



## Parshat Re-eh

### Service Times

**Friday, August 10**

7:00 pm - Mincha  
6:46 pm – Earliest Candle Lighting  
7:52 pm – Late Candle Lighting

### Rosh Chodesh Elul

**Saturday, August 11**

9:00 am – Shacharit  
(10:02 am – Latest preferable time to say the shema)  
10:00 am – Shabbat Morning Youth Groups  
10:30 am – Youth Tefilla Begins

6:40 pm – Parsha Shiur  
7:25 pm – Mincha  
8:40 pm – Havdalah

### Kiddush Sponsor:

Arlene and Peter Rosenthal in memory of Arlene's mother, Isabel Shawinsky, at her yahrzeit.

**Aug 18** – Katie Bielsky in honor of her daughter Malka's visit to USA and a thank you to all her Dor Tikvah friends who have helped make her Aliyah journey a success.

**Aug 25** - Kiddush sponsored by the Zucker family, in honor of the dedication of Congregation Dor Tikvah's new sanctuary, which marks the realization of the vision of the late Jerry Zucker, z"l (who's birthday we recall August 24), to have an Orthodox shul in West Ashley.

**Sept 1** – Lenny and Barbie Zucker in memory of Lenny's father, Max S. Zucker at yahrzeit time.

**Sept. 8 - Available**

Please consider marking a special event in your life by sponsoring a Kiddush. Contact Lenny Zucker at lenbarbz@alum.mit.edu. Regular Kiddush is \$150. Shabbat Academy Kiddush/Lunch is \$275.

### Weekday Services

Mincha/Maariv services Monday and Wednesday  
at 6:20 at Dor Tikvah.

### Regular Classes

(Classes at the Dor Tikvah House. Park in the Shul parking lot, not the house.)

Torah Study – The Avraham Stories – **is off for the summer.**

Lunchtime Talmud has resumed - Thursdays at noon (with Facebook Live access. Please contact Rabbi@DorTikvah.org with questions.)

### Dor Tikvah Youth Programs

For programming updates visit [www.dortikvah.org/youth](http://www.dortikvah.org/youth)

## Upcoming Events at Dor Tikvah

**Aug 19:** 8:00 am – Shacharit

--9:00 am - Quarterly Congregational Meeting.

--10 am - Holla 4 Challah with PJ Library! Join us to braid and bake challah and create Rosh Hashanah crafts. Kids ages 2-12. Event is free. RSVP to sharynb@jewishcharleston.org to reserve your spot.

**Aug 24:** Community Friday Night dinner with special guest Rabbi Ari Sytner. Sign up and pay at [www.dortikvah.org](http://www.dortikvah.org). Deadline to sign up is Tuesday August 21st.

**Aug 26:** 10:15 am - Congregation Dor Tikvah is having its brand-new building dedication. The entire Charleston community is welcome to celebrate in this special simcha/happy occasion! Light refreshments will be served. There will be a children's program as well. This event is free! If you would like to be an event sponsor (\$180), however, please email [info@dortikvah.org](mailto:info@dortikvah.org).

### Community Events

**Aug 12:** Jewish Heritage Night at the Joe. The Charleston Riverdogs vs. The Hagertown Suns. Wear your camp shirt for a special prize. Come play on the field starting at 4:00pm. Game starts at 5:05pm. Visit [Riverdogs.com/groups](http://Riverdogs.com/groups) and use password: heritage18 to get your tickets today or call 843-577-3547 Section 206-207. Tickets \$8, Kids under 3 are free! Proceeds support CJF's Community Scholarship Fund for Jewish Overnight Camp. Kosher food and fun! Local Jewish Organization and summer camp fair at Doby's Deck (above 3rd base). Contact Rebecca Engel at [RebeccaL@JewishCharleston.org](mailto:RebeccaL@JewishCharleston.org).

### Refuah Shelema

Yechil Yeshiahu ben Fradel  
Robert Levinson  
Hodel bat Raozel (Linda Kirshstein)  
Yehudit Elisheva bat Miriam Leah  
Claret (Kate Kalin Tobakos)  
Laella bat Simcha  
Talia bat Shoshana  
Yosef Tzvi ben Chaya  
Bloom bat Chaya Sara (Bertha Hoffman)  
Miriam bat Mazal

Bear Phillips  
Boaz Moshe ben Golda Tamar  
Moshe ben Chava  
Linda Milligan  
Shmuel Zalman ben Shoshana  
Chaya Leiba bat Nehama Beryl  
(Helen F. Piver)  
Yocheved Koplowitz  
Sarah Leah bat Batiya (Sandy Katz)  
Zelig Aharon HaLevi ben Miriam  
Valerie Armour

### Life Cycle

#### Birthday

- Rena Davies (8/11)
- Paul Garkinkel (8/10)

#### Anniversary

- Edie & Joe Rubin (8/13)

#### Yahrzeit

- Ethel Steinert, mother of Charles Steinert (8/11)
- Isabel Shawinsky, mother of Arlene Rosenthal (8/11)
- Irma Schneyer, grandmother of Matthew Engel (8/11)
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### Welcome Recent New Members

- Rebecca, Aaron, and Edie Rose Engel
- Penny and Ben-Zion Bronshtein
- The Shanes Family – welcome back!

## **Don't Define Yourself as a Victim:** *In any given situation we can look back or we can look forward.*

**Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks | Aish HaTorah**

Making a series of programs for the BBC on morality in the twenty-first century, I felt I had to travel to Toronto have a conversation with a man I had not met before, Canadian psychologist Jordan Peterson. Recently he has become an iconic intellectual for millions of young people, as well as a figure of caricature and abuse by others who should know better. The vast popularity of his podcasts - hours long and formidably intellectual - suggests that he has been saying something that many people feel a need to hear and are not adequately hearing from other contemporary voices.

During our conversation there was a moment of searing intensity. Peterson was talking about his daughter Mikhaila. At the age of six, she was found to be suffering from severe polyarticular juvenile idiopathic arthritis. Thirty-seven of her joints were affected. During her childhood and teen years, she had to have a hip replacement, then an ankle replacement. She was in acute, incessant pain. Describing her ordeal, Peterson's voice was wavering on the verge of tears. Then he said:

*One of the things we were very careful about and talked with her a lot about was to not allow herself to regard herself as a victim. And man, she had reason to be to regard herself as a victim ... [but] as soon as you see yourself as a victim ... that breeds thoughts of anger and revenge - and that takes you to a place that's psychologically as terrible as the physiological place. And to her great credit I would say this is part of what allowed her to emerge from this because she did eventually figure out what was wrong with her, and by all appearances fix it by about 90%. It's unstable but it's way better because of the fact that she didn't allow herself to become existentially enraged by her condition ... People have every reason to construe themselves as victims. Their lives are characterized by suffering and betrayal. Those are ineradicable experiences. [The question is] what's the right attitude to take to that - anger or rejection, resentment, hostility, murderousness? That's the story of Cain and Abel, [and] that's not good. That leads to Hell.*

As soon as I heard those words I understood what had led me to this man, because much of my life has been driven by the same search, though it came about in a different way. It happened because of the Holocaust survivors I came to know. They really were victims of one of the worst crimes against humanity in all of history. *Yet they did not see themselves as victims.* The survivors I knew, with almost superhuman courage, looked forward, built a new life for themselves, supported one another emotionally, and then, many years later, told their story, not for the sake of revisiting the past but for the sake of educating today's young people on the importance of taking responsibility for a more human and humane future.

But how is this possible? *How can you be a victim and yet not see yourself as a victim without being guilty of denial, or deliberate forgetfulness, or wishful thinking?*

The answer is that uniquely - this is what makes us Homo sapiens - in any given situation we can look back or we can look forward. We can ask: "Why did this happen?" That involves looking back for some cause in the past. Or we can ask, "What then shall I do?" This involves looking forward, trying to work out some future destination given that this is our starting point. There is a massive difference between the two. I can't change the past. But I can change the future. Looking back, I see myself as an object acted on by forces largely beyond my control. Looking forward, I see myself as a subject, a choosing moral agent, deciding which path to take from here to where I want eventually to be. Both are legitimate ways of thinking, but one leads to resentment, bitterness, rage and a desire for revenge. The other leads to challenge, courage, strength of will and self-control. That for me is what Mikhaila Peterson and the Holocaust survivors represent: *the triumph of choice over fate.*

Jordan Peterson came to his philosophy through his own and his father's battles with depression and his daughter's battle with her physical condition. Jews came to it through the life-changing teachings of Moses, especially in the book of Deuteronomy. They are epitomized in the opening verses of our parsha.

See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you heed the commandments of the Lord your God that I am giving you today; and the curse, if you do not heed the commandments of the Lord your God, but stray from the way I am commanding you today... (Deut. 11:26-28)

Throughout Deuteronomy, Moses keeps saying: don't think your future will be determined by forces outside your control. You are indeed surrounded by forces outside your control, but what matters is how you choose. Everything else will follow from that. Choose the good and good things will happen to you. Choose the bad, and eventually you will suffer. Bad choices create bad people who create bad societies, and in such societies, in the fullness of time, liberty is lost. I cannot make that choice for you. The choice, he says again and again, is yours alone: you as an individual, second person singular, and you as a people, second person plural. The result was that remarkably, Jews did not see themselves as victims. A key figure here, centuries after Moses, was Jeremiah. Jeremiah kept warning the people that the strength of a country does not depend on the strength of its army but on the strength of its society. Is there justice? Is there compassion? Are people concerned about the welfare of others or only about their own? Is there corruption in high places?

Jeremiah kept saying, in so many words, that God will not save us from our enemies until we save ourselves from our own lesser selves. When disaster came - the destruction of the Temple - Jeremiah made one of the most important assertions in all history. He did not see the Babylonian conquest as the defeat of Israel and its God. He saw it as the defeat of Israel by its God. And this proved to be the salvaging of hope. God is still there, he was saying. Return to Him and He will return to you. Don't define yourself as a victim of the Babylonians. Define yourself as a free moral agent, capable of choosing a better future.

Jews paid an enormous psychological price for seeing history the way they did. "Because of our sins we were exiled from our land," we say repeatedly in our prayers. We refuse to define ourselves as the victims of anyone else, Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, fate, the inexorability of history, original sin, unconscious drives, blind evolution, genetic determinism or the inevitable consequences of the struggle for power. We blame ourselves: "Because of our sins." That is a heavy burden of guilt, unbearable were it not for our faith in Divine forgiveness. But the alternative is heavier still, namely, to define ourselves as victims, asking not, "What did we do wrong?" but "Who did this to us?"

"See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse." That was Moses' insistent message in the last month of his life. There is always a choice. As Viktor Frankl said, even in Auschwitz there was one freedom they could not take away from us: the freedom to choose how to respond. Victimhood focuses us on a past we can't change. Choice focuses us on a future we can change, liberating us from being held captive by our resentments, and summoning us to what Emmanuel Levinas called *Difficile Liberte*, "difficult freedom."

There really are victims in this world, and none of us should minimize their experiences. But in most cases (admittedly, not all) the most important thing we can do is *help them recover their sense of agency*. This is never easy but is essential if they are not to drown in their own learned helplessness. No one should ever blame a victim. But neither should any of us encourage a victim to stay a victim. It took immense courage for Mikhaila Peterson and the Holocaust survivors to rise above their victimhood, but what a victory they won for human freedom, dignity and responsibility. Hence the life-changing idea: *Never define yourself as a victim.* You cannot change your past, but you can change your future. There is always a choice, and by exercising the strength to choose, we can rise above fate.