



Ruth Brooks and Saragail Chessin Carpe are sponsoring the bulletin in loving memory of their wonderful brother in law, Stanley S. Blake ע"ה, Shlomo Zalmen Ben Yaakov. December 8, 1929 - December 12, 2017. With unending love, respect and admiration of the Brooks, Chessin and Blake families.



נא לא לדבר בשעת התפילה
PLEASE NO CONVERSATION DURING SERVICES



WEEKDAY DAVENING INFORMATION

	Sunday (12/24)	Monday (12/25)	Tuesday (12/26)	Wednesday (12/27)	Thursday (12/28)	Friday (12/29)
Fast Begins					6:08 AM	
Earliest Talit	6:17 AM	6:17 AM	6:17 AM	6:18 AM	6:18 AM	6:18 AM
Shacharit	8:15 AM	8:00 AM	6:25 AM	6:25 AM	6:05 AM	6:25 AM
Gedolah	12:19 PM	12:20 PM	12:20 PM	12:21 PM	12:21 PM	12:22 PM
Mincha - Maariv	4:20 PM	4:20 PM			4:05 PM	4:20 PM
Maariv Only			8:20 PM	8:20 PM		
Shkia	4:33 PM	4:34 PM	4:34 PM	4:35 PM	4:36 PM	
Fast Ends					5:16 PM	
Tzait	5:18 PM	5:19 PM	5:19 PM	5:20 PM	5:21 PM	

שבת פרשת ויגש
SHABBAT PARSHAT VAYIGASH
5 TEVET/DECEMBER 23
Haftorah is Ezekiel 37:15-28.

FRIDAY NIGHT
CANDLE LIGHTING - 4:14 PM
MINCHA - 4:20 PM
TZAIT - 5:17 PM

SATURDAY
HASHKAMA/YOUTH - 8:20 AM
CHUMASH SHIUR - 8:30 AM
SHACHARIT MAIN - 9:00 AM
LAST KRIAT SHEMA - 9:37 AM
MINCHA - 4:00 PM
SHKIA - 4:32 PM
MAARIV/HAVDALAH - 5:17 PM

Welcome to our first Hisoreri Shabbat, with Hisoreri members leading davening and giving shiurim between Mincha and Maariv Friday night, the teen chaburah, and the "Fundamentals" shiur.



CONGREGATION AHAVAT ACHIM
18-25 SADDLE RIVER ROAD
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BULLETIN INFORMATION
TO REQUEST A BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENT (BY 7:00 PM WEDNESDAY) OR DEDICATE A BULLETIN FOR \$36 (\$54 W/PHOTO), EMAIL SEPLOTNICK@GMAIL.COM.

Suedah Shlishit is sponsored by Kira & Andrew Wigod in honor of Part 1 of the new "Youth Taking Over" program (with Divrei Torah by Julia Brenenson and Noah Greenbaum).



Welcome to our newest members, Elana & Hillel Attali (and daughters Isabel and Daniella) and Natan & Sara Santacruz!



Mazel to Naomi Levine on the engagement of her grandson, Ilan Scher, to Malkie Hagler.

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

Kiddush Information

- ☆ If you are around when the Rabbi says “על המחיה”, your assistance in clean up would be appreciated.
- ☆ Kiddush setup for this Shabbat: Borsuk, Kwestel, Shanblatt
- ☆ Kiddush setup for next Shabbat: Banner, Goldgur, Weinraub
- ☆ To sponsor a Kiddush (\$1000/\$613/\$318 plus scotch) send an email to gplotnick@aol.com.

Adult Education



- ☆ CHUMASH CLASS - Shabbat morning before Shacharit.
- ☆ GEMARA SHIUR - Winter Hiatus.
- ☆ DAYTIME TORAH VOYAGES - Thursdays at 2:00 PM. [Discussing What can I do with leftover candles?]
- ☆ FUNDAMENTALS OF JEWISH THOUGHT - After Kiddush.
- ☆ PEREK ON THE LAWN, Pirkei Avot Periodic Shiur.

Community Events

- ☆ Dec. 24 – **Rosh Chodesh Shiur for Women**, presented by Leah Herzog DARCHEI NOAM, Sunday, 8:00 PM. For more information or to sponsor, contact Talia (talia.cottrell@gmail.com) or Shira (donathshira@gmail.com).
- ☆ Jan. 6 – **Table Tennis Tournament**, playing for local Yeshivot, with featured matches including Rabbis Markowitz and Donath playing Rabbis Belizon and Shestack. SHOMREI TORAH, Saturday night, 8:00 PM. To register to play, sponsor a team, or RSVP as to your attendance, click here: [Table Tennis](#).
- ☆ Jan. 7 – **From Biblical Roots to Contemporary Practice**, a text-based study of Taharat HaMishpacha given by Shira Donath. DARCHEI NOAM, Sunday, 8:00 PM. For info contact Shira Donath at yoetzeshira@gmail.com.

Gita Cooperwasser ע"ה

Youth Program



- ☆ Please contact Melanie at mkwestel@gmail.com and volunteer to host Chad (our Youth Director) for shabbat and/or meals.
- ☆ Youth groups begin at 10:15 AM. Tot Shabbat in the playroom.
- ☆ Parents, ensure that your children are in groups or with you at all times.
- ☆ NO FOOD DURING GROUPS!
- ☆ Dec. 30 - Movie night, watching *The Prince of Egypt*, for ages 5-12. Thank you to the Farajuns for hosting (20 Harlow Crescent). RSVP to Chad at shapiro.chad@gmail.com.
- ☆ ***This Shabbat during groups, for the first time, Anny Safier will be reading a story in Braille to the young children. After the story, Anny will answer any questions our children may have.***

Points To Ponder (Answers Below)

- ☆ (2nd aliyah) What does Yosef say do before proving that he's Yosef by reminding them that they sold him?
- ☆ (4th aliyah) Bonus: Rashi and the midrash provide a reason why Yaakov believed it was really Yosef when he saw the wagons, what is the psat reason?
- ☆ (5th aliyah) What overlooked yet crucial event occurs in this aliyah? What impact does it have on Yaakov?
- ☆ (6th aliyah) How many brothers does Yosef introduce to Paroah?

☆ (2nd) He tells them to come close, presumably so the Egyptians wont know
☆ (4th) the wagons were ornate and couldn't have been sent for any other conceivable reason
☆ (5th) Hashem speaks to Yaakov for the first time in several parshiyot, assuring him that this is the right thing to do.
☆ (6th) 5 brothers.

Answers to Points To Ponder

Ahavat Achim Future Events

- ☆ Dec. 30 - Suedah Shlishit sponsored by Heidi & Avi Oster in honor of Shoshana's wedding to Tzvi Fishkin.
- ☆ Dec. 30 - College Oneg at the Rabbi's house.
- ☆ Jan. 5 - Oneg Shabbat at Melanie Kwestel's home.
- ☆ Jan. 6 - Seudah Shlishit is sponsored by the Wigod and Sokoloff families in memory of Cheryll ע"ה and Ron's parents Leonore ע"ה (Leah bat Zev) and Benjamin ע"ה (Boruch Chaim ben Zevulun Aryeh) Sokoloff.
- ☆ Jan. 13 - Kiddush sponsored by the Sonnenblicks in honor of Esti's marriage to Orel Cohen and Orel's Shabbat Chatan.
- ☆ Jan. 13 - Siyum Mesechet Shevuos at Suedah Shlishit
- ☆ Feb. 2 - Oneg Shabbat at Sonnenblick home.
- ☆ Feb. 10 - Yachad Shabbaton
- ☆ Mar. 17 - Kiddush sponsored by Agress family in honor of Josh's Aufruf and

עשרה בטבת

FAST OF TENTH OF TEVET THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28

“And it was in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth (day) of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon came, he and all his hosts, upon Yerushalayim, and he encamped upon it and built forts around it. And the city came under siege till the eleventh year of King Tzidkiyahu. On the ninth of the month famine was intense in the city, the people had no bread, and the city was breached.” (Second Melachim 25).

The tenth of Tevet - on which the siege of Yerushalayim began, was the beginning of the whole chain of calamities which finally ended with the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash. [From ou.org/chagim/roshchodesh/tevet/fast.htm]

YOUTH TAKING OVER!



**YOUTH PARSHA TRIVIA
YOUTH DIVREI TORAH
YOUTH-LED ZEMIROT**

Divrei Torah by:
Julia Brenenson & Noah Greenbaum

**JOIN
US!**



**SEUDAT SHELISHIT
FOLLOWING MINCHA**

SHABBAT VAYIGASH | December 23, 2017

SPONSORED BY: ANDREW & KIRA WIGOD

For more info, contact Chad Shapiro: 470-331-6142
or shapiro.chad@gmail.com

Congregation Ahavat Achim of Fair Lawn, NJ

Motzei Shabbat, December 30th

YOUTH
MOVIE
NIGHT

Ahavat Achim Youth

FEATURED MOVIE

The Prince of Egypt

PAJAMA ATTIRE | MOVIE BEGINS AT 6:30 PM

AT THE FARAJUNS

20 Harlow Crescent, Fair Lawn, NJ 07410





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COVENANT & CONVERSATION

LIFE-CHANGING IDEAS IN THE PARSHA WITH RABBI SACKS



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I am deeply touched that *Covenant & Conversation* has been generously sponsored by *The Maurice Wohl Charitable Foundation* in memory of Maurice and Vivienne Wohl ז"ל. Maurice was a visionary philanthropist on a vast scale, driven throughout his life by a sense of Jewish responsibility. Vivienne was a woman of the deepest humanity and compassion, who had a kind word for everyone. Together, they were a unique partnership of dedication and grace, for whom living was giving. Through their Charitable Foundation, they continue to bring blessings to Jewish communities around the world.



THE MAURICE WOHL CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

— RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS

The First Psychotherapist

vayigash 2017 / 5778

The phrase “Jewish thinker” may mean two very different things. It may mean a thinker who just happens to be Jewish by birth or descent – a Jewish physicist, for example – or it may refer to someone who has contributed specifically to Jewish thought: like Judah Halevi or Maimonides.

The interesting question is: is there a third kind of Jewish thinker, one who contributes to the universe of knowledge, but does so in a recognisably Jewish way? The answer to this is never straightforward, yet we instinctively feel that there is such a thing. To give an analogy: there is often something recognisably Jewish about a certain kind of humour. Ruth Wisse has interesting things to say about it in her book, *No Joke*.¹ So does Peter Berger in his *Redeeming Laughter*.² Humour is universal, but it speaks in different accents in different cultures.

I believe that something similar applies to psychoanalysis and psychotherapy. So many of the early practitioners of psychoanalysis, with the marked exception of Jung, were Jewish that it became known in Nazi Germany as the “Jewish science.” I have argued – though my views on this have been challenged – to the contrary, that by taking the Greek myth of Oedipus as one of his key models, Freud developed a tragic view of the human condition that is more Hellenistic than Jewish.³

¹ Ruth Wisse, *No Joke: Making Jewish Humor*, Princeton University Press, 2013.

² Peter Berger, *Redeeming Laughter: the comic dimension of human experience*, Boston, de Gruyter, 2014.

³ There were undeniably Jewish elements in Freud’s work, most notably the fact that though he himself called psychoanalysis the “speaking cure,” it is in fact the “listening cure,” and listening is a key feature of Jewish spirituality.

By contrast, three of the most significant post-war psychotherapists were not merely Jewish by birth but profoundly Jewish in their approach to the human soul. Viktor Frankl, a survivor of Auschwitz, developed on the basis of his experiences there an approach he called Logotherapy, based on “man’s search for meaning.”⁴ Though the Nazis took away almost every vestige of humanity from those they consigned to the death factories, Frankl argued that there was one thing they could never take away from their prisoners: the freedom to decide how to respond.

Aaron T. Beck was one of the founders of what is widely regarded as the most effective forms of psychotherapy: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.⁵ Among patients suffering from depression, he found that their feelings were often linked to highly negative thoughts about themselves, the world and the future. By getting them to think more realistically, he found that their mood tended to improve.

Martin Seligman is the founder of Positive Psychology, which aims not just to treat depression but actively to promote what he calls “authentic happiness” and “learned optimism.”⁶ Depression, Seligman argued, is often linked to pessimism, which comes from interpreting events in a particular kind of way that he calls “learned helplessness”. Pessimists tend to see misfortune as permanent (“It’s always like this”), personal (“It’s my fault”) and pervasive (“I always get things wrong”). This leaves them feeling that the bad they suffer is inevitable and beyond their control. Optimists look at things differently. For them, negative events are temporary, the result of outside factors, and exceptions rather than the rule. So, within limits,⁷ you can unlearn pessimism, and the result is greater happiness, health and success.

What links all three thinkers is their belief that (1) there is always more than one possible interpretation of what happens to us, (2) we can choose between different interpretations and (3) the way we think shapes the way we feel. This gives all three a marked resemblance to a particular kind of Jewish thought, namely Chabad Chassidut, as developed by the first Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liady (1745-1812). The word Chabad stands for the initial letters of the three intellectual virtues, *chokhmah*, *binah* and *da’at*, “wisdom, understanding and knowledge,” which influence the more emotional attributes of *chessed*, *gevurah* and *tiferet*, “kindness, self-restraint and beauty or emotional balance.” Unlike the other Chassidic movements, which emphasised the emotional life, Chabad Chassidism focused on the power of the intellect to shape emotion. It was, in its way, an anticipation of cognitive behavioural therapy.

“You can unlearn pessimism, and the result is greater happiness, health and success.”

⁴ Frankl wrote many books, but the most famous is *Man’s Search for Meaning*, one of the most influential works of the 20th century.

⁵ See Aaron T. Beck, *Cognitive therapy and the emotional disorders*, Penguin, 1989. See also his important *Prisoners of Hate: the cognitive basis of anger, hostility and violence*, HarperCollins, 1999.

⁶ Martin Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, Free Press, 2002; *Learned Optimism*, Basic Books, 2008.

⁷ Seligman admits that there are things about us that we can’t change, but there is much about us that we can. See Martin Seligman, *What you can change and what you can’t*, London, Nicolas Brealey, 2007.

Its origins, however, lie far earlier. Last week I argued that Joseph was the first economist. This week I want to suggest that he was the first cognitive therapist. He was the first to understand the concept of reframing, that is, seeing the negative events of his life in a new way, thereby liberating himself from depression and learned helplessness.

The moment at which he does so comes when, moved by Judah's passionate plea to let Benjamin return home to their father Jacob, he finally reveals himself to his brothers:

"I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no plowing and reaping. But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God."

Note what Joseph is doing here. He is reframing events so that the brothers will not have to live under an unbearable burden of guilt for having sold Joseph as a slave and deceived their father, causing him years of undiminished grief. But he is only able to do so for them because he has already done so for himself. When it happened, we cannot be sure. Was Joseph aware, all along, that the many blows of misfortune he suffered were all part of a divine plan, or did he only realise this when he was taken from prison to interpret Pharaoh's dreams, and then made Viceroy of Egypt?

The text is silent on this point, but it is suggestive. More than any other character in the Torah, Joseph attributes all his achievements to God. This allows him to do what, in secular terms, Frankl, Beck and Seligman would all have advised him to do if he had been one of their patients: think of a mission he was being called on to fulfill (Frankl), reinterpret misfortune as possibility (Beck) and see the positive elements of his situation (Seligman). Not only was Joseph freed from a physical prison; he freed himself from an emotional prison, namely resentment toward his brothers. He now saw his life not in terms of a family drama of sibling rivalry, but as part of a larger movement of history as shaped by Divine providence.

That is what makes me think that the work of Frankl, Beck and Seligman is Jewish in a way that Freudian psychoanalysis is not. At the heart of Judaism is the idea of human freedom. We are not prisoners of events but active shapers of them. To be sure, we may be influenced by unconscious drives, as Freud thought, but we can rise above them by "habits of the heart" that hone and refine our personality.

"Think of a mission you are being called on to fulfill, reinterpret misfortune as possibility, and see the positive elements of your situation."

Joseph's life shows that we can defeat tragedy by our ability to see our life not just as a sequence of unfair events inflicted on us by others, but also as a series of

divinely intended moves, each of which brings us closer to a situation in which we can do what God wants us to do.

We can't all be Joseph, but thanks to R. Shneur Zalman of Liady in spiritual terms, and to Frankl, Beck and Seligman in secular ones, we can learn what it is to change the way we feel by changing the way we think, and the best way of doing so is to ask, "What does this bad experience enable me to do that I could not have done otherwise?" That can be life-transforming.

Shabbat shalom,



LIFE-CHANGING IDEA #11

We are not prisoners of events
but active shapers of them.

LIFE-CHANGING IDEAS IN SEFER BEREISHIT

- **BEREISHIT:** God believes in us even if we don't always believe in ourselves. Remember this, and you will find the path from darkness to light.
- **NOACH:** Next time you meet someone radically unlike you, try seeing difference not as a threat but as an enlarging, possibility-creating gift.
- **LECH LECHA:** Follow the inner voice, as did those who came before you, continuing their journey by bringing timeless values to a rapidly-changing world.
- **VAYERA:** First separate, then connect; it is the carefully calibrated distance that allows us to grow as individuals and create stronger relationships together.
- **CHAYEI SARAH:** To survive tragedy and trauma, first build the future. Only then, remember the past.
- **TOLDOT:** You are as great as your ideals. If you truly believe in something beyond yourself, you will achieve beyond yourself.
- **VAYETSE:** The deepest crises of your life can turn out to be the moments when you encounter the deepest truths and acquire your greatest strengths.
- **VAYISHLACH:** If you find yourself struggling with faith, you are in the company of Jacob-who-became-Israel, the father-in-faith of us all.
- **VAYESHEV:** Seen through the eye of faith, today's curse may be the beginning of tomorrow's blessing. II.
- **MIKKETZ:** What can be healed is not holy. God does not want us to accept poverty and pain but to cure them. Israel, the father-in-faith of us all.
- **VAYIGASH:** We are not prisoners of events but active shapers of them.



For more material from Rabbi Sacks, or to join his mailing list, please visit www.rabbisacks.org

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