

YOUNG ISRAEL of
SHARON

Information Booklet





About Us

Welcome to our community! Young Israel of Sharon is a vibrant Orthodox shul in the suburban town of Sharon, Massachusetts, thirty minutes outside of both Boston, MA and Providence, RI. With a warm, friendly, and relaxed atmosphere, Young Israel exudes a true small-town shul feel while serving the needs of over 200 member families. Our ideology is inclusiveness. On any given day you will meet many men, women, and children, from a wide variety of backgrounds, with a broad array of religious styles and approaches, all unified by a commitment to authentic Torah life and spirit. Young Israel exemplifies the ideals of Modern Orthodoxy: serious Torah study and practice, together with an embrace of diversity and of contemporary culture and community.

In some ways, Young Israel of Sharon is like many other Modern Orthodox communities in America. We have daily *minyanim*; we're mostly, but not entirely, made up of married families with children; we have a Modern

Orthodox day school in town; we celebrate strong roles for women in Jewish and secular life. In other ways, however, we are distinct and, indeed, we take pride in not being a "cookie cutter" institution. We are a bit more laid back, a bit more diverse, a bit more embracing of nature and the environment.

We hope this packet is helpful in providing a summary of Young Israel of Sharon, of the Sharon and Greater Boston communities at-large, and of the wealth of resources available in Sharon and its environs. In addition to describing the shul, the town, and different events and offerings, we hope we've conveyed a sense of the spirit that makes our community special, attracts so many families to settle down here, and encourages the community's children to return here as adults to raise yet another generation of committed, Torah Jews.



Our Shul

Young Israel of Sharon was founded in 1972 with just a *minyan* of families. The community grew slowly at first, but expanded quickly after the construction of the Sharon Eruv in 1990. Many Orthodox families were drawn to Sharon by affordable houses with spacious green lots, by commuter rail access to Boston, and, not least, by the friendly Jewish community. In 2001, YI moved to its present-day home at 100 Ames Street.

The shul membership is diverse in many ways: religious background, religious observance, *hashkafa*, Jewish education, age, number and age range of children, and place of origin. Many members have advanced degrees or *semicha*. Our members spend their days working as teachers, dentists, accountants, homemakers, physicians, professors, social workers, programmers, craftsmen and more. Shabbat dress spans a spectrum from a more formal style to a look that's respectfully casual. We pride ourselves in our down-to-earth, inclusive environment. We are united by our shared focus on family, community, *derech eretz*, Jewish and secular education, and an Orthodox way of life. We are engaged deliberately in modern American life without sacrificing our Torah traditions.

Our Rabbi

Rabbi Noah Cheses grew up in Boston where he attended the Maimonides School. He received his rabbinic ordination from Yeshiva University (RIETS) and earned his Master's in Theology from Yale University. During his studies, he was a Norman Lamm Fellow in Jewish Thought and a Wexner Graduate Fellow.

Rabbi Cheses embraced his position as spiritual leader of Young Israel of Sharon after spending two years as the Assistant Rabbi of Shaarei Shomayim Congregation in mid-town Toronto and three years as the OU-JLIC Orthodox Rabbi at Yale University. In high school, Rabbi Cheses worked on the Grounds Crew at Fenway Park, where he spent his summers mowing the field for the Boston Red Sox. He is an avid runner who has completed the Boston, Miami, and Jerusalem marathons, and, proudly, the Sharon Triathlon, as well!

The Rabbi's vision of Jewish community is one in which every member has a strong sense of belonging to something larger than themselves. He is working to advance the values of Modern Orthodoxy, Religious Zionism and Mussar by inspiring people through powerful and relevant Torah. He aspires to see beyond religious, political and social labels and to engage all Jews and non-Jews in a sincere and accepting embrace that transcends all distinctions.

Rabbi Cheses is married to Sarah Cheses, who holds a Master's in Public Health from Columbia University and is trained as a Yoetzet Halacha. The couple is blessed with four wonderful children: Adina, Natan, Orly, and Ezra.

Please contact Rabbi Cheses at rabbi@yisharon.org.



Yocheved and Rabbi JJ Shachter, founding Rabbi of YIS, at the installation of Rabbi Cheses, with his wife, Sarah

Our Jewish Life

MINYANIM

YI Sharon offers a broad array of *tefillah* opportunities. Our shul has two daily *shacharit minyanim* and a daily *mincha/maariv minyan*. (During the winter there is one late *maariv* at shul, and a *mincha/maariv b'zman* that rotates among the three orthodox synagogues in town.) The YI community davens together in one *minyan* on Friday nights. Once a month, during the winter, there is a "Yakar-style" *Kabbalat Shabbat* with enhanced singing and family participation. Shabbat morning offers two *tefillah* options: the *hashkama minyan* and the main *minyan*. *Hashkama minyan* concludes with a short *dvar torah* given by a *minyan* member. After *Kiddush*, many *hashkama* participants choose to remain in shul for *chavrutot* or to attend a longer *shiur* given by Rabbi Aryeh Klapper, Dean of the Center for Modern Torah Leadership, or by Rabbi David Saltzman, Judaic Principal of the Maimonides Lower School. The main *minyan* features a short introduction to *layning* as well as a longer *drasha* given by Rabbi Cheses.

Teen *minyan* takes place one to two times per month. This *minyan* is completely teen-run, with participants assuming responsibilities that include arranging for volunteers to lead *davening* and read Torah, as well as setting up *Kiddush*.

Once a month, for the past twenty-five years, *Tefillat Nashim* has met in the Beit Midrash. This group was initiated by women who wanted to maximize their participation in communal prayer, while staying within the framework of *halakha*. *Tefillat Nashim* has become a special forum for some girls to celebrate becoming a Bat Mitzvah in a way that is, for them, resonant with deep meaning.



Sarah Cheses teaching Bat Mitzva Club

CHESED

Young Israel of Sharon has an active Chesed Committee, which cares for each person in the community during times of need. Whether there is a birth, death, illness, request for hospitality or need for help with special needs children, community members support each other with meals, visits, and charity. During the past recession, Young Israel created a Family Assistance Fund to provide help for members who lost jobs or faced other economic difficulties.



Our weekly "pizza and parsha" with Yachad

INCLUSION

We believe that every individual in the community must feel accepted and welcome, and should be able to participate in communal life. Through our inclusion initiative, we strive to increase the awareness and sensitivity of our *kehillah* to the multiple visible and not-so-visible needs of members of our community. Through the use of educational and social programming, as well as ongoing physical accessibility needs assessments, we affect communal awareness and ensure that Young Israel is welcoming to individuals of all ages and of all abilities. We host an annual Yachad Shabbaton and are a member of the Ruderman Synagogue Inclusion Initiative.



Our State of the Art Sukkah



Rabbi Cheses Preparing for Purim

ADULT EDUCATION

Weekly Classes: The Shul offers weekly shiurim in Gemara, Halakhah, and Machshevet Yisrael, as well as a rotating shiur after the *Hashkama minyan* on *parshanut*. There is a weekly open *Beit Midrash* – Tuesday Night Torah (TNT), during which at least a dozen *chevrutahs* simultaneously engage in spirited study. A bi-monthly class on relevant and current topics, led by Rabbi Cheses, is hosted in living rooms around the community on a rotating basis. In addition, a weekly Women's Torah Circle on Tuesday mornings brings learners of all levels together in the casual comfort of different members' homes.

Summer Beit Midrash: Each summer we are privileged to host this exciting program led by Rabbi Aryeh Klapper and the Center for Modern Torah Leadership. Approximately fifteen exceptional young men and women learn intensively in the *shul Beit Midrash* for six summer weeks and offer *chavrutot* for the wider shul community. In addition, there are public lectures offered to the *shul* community and a Shabbat with Rabbi Klapper as Scholar-in-Residence.

Scholar-in-Residence Program: Each year, the shul hosts three to five Scholar-in-Residence programs that feature prominent rabbis, scholars, and educators from the Modern Orthodox world. An important component of the Scholar-in-Residence program is our annual Shabbat T'Lamdeini weekend that celebrates outstanding female Torah scholarship.

PROGRAMMING

Our kehillah enjoys various communal activities together throughout the year, including our Break- Out Shabbat Lunch, New Member Social, Beginning of the Year BBQ, Scotch Tasting, Adult Chanukah Party, Chulent Cook-Off and much more.



Mother-Daughter Learning on Motzei Shabbat



YOUTH AND FAMILY

Our community tremendously values our children and their spiritual growth. A heavy emphasis is placed on continuously developing and enhancing our youth and family programming. We have a part time youth director, and two young women from Israel who serve as part of the Bnot Sherut Leumi program. On a typical Shabbat morning, we have babysitting for ages one through five and groups for Pre-K/K, 1st through 3rd grades, and 4th and 5th grades. We also feature weekly Bnei Akiva programming run by our Bnot, as well as regular NCSY Onegs and meals for our teenagers, supervised by our NCSY directors. On Motzei Shabbat during the winter months, we host a popular program called MishMash for parent-child learning, supplemented by raffles, prizes, and delicious snacks. Other family-friendly programs include our annual Sukkah hop, Channukah party and Purim carnival.



Annual Bar Mitzva Club Father-Son Basketball Game



Our Town

Sharon is a beautiful suburban community in a natural setting, and offers a strong Jewish environment in which to live and raise children. In 2013, Sharon was rated by Money Magazine as the #1 small town in America, topping its list of "places with great jobs, strong economies, affordable homes, excellent schools, and that special something that makes it a great place to live."

Located midway between Boston and Providence, the town provides access to both cities via MBTA commuter trains stopping at the Sharon station. New York City and Washington, D.C., are easily reached via Amtrak, accessed from the nearby Route 128 rail station. Sharon's population of 18,000 live mostly in single-family houses ranging from relatively modest ranches to luxury properties, while those starting out or downsizing may opt for comfortable rental units. Many families have resided in Sharon for multiple generations, while the town is also notable for its diversity and openness to newcomers.

Sharon's proximity to Boston invites residents to take advantage of big city cultural opportunities

and sporting events (Boston teams ain't too shabby!) Yet, nestled in its idyllic geographic location, Sharon remains sufficiently distant from city congestion to provide an intoxicating environment of peace and tranquility. Shul families enjoy the small town amenities, including taking in free concerts at the bandstand by beautiful Lake Massapoag, relaxing at Lake Massapoag's beach and picnic area, or watching their kids play baseball, lacrosse or softball at the local playgrounds. Sharon boasts bountiful green spaces and many nature-lover activities. Indeed, the town motto is, "A better place to live, because it's naturally beautiful." YI Sharon members avail themselves of the many options for hiking, bird-watching, biking, boating and other outdoor activities. Sharon's Moose Hill Wildlife Sanctuary and nearby state parks offer trails for hikers of all levels. The summer beckons boating and swimming in our 353 acre, spring-fed Lake Massapoag. Outdoor winter opportunities include skiing and snowboarding at New England's many resorts, and ice skating at local ponds and ice rinks.

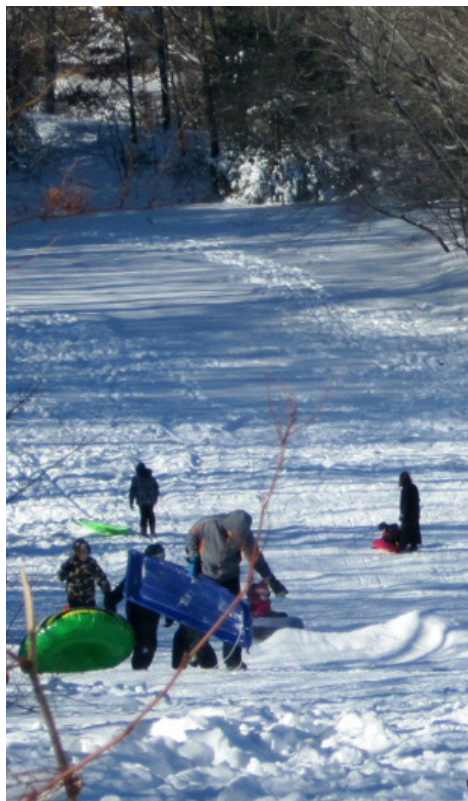
Sharon is also host to several summer camps, and the area has multiple Jewish camp options. Every summer, our town famously hosts The Sharon Triathlon. The race takes place in and around the lake, starting with the swimming event during which family and friends line the beach to cheer on athletes of all abilities. Participation from shul members has grown over the years, with seasoned YI athletes helping and encouraging other members to take part.



At the Finish Line of Sharon Triathlon



Kayaking on Sharon Lake



Sledding in Sharon

SYNAGOGUES

For a small town, Sharon has a fair number of synagogues of different denominations. Happily, these congregations share warm relationships, both institutionally and across memberships. YI Sharon sold its old building in 2000 to Temple Kol Tikvah (where the community *mikveh* is still housed), and bought its current building from Temple Sinai. Notwithstanding their differing affiliations, members of these diverse synagogues share personal and communal bonds; their children come together at playgrounds, Little League, the Fourth of July sandcastle contest, and summer camps, while the adults, from a cross-section of these congregations, forge individual, communal and civic connections.



SCHOOLS

Sharon and the surrounding area provides a broad array of choices for schooling. (See the Resources section below.) The most commonly attended Modern Orthodox school for YI Sharon's children is the Striar Hebrew Academy of Sharon (SHAS) for pre-school and elementary school, and the Maimonides School in Brookline for older grades. Both schools provide an excellent secular education, a peer group of Modern Orthodox classmates, and a strong foundation in Jewish learning and practice. Many parents in the community choose to send one or more of their children to other Jewish schools or public schools, or opt to provide homeschooling.

SHAS bears a particularly close relationship with YI Sharon because it was established by members of Young Israel, specifically for Sharon's Modern Orthodox community. Additionally, the elementary school occupies a wing of the shul building. The children's artwork and other projects adorn the hallways, while the children use the sanctuary, *Beit Midrash* and social hall for *davening* and other activities.



Rabbi Cheses Teaching Parsha to the Nursery Kids at SHAS

Jewish Resources in and around Sharon

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

The Center for Modern Torah Leadership
www.torahleadership.org

The Center models and fosters a vision of fully committed halakhic Judaism that embraces the intellectual and moral challenges of modernity as spiritual opportunities, and takes responsibility for the societal implications of its interpretations of Torah. The Center carries out its mission through the Summer Beit Midrash program.

Maayan
www.maayan.org

Maayan provides women of all ages and backgrounds the opportunity to further their Jewish learning. Weekday, evening, and Sunday classes in Tanakh, Mishnah, Talmud, Jewish thought, and liturgy are offered at locations in Newton, Brookline, Brighton, and Sharon.

The Jewish Sharon Email List
groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/jewishsharon/info

This list is a resource for information on the greater Jewish community of Sharon, and a forum for discussion on topics relevant to the community. This list is useful in obtaining recommendations, offering or seeking a helping hand, selling or giving away items, etc.

Mikvah
chevratnashim@gmail.com,
<http://www.southshoremikvah.org>

The Sharon mikvah, Mikvah Mei Ezra, is run by the women of Chevrat Nashim, and is located at 9 Dunbar St.

Eruv
www.sharoneruv.org

The Sharon Eruv is maintained under the direct supervision of Rabbi Noah Cheses of Young Israel of Sharon. With our eruv volunteers, the eruv is checked on a weekly rotation basis to ensure that it is intact, and that all necessary repairs are made. For an eruv map and additional information, see the website. Eruv status can be obtained by calling 781-784-4299.

SCHOOLS

Striar Hebrew Academy of Sharon (SHAS)
www.striarhebrew.org
admissions@striarhebrew.org

Nursery through fifth grade
100 Ames Street, Sharon, MA 781-784-8724

Maimonides School
www.maimonides.org

Elementary, Middle, and Upper Schools
34 Philbrick Road, Brookline, MA 617-232-4452

Shaloh House
www.shalohhouse.com

Preschool— infant through kindergarten
50 Ethyl Way, Stoughton, MA 781-344-6334

Providence Hebrew Day School
www.phdschool.org

Kindergarten-eighth grade
450 Elmgrove Avenue, Providence, RI. 401-331-5327

Gann Academy
www.gannacademy.org

High School
333 Forest Street, Waltham, MA. 781-642-6800

Gateways: Access to Jewish Education
www.jgateways.org

KOSHER FOOD

Kosher products, including fresh meat and chicken, are available locally. In addition, freshly baked goods at a number of local supermarkets are certified kosher by the KVH (Rabbinical Council of New England.)

Zayde's Family Marketplace Canton, MA

Features many varieties of meats, cheeses, packaged products and Israeli foods, as well as imported goods from other countries. An assortment of homemade food is cooked daily and certified by the KVH.

Sweethearts Three Sharon, MA

Candy & Chocolatier – certified by the KVH and shomer Shabbat.

Crescent Ridge Dairy Farm

National Geographic ranked Crescent Ridge ice cream among the world's ten best, competing with offerings from as far away as Paris, Cuba, and Florence. All flavors and toppings are certified by the KVH.

Life's A Bagel is a fresh bagel and coffee shop located in Canton, MA, certified by the KVH.

Sharon Woods Inn (Glatt & Shomer Shabbat) Bed & Breakfast in Sharon, MA (781)784-9401 dynamush@gmail.com. Year-round kosher bed & breakfast & Shabbat meals.

Bakeries

Shaw's Bakery: Canton and Sharon – Certified by the KVH

Stop & Shop Bakery: Stoughton and Norwood – Certified by the KVH

Costco: Dedham – Certified by the KVH

There are many kosher restaurants, bakeries and butchers in Boston, Brookline, Newton, and Providence. A list can be found at www.kashrut.com/travel/Boston/

ACTIVITIES IN AND AROUND SHARON

The Sharon Public Library has a museum pass program. Reserve a pass for one day and receive a discount per admission. Check out www.sharonpubliclibrary.org for more information.

Recreation

Westgate Lanes (candlepin and 10pin bowling in Brockton)

Kings Bowling (at Legacy Place, Dedham)

Splitsville Luxury Lanes (at Patriot Place, Foxboro)

Launch Trampoline Park (Norwood)

Ulin Rink (ice skating)

Rodman Arena, Walpole

Asiaf Arena, Brockton

McGolf (mini-golf, Dedham)

Family Funway (mini-golf, Foxboro)

Nashoba Valley snow tubing & skiing

Blue Hills Ski Area (Milton)

Outdoor/Nature

Moose Hill Wildlife Sanctuary (Mass Audubon)

Moose Hill Farm (Trustees of the Reservation)

Ward's Berry Farm (Sharon – pick-your-own berries, pumpkins, other produce, farm store, animals, playground)

Borderland State Park

Blue Hills (hiking trails, skiing)

Zoos

Franklin Park Zoo

Roger Williams Zoo

Capron Park Zoo

Davis' Farmland (petting zoo, splash park, hayride)

Museums

Providence Children's Museum

Children's Museum in Easton

Boston Children's Museum

Boston Science Museum (Cambridge)

John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum (Boston)

Edward M. Kennedy Institute (Boston)

Harvard Museum of Natural History (Cambridge)

Museum of Fine Arts (MFA - Boston)

Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum (next to the MFA, Boston)

Fuller Craft Museum (Brockton)

Decordova Sculpture Garden (Lincoln)

Historical places

Freedom Trail

Faneuil Hall/Quincy Marketplace

Holocaust Memorial

Lexington/Concord

Adams Historical Area (Quincy)

Plimoth Plantation (Plymouth)

Shopping

Village Shoppes (Canton)

Legacy Place (Dedham): shopping, movies

Patriot Place (Foxboro): shopping, movies.

Patriot Hall of Fame, small ice skating rink
Wrentham Outlets

Crafts

Ceramics a la Carte (Canton)

The Clayroom (Walpole)

Plaster Fun Time (Dedham)

Seasonal

Many smaller apple orchards are located within a half hour drive of Sharon and larger orchards within a one-hour drive:

The Big Apple Farm

Honey Pot Hill Orchards

Berlin Orchards

Nashoba Valley

Belkin Family Lookout Farm



Kosher Maple Syrup Made at Moose Hill



Crescent Ridge Kosher Ice Cream



Things YIS Members have said:

"Sharon is the best place to raise children (I raised five here). Parents watch out for each other's children, and informally help in raising each other's kids. This makes the kids feel comfortable entering their friends' houses, without hesitation, and this becomes even more important as the kids become teenagers, and feel that they have many places that they can call home. Topping this off, our kids and teens (and adults) feel completely safe walking all over town." - RS

"I have been a member of YI Sharon since 1979, through all 3 buildings and all 3 congregation rabbis, since before the mikveh and the eruv and SHAS. Sharon is an open Jewish community where people are comfortable interacting with the members and rabbis of all the various shuls. Tashlich at the lake is so special because of that. There is much home hospitality and continuing Jewish education on so many levels. People are not pretentious and do not stand on ceremony, yet Halakhic observance needn't be compromised." AF, member for 36 years

"Sharon is a unique place because most Orthodox communities outside Israel are in large urban cities. Sharon is an exception and offers a lifestyle of being close to nature and being Orthodox. We have 3 parks (Moose Hill, Moose Hill Farm by Trustees, Borderland), a trail system that goes through woods and lakes in the town - great for walks and snowshoeing or cross country, Ward's Berry Farm with fresh produce and its educational 4H program for kids, two CSA (community sponsored agriculture) sites where families can participate in picking veggies and, of course, the lake. Walking around town, one can see many families with vegetable gardens and orchards in their backyards (us included), chickens and even horses and goats. Wonderful place to watch birds (water birds at the lake, song birds at the park or in your backyard if you have bird feeders). It is an oasis if you love nature and the outdoors." AS

"Cross-country ski out your front door. Walk along the beach after a hard day of work. Take yourself back in time to eat ice cream at Crescent Ridge and watch the cows. Make friends across the different Jewish congregations in town." -HB, member for 24 years

This is a friendly town—strangers greet each other with "good morning" on the street. I have even come to have a casual acquaintance with some of the people I see regularly, just by saying "good morning" as we pass each other." - PS, member for 12 years



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