

*The bulletin is sponsored to wish a Mazel Tov to Tali Marcus & Seffi Kogen on the birth of a baby girl!*  
 יגדלוה לתורה ולחופה ולמעשים טובים  
*May they raise her to Torah, chuppah and good deeds.*



**CANDLE LIGHTING 6:58 PM | 10 NISAN | MARCH 28, 2026 | HAVDALA 8:02 PM**

**שבת פרשת צו  
 שבת הגדול  
 SHABBAT PARSHAT TZAV  
 SHABBAT HAGADOL**

Haftorah for Shabbat HaGadol is Malachi 3:4-24 (repeating verse 23). Don't say צדקתך or אב הרחמים צדק. At Motzei Shabbat do not say ואתה קדוש or ויהי נועם. Final time for kiddish levanah of Nisan is all Tuesday night, March 31, but if necessary, even the entire first night of Pesach (all Wednesday night until daybreak).

**FRIDAY EVENING**

<b>MINCHA</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>
SHKIA	7:16 PM
TZAIT HAKOCHAVIM	7:56 PM
<b>SHABBAT</b>	
<b>HASHKAMA</b>	<b>7:45 AM</b>
<b>SHACHARIT - MAIN</b>	<b>9:00 AM</b>
POST-HASHKAMA SHIUR	HIATUS
LAST KRIAT SHEMA	9:54 AM
FUNDAMENTALS SHIUR	HIATUS
PRE-MINCHA SHIUR	5:55 PM
<b>MINCHA</b>	<b>6:35 PM</b>
SHKIA	7:17 PM
<b>MAARIV</b>	<b>8:02 PM</b>

**PRE-PESACH LUNCH**

Thank you to our sponsors and all the people that made it happen.

**SEUDAH SHLISHIT PEREK-BY-PEREK SHIUR**

Perek-by-perek shiur will be given by: Rich Mayer (Ch. 1), Zach Doberman (Ch. 2), Yesh Ginsburg (Ch. 3), Akiva Gordon (Ch. 4), Benji Cooper (Ch. 5), Chayim Goldberg (Ch. 6), Liz Jacob (Ch. 7), and Moshe Katz (Ch. 8).

**MAZEL TOV**



Mazel tov to Shelly & Steve Winchester on their daughter Dena's marriage to Ian Hollenberg.

יעלה הזיווג יפה ויבנו בית נאמן בישראל

May the beautiful couple be elevated in the building of a faithful house of Israel.

**FROM THE RABBI**

Dates/times to sell Chometz: (1) This Sat. night, March 28, after Havdalah (~8:15 PM); (2) Sun., Mar. 29, 9-11 AM (during kashering); (3) Sun., Mar. 29, after Mincha-Maariv (~7:30 PM); (4) Mon., Mar. 30, after Mincha-Maariv (~7:30 PM); (5) Tue., Mar. 31, after 7:25 Shacharit (~8:10 AM); and (6) Tue., Mar. 31, after Mincha-Maariv (~7:30 PM).

**PRE-PESACH NOTES**

- (1) Shabbat Hagadol Drasha, ~10:45 AM, "The Great Debate over Redemption, and the Comment of a Therapy Client which May Resolve it."
- (2) Time for Bedikat Chametz is Tuesday, March 31, after 8:00 PM.
- (3) Siyum Bechorim, Wednesday, April 1, after each Shacharit minyon.
- (4) Last time to eat Chometz is Wednesday, April 1, 10:51 AM.
- (5) Last time to possess Chometz is Wednesday, April 1, 11:55 AM.
- (6) Chometz burning at the Norton home, 20-11 Hunter Pl., Fair Lawn, Wednesday, April 1, 8:00 AM - 11:30 AM. No lulav, plastic, foil, paper, pasta, sauces or liquids. Bread, cereal, crackers and dry items only.



	SUNDAY 3/29	MONDAY 3/30	TUESDAY 3/31	WEDNESDAY 4/1	THURSDAY 4/2	FRIDAY 4/3
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**WEEKDAY MINYANIM AT AHAVAT ACHIM**

<b>SHACHARIT</b>	<b>8:00 AM</b>	<b>6:15 AM</b>	<b>6:25 AM</b>	<b>6:25 AM</b>
<b>2ND SHACHARIT MINYON - YISHTABACH AT 7:40 AM</b>		<b>7:25 AM</b>	<b>7:25 AM</b>	<b>7:25 AM</b>
<b>MINCHA/MAARIV</b>	<b>7:06 PM</b>	<b>7:07 PM</b>	<b>7:08 PM</b>	<b>7:05 PM</b>
<b>ZMANIM</b>				
Earliest Talit	5:50 AM	5:48 AM	5:46 AM	5:44 AM
Gedolah	1:33 PM	1:33 PM	1:33 PM	1:33 PM
Shkia	7:18 PM	7:19 PM	7:20 PM	
Tzait	7:58 PM	7:59 PM	8:00 PM	



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Mar. 29** - Hagolas Kelim/Pesach Kashering, 9:00 - 11:00 AM, at the shul.

**April 1** - Seraifat (Burning) Chometz, 8:00 AM to 11:30 AM, at the Norton residence, 20-11 Hunter Pl. No foil, plastic, paper, cardboard, pasta, sauces or liquids. Bread, cereal, crackers and dry items only.

**Apr. 1** - Latest to eat Chometz: 10:51 AM

**Apr. 1** - Latest to own Chometz: 11:55 AM

**Apr. 19** - Yom Ha'atzmaut Celebration, 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

**Apr. 25** - Rabbi Binny Freedman SIR.

**May 3** - Mitzvah Fair, 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM.

## IN OUR FUTURE - KIDDUSH, SEUDAH SHLISHIT, & ETC.

**Apr. 2** - Dessert kiddush sponsored by Deborah & Mitchell Kempin to celebrate the birth of their granddaughter Emma Sophia, אמונה, born to Elissa & Michael Schachter, and the birth and baby naming of a granddaughter born to Arielle & Ian Hecht.

**Apr. 18** - Yom Ha'atzmaut Kiddush. To sponsor, click here: [Independence](#).

**Apr. 25** - Birthday and Anniversary Kiddush

**June 20** - Kiddush is sponsored by Shelly & Steve Winchester celebrating Daniel's Auf Ruf and upcoming wedding to Yael Simons.

- 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](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).

## BIRTHDAY & ANNIVERSARY KIDDUSH

To add a birthday or anniversary to our April list (next Kiddush on Shabbat, April 25), click here: [SIMCHA](#). Listings/sponsorships are \$36 per family per month. RSVP for the April birthday/anniversary Kiddush by Sunday night, April 19.

## SHIURIM



• PESHAT OF THE PARSHA, Tuesdays at 1:00 PM (<https://zoom.us/j/7291311899>, PW: 112233).



• TORAH FOR YOUR COMMUTE, via Whatsapp, 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 on Zoom - **HIATUS**

• SEDER ON THE SIDDUR, at Seudah Shlishit - **HIATUS**.

## BOARD MEETINGS 8:15 PM

**Apr. 28** - At shul w/Zoom option.

**May 26, & June 30**

## OU WOMEN'S INITIATIVE

**Apr. 19** - Count & Cultivate - A Powerful Sefirat HaOmer Program, exploring what real growth looks like and how we cultivate it during the days of Sefirah, 7:30 PM. Location to be provided.

## MAOT CHITIM

To facilitate the minhag of Maot Chitim, "wheat monies", providing wheat/matzah to the poor on Pesach, donate here: [Maot Chitmin](#). Funds will be divided: Tomchei Shabbat 50%, JFCS 25%, & Project Ezra 25%

## GITA COOPERWASSER ה"י YOUTH EVENTS

**Apr. 9** - Playdate in the Park (Pesach Edition), 3:45 PM.

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

## GITA COOPERWASSER ה"י SHABBAT YOUTH INFO



### ● SHABBAT YOUTH LEADERS:

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

**K - 2ND: NICOLE, ABBY, & ZOE**

**3 YRS - PRE-K: ARIELYS & PERRI**

- Youth groups for 3rd through 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>

## SHABBAT HAGADOL

(ADAPTED FROM AISH.COM)

The Shabbat prior to Passover is called Shabbat HaGadol. The source of the term is unclear as it is not found in the Tanach or Talmudic literature, though in the Middle Ages a number of authorities occupied themselves with explaining the origin of the term (see Machzor Vitri, § 259). One approach sees Shabbat HaGadol as originating with the special Haftarah, Malachi 3:23, which says "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the **great** and awesome day of the Lord."

Therefore the Talmud teaches: Rabbi Yehoshua says: "In Nissan the world was created ... the bondage of our ancestors ceased in Egypt; and in Nissan they will be redeemed in time to come." (Talmud Rosh HaShana 11a) The tradition, which accords Elijah a primary role in the Messianic age, calls upon us to read the portion of the prophet which alludes to that "great" day.

Other commentaries look back to the past for an explanation for the term. The Talmud teaches that the day the Jews left Egypt -- the 15th of the month of Nissan -- was a Thursday, and the 10th of the month was the previous Shabbat: "As to Nissan in which the Israelites departed from Egypt, on the fourteenth they killed their Passover sacrifices, on the fifteenth they went forth, and in the evening [of the 15th] the firstborn were smitten... and that day was a Thursday. (Shabbath 87b)."

The significance of the 10th is mentioned in the Torah: Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, "In the tenth day of this month they shall take every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for a house." (Exodus 12:3) Tosfot point out that by taking the lamb, the Jews piqued the interest, and the ire, of the firstborn of Egypt. They pleaded with Pharaoh to release the Jews. When he refused, the firstborn rebelled and attacked their own parents. Therefore the day is considered great, due to the miracle of God which was manifest and the subsequent unraveling of Egyptian society. This explanation though points to the significance of the 10th of Nissan rather than to the Shabbat which precedes Passover. While that 10th of the month in Egypt happened to fall on Shabbat, its significance has apparently no intrinsic connection with Shabbat.

Another idea comes from the Sfat Emet who says that the term "Shabbat HaGadol" results from the Shabbat taking on new significance upon the Jews redemption from Egypt causing Shabbat to acquire an historical identity intertwined with theology. The Sfat Emet explains that Shabbat had now become "greater", with the second aspect of Shabbat, articulated in the repetition of the Ten Commandments, realized.

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

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

## PROHIBITION TO EAT MATZAH/SEARCH FOR CHOMETZ - TUE., MAR. 31

It is forbidden to eat Matzah on Erev Pesach, after Tzait Hakochavim (nightfall).

After nightfall search for chometz everywhere you bring it during the year. Someone not participating in the search places ten pieces of chometz in random locations to which we bring chometz during the year (failure to do so does not invalidate the search, but be very careful to find all ten pieces). Before the search recite the Bracha "אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על ביעור חמץ" – on the removal of chometz (for the search is the beginning of the process). After the search, one declares "כל חמירא" (preferably in a language that he understands) nullifying all chometz and sourdough of which he is unaware.

## FAST OF THE FIRST BORN - WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1

First born have a custom to fast, redeem themselves with money for Tzedakah, or participate in a Seudat Mitzvah such as a siyum.

## EREV PESACH - WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1

Chometz set aside for breakfast may be eaten until the end of the fourth proportionate hour after dawn (10:51 AM). The chometz you authorized Rabbi Shestack to sell must be placed in a reserved area by 11:30 AM, after which the sale will have taken place. One may not possess chometz after the fifth proportionate hour (11:55 AM), and after any chometz is properly disposed of say the formula of "כל חמירא" nullifying and making free all chometz of which we are both unaware and aware, but do not make any Bracha (one should have in mind that if the sale to the non-Jew is found invalid, such Chometz too is nullified and rendered free).

## PESACH - WEDNESDAY/THURSDAY NIGHTS, APRIL 1 & 2 - SEDARIM

Upon the appearance of three small stars, most married men don Kittels and take their place at the table. The leader has someone else pour each of the Four Cups of wine for him (in the manner of a wealthy free man) and begin the Seder with Kiddush, including שהחיינו. We follow the order presented in the Haggadot. All four cups at the Seder must be full, containing at least a רביעית of preferably red wine (a רביעית is a little more than 3 ounces or 86.5 grams). One should drink the entire cup, but must finish at least the majority of a רביעית. The Four Cups, as well as the eating of the Matzah, Hillel's sandwich and Afikomen, must be done in a reclining position to one's left side (בהסיבת שמאל). Women and children are obligated to drink the Four Cups, although children can be given small cups relative to their age and size. Romaine lettuce must be thoroughly cleansed and then carefully inspected for bugs. The horseradish must be grated.

## PRAYER FOR DEW - MUSSAF - THURSDAY, APRIL 2

The Chazzan dons a Kittel. We say "משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם" during silent Shemonei Esrei at Mussaf. In his Repetition the Chazzan stops saying "...ומוריד הגשם". The congregation no longer says "...ומוריד הגשם..." at Mincha. It is advisable to repeat 101 (or at least 90) times "אתה רב להושיע מכלכל חיים"; so that it becomes fluent and habitual, avoiding any future doubt as to whether one failed to omit "משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם".

## SECOND NIGHT - COUNTING THE OMER - THURSDAY NIGHT, APRIL 2

Wait until Tzait before lighting candles or preparing for the 2nd day. Maariv begins after Tzait. Each night before counting the Omer we recite the Bracha "אשר קדשנו במצותיו... וצונו על ספירת העומר" and then proclaim the current day of the Omer. Both the Bracha and the count itself must be done while standing. It is best to count the Omer after Tzait. If one counted before then, it is proper to count again after Tzait without a Bracha. If one counted earlier than Plag HaMincha he must count again with a Bracha when the stars appear. If one forgot to count at night, he must count during the day without a Bracha. He may then continue to count again on all of the successive nights with a Bracha. If one failed to count an entire day, one continues to count the following nights without a Bracha.

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

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

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

## 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



COMMUNITY  
SECURITY  
SERVICE

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.]



## Authorization

I, the undersigned, fully empower and permit Rabbi Ely Shestack or his designee to act in my place and stead, and on my behalf to sell all chametz possessed by me knowingly or unknowingly, as defined by Torah and rabbinic law, except for chametz designated for burning after the sale, and except for chametz designated for consumption on the upcoming Sabbath meals, and to lease all places in which chametz owned by me may be found, especially at:

(Address) \_\_\_\_\_

(Auxiliary Address\*: work, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

The chametz I possess includes the following: (note chametz in aux. location with ‘\*’)

	Type of Chametz (groceries, liquor, medicine, toiletries, etc.)	Where Stored	Approximate Value
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

If you or your Chametz will be in Europe/Israel for Pesach, please initial here \_\_\_\_\_ to indicate your interest in an earlier sale time.

If you or your Chametz will be on the west coast, please initial here \_\_\_\_\_ to indicate your interest in a later buy-back time.

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### *Complete this part only if you will be away for all Pesach:*

I specifically authorize Rabbi Ely Shestack or person designated by him to sell all chametz located anywhere in my home at the above address, and to lease my entire home (except for \_\_\_\_\_). The keys to my home can be found with:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Residing at (address): \_\_\_\_\_

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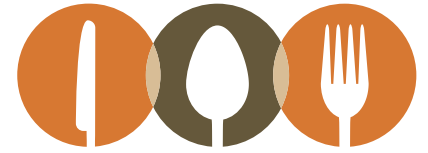
### **Concise Document of Sale**

I, the undersigned hereby sell all my chametz via Rabbi Ely Shestack or his designee. I also lease the place where such chametz is found at the above address(es) for a period of ten (10) days. This sale and rental are to take effect on Wednesday, April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026 corresponding to 14 Nissan 5786, before 11:30am. Further details concerning all of the above are recorded in the above power of attorney form and lengthier document for sale.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_



AHAVAT ACHIM  
קהלת אהבת אחים  
THE FAMILY SHUL



**CABINETS BARE BEFORE PESACH?  
JOIN US FOR ONE LAST KIDDUSH!**

# PRE-PESACH COMMUNITY LUNCHEON

**IT'LL BE  
CHAMETZ-ING!**

**SATURDAY, MARCH 28**

SIGN UP TO SPONSOR OR VOLUNTEER TO  
MAKE A CROCKPOT DISH!

## **SPONSORSHIPS:**

KADESH: \$54

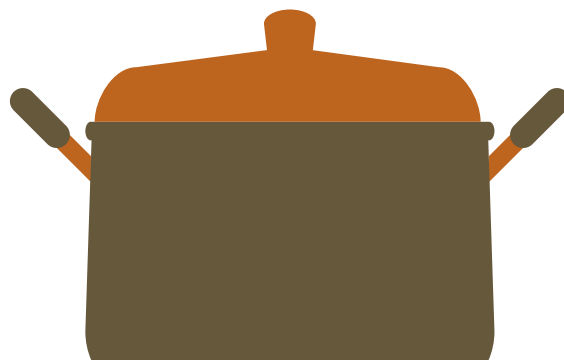
KARPAS: \$72

MAGGID: \$118

TZAFUN: \$180

**SIGN UP BY 3/24!**

[TINYURL.COM/AAPRE-PESACH](https://tinyurl.com/aapre-pesach)



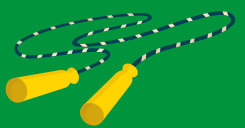


Save the Date!

# Playdate in the Park: Pesach Edition



Join us at Edison Park on  
Thursday, April 9th at 3:45 P.M.



Fruit & snacks will be provided!  
Bring your own water.

\*please do not bring snacks containing nuts\*



AHAVAT ACHIM  
קהלת אהבת אחים

718.224.1111



AHAVAT ACHIM  
קהלת אהבת אחים  
THE FAMILY SHUL



Ahavat Achim invites you to join us for

# YOM HA'ATZMAUT KIDDUSH

on Saturday, April 18 following davening  
for a special Israeli inspired kiddush!  
From falafel to Prigat, this kiddush will leave  
you with a taste of home in your mouth!

## **SPONSORSHIP LEVELS:**

Chaim Weizmann: \$54

Golda Meir: \$72

Theodore Herzl: \$118

David Ben Gurion: \$180

[TINYURL.COM/ISRAELIKIDDUSH](https://tinyurl.com/israelikiddush)



**SAVE THE DATE!**



# YOM HA'ATZMAOUT

**AT AHAVAT ACHIM**

**SUNDAY, APRIL 19TH**

**FROM 1PM - 3PM**

*Join us for a fun-filled afternoon celebrating Israel!*



**DRAWING**

**MOVIES**

**FOOD**

# Ignite

## COUNT & CULTIVATE

From Counting Days to Cultivating Character

### *Teaneck Event*

**SUNDAY, APRIL 19TH**

**7:30 PM-9:30 PM**

Maayanot Yeshiva High School for Girls  
1650 Palisade Avenue, Teaneck, NJ

### **REBBETZINS' PANEL:**

*What is Growth?  
Personal Insights & Experiences  
from Community Rebbetzins*

**FOLLOWED BY SHIURIM  
AND ART SESSIONS**

ADMISSION: \$18

**5 LOCATIONS**

MANHATTAN

TORONTO

LOS ANGELES

SOUTH FLORIDA

TEANECK

LEARN MORE AND REGISTER AT [OUWOMEN.ORG/IGNITE](https://ouwomen.org/ignite)





**MIZRACHI**  
RELIGIOUS ZIONISTS OF  
**AMERICA**  
rza.org



# AHAVAT ACHIM

PRESENTS A SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE SHABBATON WITH

## RABBI BINNY FREEDMAN

SAVE THE DATE

**SHABBAT PARASHAT  
ACHAREI MOT-KEDOSHIM  
APRIL 24–25, 2026**



**Rabbi Binny Freedman** is Rosh Yeshiva, founder, and Dean of Yeshivat Orayta. He is a highly engaging and inspiring educator who has the gift for synthesizing difficult, sophisticated material in a way that inspires both the novice and the scholar. His proficiency in applying Jewish concepts to contemporary life in a personal and meaningful manner has made him a sought-after speaker and educator around the world. Rav Binny is an IDF Company Commander who came to Israel as a lone soldier in 1982.

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# Covenant & Conversation

Jonathan Sacks  
THE RABBI SACKS LEGACY

TZAV • יצ

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.

## Violence and the Sacred

Why sacrifices? To be sure, they have not been part of the life of Judaism since the destruction of the Second Temple, almost two thousand years ago. But why, if they are a means to an end, did God choose *this* end? This is, of course, one of the deepest questions in Judaism, and there are many answers. Here I want to explore just one, first given by the early fifteenth-century Jewish thinker, Rabbi Joseph Albo, in his *Sefer HaIkkarim*.

Albo's theory took as its starting point not sacrifices but two other questions. The first: Why after the Flood did God permit human beings to eat meat? (Gen. 9:3–5). Initially, neither human beings nor animals had been meat-eaters (Gen. 1:29–30). What caused God to, as it were, change His mind? The second: What was wrong with the first act of sacrifice, Cain's offering of "some of the fruits of the soil" (Gen. 4:3–5)? God's rejection of that offering led directly to the first murder, when Cain killed Abel. What

was at stake in the difference between the offerings Cain and Abel each brought to God?

Albo believed that killing animals for food is inherently wrong. It involves taking the life of a sentient being to satisfy our needs. Cain also knew this to be true. He believed there was a strong kinship between humans and other animals. That is why he offered not an animal sacrifice, but a vegetable one. His error, according to Albo, is that he should have brought fruit, not vegetables – the highest, not the lowest, of non-meat produce. Abel, by contrast, believed that there was a qualitative difference between people and animals. Had God not told the first humans: "Rule over the fish of the sea, and the birds of the air, and every living thing that moves upon the earth" (Gen. 1:28)? That is why Abel brought an animal sacrifice.

Once Cain saw that Abel's sacrifice had been accepted while his own was not, he reasoned thus: if God, who forbids us to kill animals for food, permits and even favours killing an animal as a sacrifice, and if, as Cain believed, there is no ultimate difference between human beings and animals, then I shall offer the highest living being as a sacrifice to God, namely my brother Abel. According to this reasoning, says Rabbi Albo, *Cain killed Abel as a human sacrifice*.

That is why God permitted meat-eating after the Flood. Before the Flood, the world had been "filled with violence." Perhaps violence is an inherent part of human nature. If humanity were to be allowed to exist at all, God would have to lower His demands. *Let humans kill animals*, He said, *rather than killing human beings* – the one form of life that is not only God's creation but also in God's image. Hence the otherwise almost unintelligible sequence of verses after Noah and his family emerge on dry land:

Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings upon it. The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in His heart, "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood..."

*Gen. 8:20–21*

Then God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them...

"Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything... Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made humanity." Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; I allow them all to you, like green plants. But... one who sheds the blood of man – by man shall his blood be shed, for in God's image man was made.

*Gen. 9:3–6*

According to Albo, the logic of the passage is clear. Noah offers an animal sacrifice in thanksgiving for having survived the Flood. God sees that human beings need this way of expressing themselves. They are genetically predisposed to violence ("every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood"). If society is to survive, humans will need to be able to direct their violence towards non-human animals, whether as food or sacrificial offerings. The crucial line to be drawn is between human and non-human. The permission to kill animals is accompanied by an absolute prohibition against killing human beings, "for in the image of God has God made humanity."

It is not that God approves of killing animals, whether for sacrifice or food, but that to forbid this to human beings, given

their genetic predisposition to bloodshed, is utopian. It is not for now but for the end of days. Until then, the least bad solution is to let people kill animals rather than murder their fellow humans. Animal sacrifices are a concession to human nature.<sup>1</sup> *Sacrifices are a substitute for violence directed against humankind.*

The contemporary thinker who has done most to revive this understanding is French-American literary critic and philosophical anthropologist René Girard, in such books as *Violence and the Sacred*, *The Scapegoat*, and *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*. The common denominator in sacrifices, he argues, is:

...internal violence – all the dissensions, rivalries, jealousies, and quarrels within the community that the sacrifices are designed to suppress. The purpose of the sacrifice is to restore harmony to the community, to reinforce the social fabric. Everything else derives from that.<sup>2</sup>

The worst form of violence within and between societies is vengeance, “an interminable, infinitely repetitive process.” This is in line with Hillel’s saying, on seeing a human skull floating on water:

“Because you drowned others, they drowned you, and those who drowned you will in the end themselves be

drowned.”

*Mishnah Avot 2:7*

There is no natural end to the cycle of retaliation and revenge. The Montagues keep killing and being killed by the Capulets. So do the Tattaglias and the Corleones, and the other feuding groups in fiction and history. It is a destructive cycle that has devastated whole communities. According to Girard, this was the problem that religious ritual was developed to resolve. The primary religious act, he says, is the sacrifice, and the primary sacrifice is the scapegoat. If tribes A and B, who have been fighting, can sacrifice a member of tribe C, then both will have sated their desire for bloodshed without inviting revenge, especially if tribe C is in no position to retaliate. Sacrifices divert the destructive energy of violent reciprocity.

Why then, if violence is embedded in human nature, are sacrifices a feature of ancient rather than modern societies? Because, argues Girard, there is another and more effective way of ending vengeance:

Vengeance is a vicious circle whose effect on primitive societies can only be surmised. For us the circle has been broken. We owe our good fortune to one of our social institutions above all: our judicial system, which serves to deflect the menace of vengeance. The system does not suppress vengeance; rather, it

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<sup>1</sup> On why God never chooses to change human nature, see Rambam, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, III:32.

<sup>2</sup> René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), p. 8.

effectively limits itself to a single act of reprisal, enacted by a sovereign authority specialising in this particular function. The decisions of the judiciary are invariably presented as the final word on vengeance.<sup>3</sup>

Girard's terminology here is not one to which we can subscribe. Justice is not vengeance. Retribution is not revenge. Revenge is inherently I-Thou, or We-Them. It is personal. Retribution is impersonal. It is no longer the Montagues versus the Capulets, but both under the impartial judgement of the law. But Girard's substantive point is correct and essential. The only effective antidote to violence is the rule of law.

Girard's theory confirms the view of Albo. Sacrifice (as with meat-eating) entered Judaism as a substitute for violence. It also helps us understand the profound insight of the Prophets that sacrifices are not ends in themselves, but part of the Torah's programme to create a world redeemed from the otherwise interminable cycle of revenge. The other part of that programme, and God's greatest desire, is a world governed by justice. That, we recall, was His first charge to Abraham, to "instruct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just" (Gen. 18:19).

Have we therefore moved beyond that stage in human history in which animal sacrifices have a point? Has justice become a powerful enough reality that we no longer need religious rituals to divert the violence between human beings? Sadly, the answer is no. The collapse of the Soviet Union, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the end of the Cold War, led some thinkers to argue that we had reached "the end of history." There would be no more ideologically driven wars. Instead, the world would turn to the market economy and liberal democracy.<sup>4</sup>

The reality was radically different. There were waves of ethnic conflict and violence in Bosnia, Kosovo, Chechnya, and Rwanda, followed by even bloodier conflicts throughout the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, and parts of Asia. In his book *The Warrior's Honour*, Michael Ignatieff offered the following explanation of why this happened:

The chief moral obstacle in the path of reconciliation is the desire for revenge. Now, revenge is commonly regarded as a low and unworthy emotion, and because it is regarded as such, its deep moral hold on people is rarely understood. But revenge – morally considered – is a desire to keep faith with the dead, to honour their memory by taking up their cause where they left off. Revenge keeps faith between generations...

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

This cycle of intergenerational recrimination has no logical end... But it is the very impossibility of intergenerational vengeance that locks communities into the compulsion to repeat... Reconciliation has no chance against vengeance unless it respects the emotions that sustain vengeance, unless it can replace the respect entailed in vengeance with rituals in which communities once at war learn to mourn their dead together.

*Michael Ignatieff, The Warrior's Honor: Ethnic War and the Modern Conscience (Toronto: Penguin, 2006), pp. 188–190.*

Far from speaking to an age long gone and forgotten, the laws of sacrifice tell us three things as important now as then: First, violence is still part of human nature, never more dangerous than when combined with an ethic of revenge. Second, rather than denying its existence, we must find ways of

redirecting it so that it does not claim yet more human sacrifices. Third, the only ultimate alternative to sacrifices, animal or human, is the one first propounded millennia ago by the Prophets of ancient Israel, few more powerfully than Amos:

Even though you bring Me burnt offerings and offerings of grain, I will not accept them...

But let justice roll down like a river, And righteousness like a never-failing stream.

*Amos 5:23–24*



## Around the Shabbat Table

1. How do sacrifices fulfil the instinct for human violence? Does this change your understanding of the meaning behind the korban?
2. Can you think of a modern-day example where revenge, not justice, is the driving force?
3. Amos says God desires justice over burnt offerings. What does it mean to prioritise justice in our own lives?

● 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/tzav/violence-and-the-sacred/>