



# Congregation Am Echad

## Annual Gala Dinner

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HONORING  
*Sam and Fabienne Adler*

Sunday, February 8th, 2015  
The Glass House, San Jose



AM ECHAD'S ANNUAL DINNER  
HONORING SAM AND FABIENNE ADLER

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2015

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*Thank you for joining us!*



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PRESENTATION TO THE HONOREES

KEYNOTE SPEAKER  
RABBI YY RUBINSTEIN

DESSERT

BIRCAS HAMAZON  
KEVIN FAGAN

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RABBI MENACHEM LEVINE

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# Sam and Fabienne Adler

## Our Honorees



Congregation Am Echad is proud to honor Samuel and Fabienne Adler for the way they beautifully represent the values and middos that our shul promotes. They are role models of leadership, caring for others and living passionate Torah Judaism.

Sam and Fabienne moved to the Am Echad community three years ago from San Francisco, and upon arrival were very active members of our shul. They began hosting singles, couples and families for Shabbos and Yom Tovim, and

have had long-term student boarders twice since then. Sam is currently the Membership Chair on the Board of Am Echad (if you're interested in membership, please contact him!), and serves on several committees. He participates regularly in Daf Yomi and daily minyanim, and helps coach the boys' softball team, the Am Echad Giants. In addition, Sam serves on the boards of Meira Academy and Chabad of the Greater South Bay. Though his volunteer work at Am Echad is quite extensive, Sam fits in the time to run the Marketing Department at Zend Technologies in Cupertino. Fabienne capably runs the Adler home, lovingly raising and home-schooling their two sons, Chaim Dovid and Elimelech Leib. In addition to her familial responsibilities and generous hospitality, Fabienne also finds time to serve on the Chevra Kaddisha, and attend shiurim and other programs. She is the first to volunteer her home, outstanding culinary skills, and share her Torah knowledge for the community's benefit, most often at the Women's Rosh Chodesh Events.

Together, the Adlers are a powerful example of beautiful Torah home, filled with Ahavas Hashem and Ahavas Yisroel. There is always a beautiful D'var Torah at their table, and the atmosphere is warm and welcoming. They both dedicate their prodigious talents and energy to grow and strengthen the Am Echad community. Thank you Sam and Fabienne for all you do! Kol Hakavod! This is an honor *so* well deserved!



Am Echad would like to thank the  
*Irwin Saks Foundation*  
Miami Beach, Florida  
for graciously sponsoring  
Rabbi Rubinstein's visit

L'Zecher Nishmas Reb Yitzchok ben Avraham ZTZ'L

Dear Sam and Fabienne,  
Congratulations!

You are truly building  
the future through your  
leadership and dedication.

The Adler Family  
Joel, Toni, John,  
Rachel and Gloria

# Rabbi YY Rubinstein



Before moving to the US in September 2011 he was a familiar figure on National BBC TV and Radio being a regular on several programs, including the "Terry Wogan show" with 15 Million listeners and BBC World Service with a minimum audience of 156 Million. Her Majesty the Queen asked to meet him declaring that he was, "Awfully good."

His media work has been varied and eclectic. He was a regular contributor to BBC Radio 4 on their flagship news program "Today" as well as a being regular on Radio 4's "Beyond Belief" which tackled some of today's thorniest moral and religious issues. He wrote and presented "Sunrise Sunset" on BBC Radio 2, a guide to Jewish life from cradle to grave. For BBC TV he featured alongside the likes of John Cleese on the "Everyman" TV show's fiftieth anniversary edition on "Religion and Humor" and co-wrote and starred in "Keep Taking the Tablets" for BBC TV.

With his Scottish accent, he combines a keen sense of humor with a sharp intellect. This combination allows him to comment on serious issues affecting the Jewish community specifically, as well bringing a Jewish perspective to moral and ethical discussions on topics that affect everyone. He is well known for having a gift to bring obscure Jewish ideas and practice to life through simple and clear explanation replete with laughter too. Rabbi YY has sometimes been described as a "Kosher" Craig Ferguson, a fellow Scot. He is an Orthodox Rabbi whose religious views are traditional and political views are moderate and wrote the description of Orthodox Judaism that appears on the BBC's Religion and Ethics website and is working with the BBC on developing a program about his move to New York. The working title is "Brooklyn...the other Israel."

He is the Author of eight books on various Jewish and general themes the last being for dealing with serious illness. His fifth and sixth books are translations of classical Jewish works and are being edited and readied for publication at present. He has written a novel and a book for "Tweens" called, "The Queen's Lives."

Rabbi YY has written regularly for several Jewish newspapers in the States and UK, including HaModia, Ami Magazine, The Jewish Press, Jewish Tribune and others. For BBC TV he featured alongside the likes of John Cleese on the Everyman TV show's fiftieth anniversary edition on "Religion and Humor" and co-wrote and starred in "Keep Taking the Tablets" for BBC TV.

# A Letter from the Rabbi

*"Moshe's father-in-law Yisro, minister of Midian, heard about all that G-d had done for Moses and His people Israel when He brought Israel out of Egypt" (Shemos 18:1)*

Parshas Yisro records the most important moment in Jewish history - the giving of the Torah and the Ten Commandments. It is interesting therefore, that Parshas Yisro is the one that is named after Moshe's father-in-law (Yisro), a former Midianite idolatrous priest. What is the deeper message that we are to learn from this?



The parsha begins "And Yisro heard" (Shemos 18:1). The Zohar asks: "Did only Yisro hear and the whole world not hear? Is it not written, 'the nations heard and shuddered'?"

The Alshich HaKadosh explains that although the entire world heard about the miracles and were filled with fear of the Jews, only Yisro did something about it. Only Yisro came to the Jewish people with the request to convert. Proper hearing does not merely connote the ability to process sound waves. It requires a deeper understanding of the message being conveyed.

Rav Shalom Schwadron compares this concept to two people walking down the train tracks. When the conductor of an oncoming train sees them, he sounds a shrill warning whistle. Both men hear the whistle, but one is a simple farmer who has never seen a train. He continues walking while enjoying the view and the sounds of the whistle, while the other person understands the warning being conveyed and immediately flees from the oncoming danger.

Here too, both men physically "heard" the sound of the whistle, but only the latter properly understood the message. Likewise, although the nations of the world heard about Hashem's miracles, the information failed to change them. Only Yisro internalized the message, understanding what was required of him and acting accordingly.

Many hear, but few really take to heart what they hear. As the Midrash Tanchuma (Yisro 2) puts it, "There are those that hear and lose, and those that hear and profit." Hearing and listening properly are the key to one's success in this world. The Midrash (Shemos Rabba 27:9) offers the following mashal on the verse, "Incline your ear and come to Me; Hear and your soul shall live (Yeshayahu 55:3)."

Many sounds and sights reach our ears and eyes, but only one who truly focuses will absorb their message. The Gemara relates that the turning point in the life of Rabbi Akiva was when he witnessed the erosion of a stone by water. Many observed the same thing, but only Rabbi Akiva derived the message that was

intended to be culled from that image: If water can erode stone, then Torah can change the heart.

The beginning of next week's Parsha discusses the laws of a Jewish slave sold for stealing. The parsha tells us that if the slave chooses not leave after six years, we drill a hole in his ear. This is because 'the ear that heard by Har Sinai that we are not allowed to steal, and yet he went and stole, should be pierced' .

The Mechilta (see also Kiddushin 22b) describes the piercing of the earlobe of the Jewish slave as a punishment for his failure to hear and heed the ongoing commandment, "Do not steal." It might be asked, however, why we pierce the earlobe, a mere piece of cartilage, and not the eardrum which failed to do the actual listening.

Chazal tell us that the outer ear serves as a funnel to collect the sound waves and direct them to the inner ear. The problem of the slave was not that he did not hear on Sinai that we are all to subjugate ourselves to Hashem alone. The problem was that he failed to hear the command as if it were directed to him and him alone. His outer ear failed to funnel those words to him personally, and thus bears the blemish. He heard G-d's voice but did not experience it as if G-d was speaking to him directly.

Yet, why is it specifically the ear that gets punished? The hands stole and the legs carried him to do the stealing, so why is the ear singled out?

In another incident, the Midrash tells us that it is possible for a person to be completely sullied in sin with his entire body, but if his ears have not sinned, then there is hope that he can do complete teshuva. Again we see the emphasis on the ears. How are we to understand this?

Our ears have two functions. They are the conduit for our hearing, as well as for our balance.

We are taught that in addition to its more overt physical side, every one of our senses has a spiritual side.

The ear represents the ability to be open to listening to words of rebuke, and the ability to 'weigh things' objectively, to figure out which is the correct path to take. When we sincerely grapple with what the right thing to do is, then we have the ability to grow and improve. However if a person rationalizes away everything he does with preconceived notions, and is not open to hearing the truth, then for him there is no hope for teshuva.

For this reason, the person who steals after hearing clearly by Har Sinai not to steal, will have his ear pierced to teach him that there is something inherently wrong with the function of his ears that is causing him to go astray. His ears are not hearing the message and his ears are not open to listening to corrective words.

With this approach, we can understand Yisro as well.

Yisro had served every Avoda Zara in the world, yet he was still open to hearing the truth. This openness enabled him to become Yisro the Jew, Yisro the father-in-law of Moshe Rabbeinu, and Yisro, after whom the Parsha of Kabbalah is named.

Many times in our own lives, Hashem sends us messages. We sometimes hear the information, yet often ignore the call to action which is required. At those times, let us now "hear" the lesson of Yisro and properly understand the changes that we are required to undertake.

We see that the Torah strongly emphasizes the importance of a hearing that brings self-improvement. Twice a day we are commanded to say "*Shma Yisrael*," accepting and renewing our commitment to believe in Hashem and do His will. Similarly, one of the most glorious moments in the entire history of the Jewish people was when we cried "*Na'aseh v'nishma*," again with the emphasis on hearing, thus declaring that we would keep and fully incorporate every principle of the Torah into our lives.

Rabbeinu Yonah in *Sha'arei Teshuva* (chapter 2) says that the ear is the most important limb of the body precisely for the reason that it was designed to receive rebuke from others and help a person do teshuva. When we use our ears to grow spiritually, we are using them for the purpose for which they were created.

Although Samuel and Fabienne Adler grew up on separate continents, and speaking different languages, they have a strong commonality in their ability to hear. Both Sam and Fabienne live lives in which they have chosen to live based on hearing the truth of the Torah. They continue to exemplify the proper form of hearing, in their hearing the needs of the community, and taking action for that which they have heard. On a personal level, as well, the Adlers listen to words of correction and strive towards greater levels of character development and refinement.

Thank you for joining us in giving recognition to this special couple.

# President's Message

Mazal tov on a wonderful and successful year for our congregation!

This year was marked by continued growth in both the size of our membership and in its commitment to increased Torah study and community involvement. Under the tutelage of Rabbi Levine and others, classes are active throughout the week for both men and women. The Chevra Kadisha and the Chesed society have continued to serve the community well.

Plans are well underway for the establishment of an eiruv, and work has begun on a multiyear plan to build a larger synagogue. It is gratifying to see the younger generation of Am Echad attending Meira Academy , out-of-town yeshivot, and seminaries in Israel. This bodes well for the future of our community.

Our honorees this year, Sam and Fabienne Adler, exemplify the best of Am Echad: commitment to Torah and Mitzvot and to the needs of the community. They both set the standard for our new young families.

With G-d's help, we look forward to the coming year with renewed energy and vision.

*Andrew Hartman*

President, Am Echad

From serving on the board, to hosting guests,  
and hosting classes at your house,  
Sam and Fabienne have truly been a merit  
to our community and a source of inspiration  
for the rest of us to emulate.

Thanks for everything that you do  
for the shul and our community.

Kevin and Tamara Fagan

Avos 4:8

"Whoever honors the Torah is  
himself honored by the people"

To Sam and Fabienne,  
Mazal Tov on your well deserved honor.  
You both beautifully exemplify  
what Am Echad is all about.

*Andy & Leah Hartman*

Our very best wishes  
and sincere congratulations  
to our children

Rabbi & Rebbetzin Menachem Levine  
of Congregation Am Echad.

May you both continue  
for many healthy and fruitful years  
in your Harbotzas Torah  
and distinguished services  
to Klal Yisroel.

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Shammai says: Make your Torah study a fixed practice; say little and do much; and receive everyone with a cheerful face.

Congratulations Sam and Chana  
on being honored for contributing  
so much to the community as well as  
inspiring us all.

Ian and Nina Brody

In Honor of My Wonderful Children  
Rabbi Menachem and Rebbetzin Rachelli Levine

I have seen firsthand the  
incredible work you are doing  
in building a Torah community in San Jose.

I am so proud of you and  
wish you much continued hatzlacha.

Love,  
Ima Zakheim

Mazel Tov to Sam and Fabienne Adler.

Both of them contribute so much to the community, without fanfare, and often behind the scenes.

May they continue to go from strength to strength.

We also wish to thank Rabbi and Rebbetzin Levine whose energy and enthusiasm pushes our community and each individual member to grow in Torah and Yiddishkeit.

*Jim and Jimmi Roberts*

To the Am Echad Community...  
we are so grateful for the friendship  
and warmth you have shown us since  
the very first day we joined your ranks.

We look forward to growing and learning  
together for years to come!

Shmuel, Fabienne, Chaim Dovid and Elimelech

With tremendous hakaras hatov to  
Rabbi and Rebbetzin Levine  
for their leadership and commitment  
to the growth of our community.

May you go from strength to strength!

Shmuel, Fabienne, Chaim Dovid, and Elimelech Adler

Sam and Fabienne,  
Thank you for all the chesed!  
Your loving and generous spirit  
is an inspiration to us all!

Love,  
*Alex and Rachel Sidorousky*

Shmuel and Fabienne,  
You are an inspiration in all that you do  
for our kehillah and for Klal Yisroel.  
Thank you for your encouragement,  
support and friendship.

Love,  
*Jonathan and Leah Kaye*

Rabbi and Rebbetzin Levine,  
Bravo for your love and devotion to  
your community and to the Jewish People.

Nechama Wolfson

Sam & Fabienne

"ישר כוכם"

For your selfless dedication to the Am Echad Community  
הכנסת אורה ים

The Lindenbaum Family

"The world stand on three things: on the Torah, on the service of God, and upon acts of loving-kindness." Avos 1:2

Dear Fabienne and Sam,

You certainly embody the words of wisdom from our Sages.  
May Hashem bless you and give you continued strength and success in the realization of your lofty goals.

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Rav Menachem and Rebbetzin Rachelli Levine -  
for all of your work in developing the  
Torah community in Northern California.

The Shul's Members and Supporters,  
may you continue to be inspired to grow  
as Jews to even greater heights.

*Dovid Levine*

Mazel Tov Sam & Chana  
on this beautiful  
recognition for all you do!

We love you!

*John & Jamie Adler*

Congregation Am Echad  
thanks

*Bruno Zerbib*

for the multi-media  
dinner video.

Mazel tov to the honorees  
and best wishes to the warm and  
wonderful Am Echad community.

*Miriam & Michael Gartenberg  
Ari, Eli, Chaim & Tamar*

Sam and Fabienne,  
Mazal Tov on your honor!

From the members of the Daf Yomi Class.  
*Larry Cosden, Russ Steinweg,  
Howard Klein, Andy Hartman,  
Yehuda Elimelech*

Congratulations to the Adlers,  
Rabbi Levine, and the whole community!  
May you be well and continue to  
bring kedusha to the Bay Area!

*Yves and Yaffa Elias*

Mazel Tov Shmuel and Fabienne  
on this well deserved honor!  
You are truly an inspiration!

Thank you to Rabbi and Rebbetzin Levine  
who continue to be true pillars of support,  
guidance and friendship.

*Evie and Phillip Hoffman  
and Family*

Mazel Tov Samuel and Chana Adler!

*Best wishes,  
The Yaghutiel family*

Mazal tov to the Adlers  
on a well deserved honor.  
You are kind, growth-oriented  
people and we so appreciate how you  
opened your home to us and the  
community for learning.

*Rabbi Gavriel and Malka Rudin*

Dear Sam,

Thanks for welcoming me to the  
congregation so warmly and engagingly.

In loving memory of Walter Steinweg, Z"L.

*Russell Lewis Steinweg*

Mazal tov Sam & Fabienne  
on this well deserved honor!

*The Guttenberg Family*

Sam and Fabienne,  
Thank you for all you do on  
behalf of our Jewish Community.  
Your passion for Jewish life is an  
inspiration to all of us!

Abra and Jordan Sills

In honor of Sam & Fabienne,  
Your commitment to Klal Yisroel  
is exceptional.

Mazel Tov on this honor.

Rabbi Joey & Sarah Felsen

*Congratulations*  
to My  
Esteemed  
Clients  
Samuel and  
Chana Adler

Therese Swan

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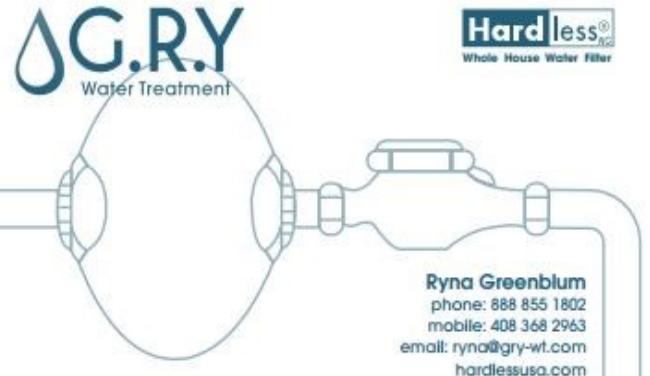


*The Swan*

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Mazel Tov to the Adlers!

From,  
*The Greenblums*



## Mazal Tov to Sam and Fabienne Adler

from  
Kaye Gatell

"The righteous will flourish like a date palm, like a cedar in Lebanon"

Mazel Tov Sam and Fabienne

from The Ladies Tehillim Group

Esther Rochel Klein, Leah Hartman, Leah Kaye,  
Smadar Lerner, Helen Stolin and Joyce Tachner

A big Mazel Tov to Sam and Fabienne on your major honor! Continued hatzlacha to the Adler Family.

Larry Cosden

Our best wishes to the Am Echad community.

Rita and Jerry Jacobson

Mazal Tov to the deserving honorees,  
Sam and Fabienne Adler.  
The chesed you do in such a quiet way  
is truly an inspiration.

Tzvi and Devorah Lewis

מזל טוב

Sam and Fabienne

Thank you for your friendship

which has greatly enriched our lives.

מלא ה' משאלות לכם לטובה וברכה.

R' Dovid and Aviva Lieberman

In honor of Sam and Fabienne Adler.  
We truly enjoyed their hospitality and warmth in San Francisco.

Joanna Samuels and Tomer Altman

Following in the ways of Shmuel and Channah,  
May you go from strength to strength.

Rabbi and Mrs. Noah and Rivkah Vogel  
from the Almaden Valley Torah Center

**Kol Hakavod**  
**Samuel and Fabienne**  
  
**From**  
**Sharon and Kevin Saitowitz**

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Congratulations to the Adler family.

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