY 7TH

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HALFTIME SHOW: \$72

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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

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★ Annual ★
C MEDY
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



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

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

At the door:
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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>

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Covenant & Conversation

Jonathan Sacks
THE RABBI SACKS LEGACY

יִתְרוֹ • יתרו

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.

The Politics of Revelation

The revelation at Mount Sinai – the central episode not only of the *parsha* of Yitro, but of Judaism as a whole – was unique in the religious history of humankind. Other faiths (Christianity and Islam) have claimed to be religions of revelation, but in both cases the revelation of which they spoke was to an individual (“the son of God”, “the prophet of God”). Only in Judaism was God’s self-disclosure not to an individual (a prophet) or a group (the elders) but to an entire nation, young and old, men, women and children, the righteous and not yet righteous alike.

From the very outset, the people of Israel knew something unprecedented had happened at Sinai. As Moses put it, forty years later:

For ask now about earliest times, times long before your own, from the day God

created humans on the earth; ask from one end of heaven to the other: Has anything as great as this ever happened before? Has anyone heard of anything like this? Has any people ever heard the Voice of God speaking out of fire, as you have, and lived?... To you this was shown – so that you may know that the Lord is God; besides Him, there is no other. From heaven He let you hear His Voice...

Deut. 4:32-35

For the great Jewish thinkers of the Middle Ages, the significance was primarily epistemological. It created certainty and removed doubt. The authenticity of a revelation experienced by one person could be questioned. One witnessed by millions could not. God disclosed His presence in public to remove any possible suspicion that the presence

felt, and the voice heard, were not genuine.

Looking however at the history of humankind since those days, it is clear that there was another significance also – one that had to do not with religious knowledge but with politics. At Sinai a new kind of nation was being formed and a new kind of society – one that would be an antithesis of Egypt in which the few had power and the many were enslaved. At Sinai, the children of Israel ceased to be a group of individuals and became, for the first time, a body politic: a nation of citizens under the sovereignty of God whose written constitution was the Torah and whose mission was to be “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

Even today, standard works on the history of political thought trace it back, through Marx, Rousseau, and Hobbes to Plato’s Republic, Aristotle’s Politics and the Greek city state (Athens in particular) of the fourth century BCE. This is a serious error. To be sure, words like “democracy” (rule by the people) are Greek in origin. The Greeks were gifted at abstract nouns and systematic thought. However, if we look at the “birth of the modern” – at figures like Milton, Hobbes, and Locke in England, and the founding fathers of America – the book with which they were in dialogue was not Plato or Aristotle but the Hebrew Bible. Hobbes quotes it 657 times in *The Leviathan* alone. Long before

the Greek philosophers, and far more profoundly, at Mount Sinai the concept of a free society was born.

Three things about that moment were to prove crucial. The first is that long before Israel entered the land and acquired their own system of government (first by judges, later by kings), they had entered into an overarching covenant with God. That covenant (*Brit Sinai*) set moral limits to the exercise of power. The code we call Torah established for the first time the primacy of right over might. Any king who behaved contrarily to Torah was acting *ultra vires*, and could be challenged. This is the single most important fact about biblical politics.

Democracy on the Greek model always had one fatal weakness. Alexis de Tocqueville and John Stuart Mill called it “the tyranny of the majority”. J. L. Talmon called it “totalitarian democracy.” The rule of the majority contains no guarantee of the rights of minorities. As Lord Acton rightly noted, it was this that led to the downfall of Athens: “There was no law superior to that of the state. The lawgiver was above the law.” In Judaism, by contrast, prophets were mandated to challenge the authority of the king if he acted against the terms of the Torah. Individuals were empowered to disobey illegal or immoral orders. For this alone, the covenant at Sinai deserves to be seen as the single

greatest step in the long road to a free society.

The second key element lies in the prologue to the covenant. God tells Moses:

“This is what you shall say to the House of Jacob, what you shall tell the people of Israel: ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians: how I lifted you up on eagles’ wings and brought you to Me. Now, if you faithfully heed My voice and keep My covenant, you will be My treasure among all the peoples, although the whole earth is Mine. A kingdom of priests and a holy nation you shall be to Me.’ These are the words you must speak to the Israelites.”

Ex. 19:3-6

Moses tells this to the people, who reply:

“We will do everything the Lord has said.”

Ex. 19:8

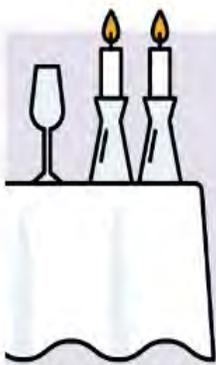
What is the significance of this exchange? It means that until the people had signified their consent, the revelation could not proceed. There is no legitimate government without the consent of the governed, even if the governor is Creator of heaven and earth. I know of few more radical ideas anywhere. To be sure, there were Sages in the Talmudic period who questioned whether the acceptance of the covenant at Sinai was completely free.

However, at the heart of Judaism is the idea – way ahead of its time, and not always fully realised – that the free God desires the free worship of free human beings. God, said the rabbis, does not act tyrannically with His creatures.

The third, equally ahead of its time, was that the partners to the covenant were to be “all the people” – men, women and children. This fact is emphasised later on in the Torah in the *mitzva* of Hakhel, the septennial covenant renewal ceremony. The Torah states specifically that the entire people is to be gathered together for this ceremony, “men, women and children.” A thousand years later, when Athens experimented with democracy, only a limited section of society had political rights. Women, children, slaves, and foreigners were excluded. In Britain, women did not get the vote until the twentieth century. According to the sages, when God was about to give the Torah at Sinai, He told Moses to consult first with the women and only then with the men (“this is what you shall you say to the House of Jacob” – this means, the women). The Torah, Israel’s “constitution of liberty”, includes everyone. It is the first moment, by thousands of years, that citizenship is conceived as being universal.

There is much else to be said about the political theory of the Torah (see my *The Politics of Hope, The Dignity of Difference,*

and *The Jonathan Sacks Haggada* as well as the important works by Daniel Elazar and Michael Walzer). But one thing is clear: With the revelation at Sinai something unprecedented entered the human horizon. It would take centuries, millennia, before its full implications were understood. Abraham Lincoln said it best when he spoke of “a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.” At Sinai, the politics of freedom was born.



Around the Shabbat Table

1. What part of the Sinai story feels most meaningful to you, and why?
2. Why do you think God chose to reveal the Torah to an entire people rather than to one key leader?
3. How do you define democracy from the Torah perspective?

● 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/yitro/the-politics-of-revelation/>