



Shabbat Announcements

Parshat Vayera

November 8, 2014 15 Cheshvan, 5775

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks on Parshas Vayera

TORAH
ARTSCROLL, 78
HERTZ, 63

HAFTORAH
ARTSCROLL, 1134
HERTZ, 76

Times

Candle Lighting	4:26 pm
Friday Mincha	4:25 pm
Hashkama	8:00 am
Parsha Shiur	8:30 am
Main Shul	9:00 am
Beit Midrash	9:15 am
Youth Minyan	8:30 am
Shiur	3:45 pm
Mincha	4:20 pm
Shabbat Ends	5:33 pm
Sunday Nov., 9	7:30/8:30 am
Mon., Thur.	6:35/7:45 am
Tues., Wed., Fri.	6:45/7:45 am
Mincha	4:20 pm
Latest Times for Shema/Shemoneh Esrei	
November 8	9:07/9:57 am
November 15	9:11/10:01 am
Next Shabbat Shabbat Chayei-Sarah	
Candle Lighting	4:19 pm
Mincha	4:20 pm

The early history of humanity as told in the Torah is a series of disappointments. God gives human beings freedom, which they then misuse. Adam and Eve eat the forbidden fruit. Cain murders Abel. Within a relatively short time the world before the Flood has become dominated by violence. All flesh had perverted its way on the earth. God creates order. Man creates chaos. Even after the Flood humanity, in the form of the builders of Babel, is guilty of hubris, thinking they can build a tower whose top "reaches heaven."

Humans fail to respond to God, which is where Abraham enters the picture. We are not quite sure, at the beginning, what it is that Abraham is summoned to. We know he is commanded to leave his land, birthplace and father's house and travel "to the land I will show you," but what he is to do there, we do not know. On this the Torah is silent. What is Abraham's mission? What makes him special? What makes him, not simply a good man in a bad age, as was Noah, but a leader and the father of a nation of leaders?

To decode the mystery we have to recall what the Torah has been signaling prior to this point. I suggested in previous essays that a, perhaps the, key theme is a failure of responsibility. Adam and Eve lack personal responsibility. Adam says, "It wasn't me; it was the woman." Eve says, "It wasn't me, it was the serpent." It is as if they deny being the author of their own acts – as if they do not understand either freedom or the responsibility it entails.

Cain does not deny personal

responsibility. He does not say, "It wasn't me. It was Abel's fault for provoking me." Instead he denies moral responsibility: "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Noah fails the test of collective responsibility. He is a man of virtue in an age of vice, but he makes no impact on his contemporaries. He saves his family (and the animals) but no one else. According to the plain reading of the text, he does not even try.

Understand this and we understand Abraham. He exercises personal responsibility. A quarrel breaks out between his herdsmen and those of his nephew Lot. Seeing that this was no random occurrence but the result of their having too many cattle to be able to graze together, Abraham immediately proposes a solution: Abram said to Lot, "Let there not be a quarrel between you and me, or between your herders and mine, for we are brothers. Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left." (Gen. 13: 8-9)

Note that Abraham passes no judgment. He does not ask whose fault the argument was. He does not ask who will gain from any particular outcome. He gives Lot the choice. He sees the problem and acts.

In the next chapter we are told about a local war, as a result of which Lot is among the people taken captive. Immediately Abraham gathers a force, pursues the invaders, rescues Lot and with him all the other captives, whom he returns safely to their homes, refusing to take any of the spoils of victory that he is offered by the grateful king of Sodom.

This is a strange passage – not the image of Abraham the nomadic shepherd we see elsewhere. Its presence is best understood in the context of the story of Cain. Abraham shows he is his brother's (or brother's son's) keeper. He immediately

understands the nature of moral responsibility. Despite the fact that Lot had chosen to live where he did with its attendant risks, Abraham did not say, "His safety is his responsibility not mine."

Then, in this week's parsha, comes the great moment at which for the first time a human being challenges God himself. God is about to pass judgment on Sodom. Abraham, fearing that this will mean that the city will be destroyed, says: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do justice?"

This is a remarkable speech. By what right does a mere mortal challenge God himself? The short answer is that God himself signaled that he should. Listen carefully to the text: Then the Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him" ... Then the Lord said, "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know."

Those words, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?" are a clear hint that God wants Abraham to respond, otherwise why would He have said them?

The story of Abraham can only be understood against the backdrop of the story of Noah. There too, God told Noah in advance that he is

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about to bring punishment to the world.

So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth."

Noah did not protest. To the contrary, we are told three times that Noah "did as God commanded him." Noah accepted the verdict. Abraham challenged it. Abraham understood the third principle: collective responsibility.

The people of Sodom were not his brothers and sisters, so he was going beyond what he did in rescuing Lot. He prayed on their behalf because he understood the idea of human solidarity, immortally expressed by John Donne (Devotions upon Emergent Occasions, 1623): No man is an island, Entire of itself ...Any man's death diminishes me, For I am involved in mankind.

But a question remains. Why did God call on Abraham to challenge Him? Was there anything Abraham knew that God didn't know? The idea is absurd. The answer is surely this: Abraham was to become the role model and initiator of a new faith, one that would not defend the human status quo but challenge it. Abraham had to have the courage to challenge God if his descendants were to challenge human rulers, as Moses and the prophets did. Jews do not accept the world that is. They challenge it in the name of the world that ought to be. This is a critical turning point in human history: the birth of the world's first religion of protest – a faith that challenges the world instead of accepting it.

Abraham was not a conventional leader. He did not rule a nation. There was as yet no nation for him to lead. But he was the role model of leadership as Judaism understands it. He took responsibility. He acted; he didn't wait for others to act. Of Noah, the Torah says, "he walked with God." But to Abraham, God himself said, "Walk before me," (Gen. 17: 1), meaning: be a leader. Walk ahead. Take personal responsibility. Take moral responsibility. Take collective responsibility.

Judaism is God's call to responsibility.



GNS Yoetzel Halacha Dena Block welcomes your questions about mikvah, observance of taharat mishpacha (halacha relating to married life) and women's health, as it connects to Jewish law. Reach out to her at:
Phone: (516) 320-9818
Email: gnsyoetzel@gmail.com All conversations/ emails are strictly confidential.



Great Neck Synagogue
Shabbat Activities Program
26 Old Mill Road, Great Neck, NY 11023
516-487-6100

Dale Polakoff, Rabbi
Ian Lichter, Assistant Rabbi
Dr. Ephraim Wolf, z"l, Rabbi Emeritus
Zeev Kron, Cantor
Eleazer Schulman, z"l, Cantor Emeritus
Rabbi Sholom Jensen, Youth Director
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Dena Block, Yoetzel Halacha 516-320-9818

HELP OUR SHUL GROW

As the Jewish community in Great Neck continues to grow, we ask our members to help us identify and reach out to new people and families that move into the community. If you know of people new to Great Neck please contact Mark Twersky or the chairs of the New Members Committee, **Debbie Chadow, Katie Lichter and Nadine Shatzkes**

The New Members Committee may also contact you to reach out to prospective new members who have moved into your neighborhood. Please help us give a warm welcome to new families by extending a Shabbat meal invitation or by making a friendly phone call. Please welcome the following new members of our community:



- *Ronen and Tali Abergel**
- *Joy and Joseph Allens**
- Ravit and Eli Azulay**
- Deborah and Bobby Balakhaneh**
- *Irene Dicker**
- Jennifer Dienstag**
- *Kathy and Josh Gold**
- Karen and Jason Hammerman**
- *Sharonal and Aaron Hanasab**
- *Dr. Barbara Kapelman**
- Aliza and Aryeh Karkowsky**
- Jacqueline and Mark Kaufman**
- Barrie and Josh Lev**
- *Harriet and Harry Lumerman**
- *Zarina and Edward Mehrfar**
- Erica and Steven Parilis**
- Melissa and Baruch Pelcovitz**
- Dr. Jackie and Michael Rudick**
- Esther and Shahriar Samady**
- *Elanna and Gregory Stashower**
- *Jessica and Noah Steinberg**

***Members of GNS**

Please join us for
A Taharat Hamishpacha Refresher Course
with Yoetzel Halacha Dena Block

Wednesday, November 5th at 8 p.m.
Everything You Wanted to Know about Niddah
but were Afraid to Ask: A Refresher Course for
Women of All Ages and Stages
at the home of
Dina Hamerman- 53 Wooleys Lane in Great Neck



Death to Burial: Spiritual and Practical

RABBI DALE POLAKOFF &

JERRY WEINSTEIN,

HEAD OF THE CHEVRA KADISHA OF GREAT NECK

Presented by the GNS Men's Club

Starting Tuesday
evening November 4 at 7:30 pm

This class will meet on 4 consecutive Tuesday evenings
at 7:30 pm beginning on November 4.
Classes will be held on the 11th, 18th and 25th.

GNS Coat & Winter Clothing Collection

- Bring gently used coats in excellent condition and winter clothing.
- (Please separate coats from regular clothing)
- Drop off at the home of Louise Kahn
- 18 Oak Drive
- Please leave bags at our garage
- The Collection will be donated to Oneg Shabbos and Needy Families!
- Drop off Sun-Fri Until Nov. 9



FRIDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 21

**GNS SHABBAT DINNER
& GUEST SPEAKERS SERIES**
2014-2015 Season Premier!

Guest Speaker:
YOSSI KLEIN HALEVI

Contributing Editor, The New Republic
Senior Fellow, Shalom Hartman Institute



Yossi Klein Halevi is a senior fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute, a member of the Institute's Council Project, co-director of the Institute's Leadership Initiative, and a contributing editor to The New Republic. Yossi is a frequent contributor to the opinion pages of leading North American newspapers. He is also a vocal critic of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and a vocal supporter of the creation of a Jewish state. In 2011, he was named one of the most influential people in the world by Time magazine. He is the author of the book "Lila: A Poem for the Jewish People" (2011). He is also the author of "The Idea of Jewishness" (2012).

Copies of "Lila Dreamers" are available for pre-order
from the synagogue office and will be signed
following Shabbat.

RESERVATIONS
REQUIRED BY
Tuesday,
November 18

\$30/PERSON
\$25/TEEN
\$15/CHILD
\$125 FAMILY MAX

SPONSORSHIP
OPPORTUNITIES
AVAILABLE
Contact The
Synagogue Office

RSVP: 516.467.6100
info@syn.org
WWW.GNS.ORG



26 Old Mill Road
Great Neck, NY 11023

HOLY HOMICIDE



A Night of Mayhem, Food and Fun
And You... Are The Guilty Party

THE KILLING KOMPANY

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 8th @ 7:00 PM
COLBEH Restaurant in GREAT NECK
\$65/Person \$120/Couple (\$150 at the door)
\$180 to Sponsor

An Afternoon of the Classics

featuring

Internationally Acclaimed Concert Pianist

ELENA KLIONSKY



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 3:00PM
GREAT NECK SYNAGOGUE
26 OLD MILL ROAD, GREAT NECK, NY 11023

Complimentary Admission
Refreshments will be served

RSVP: 516.467.6100 or info@syn.org

Sponsored by Lorraine & Harold Dornreich
in memory of Lorraine's sister, Rosaline Mandelkern.

SAVE THE DATE
63RD ANNUAL GNS DINNER
SATURDAY EVENING
DECEMBER 13

HONORING
RABBI IAN & KATIE LICHTER
FATHER & DAUGHTER
LESLIE KAHN & MICHELLE BERMAN

BONEH HABAYIT
NADINE SHATZKES

SAVE THE DATE!

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE NEW MEMBERS COMMITTEE
Katie Lichter, Debbie Chadow, Nadine Shatzkes

*Please note this is not a Youth event!



Dairy meal included
\$30 per person / \$60 per couple
Please send check payable to GNS to make a reservation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

YOETZET HALACHA EVENT

A Taharat Hamishpacha Refresher Course with Yoetzet Halacha Dena Block

Wednesday, **November 5th at 8 p.m.** "Everything You Wanted to Know about Niddah but were Afraid to Ask" at the home of **Dina Hamerman- 53 Wooleys Lane in Great Neck.**

SISTERHOOD AND MEN'S CLUB

Sat. Nov. 8, 7:00pm: Dinner and a Show That Will Slay You. It may be a murder, but who done it? Try to solve the mystery while feasting at Colbeh (and no one gets hurt!) and enjoy our Holy Homicide evening. Your friends could be suspects, would you squeal on them? \$65 per person, \$120 couples, \$180 to sponsor. Call **Mark Friedman** 482-9362 or **Judy Lillian** 487-6845 or the **Shul office** 487-6100

FREE CLASSICAL MEMORIAL CONCERT AT GNS

In memory of **Rosalind Mordkofsky** - beloved sister of **Lorraine Domnitz** on **Sun., Nov. 9th** at 3pm with noted pianist **Elena Klionsky.**

MEN'S CLUB

SUN. NOV. 23, 10:00 am: A breakfast and Talk by **Prof. William Helmreich** on the Jewish aspects of his highly successful new book, "*The New York Nobody Knows: Walking 6,000 Miles in the City*". You will be enlightened and entertained. All welcome.

SUN. DEC. 7, 10:00 am: We are thrilled that **Hank Scheinkopf**, noted political, public affairs and corporate media consultant, will be speaking on, *The mid-term elections are over: what's new?* Mr. Scheinkopf has managed on many political campaigns, including those of President Clinton and Mayor Bloomberg. All welcome.

GNS MEN'S CLUB FALL BLOOD DRIVE

Thank you to the 60 generous donors who overcame high winds and power losses to participate in Sunday's blood drive. Thank you also to the hard-working volunteers **Ben Pagovich, Oliver Rein, and Brittney, Brianna, Brayden and Bryce Kohler.** Everyone's combined efforts raised not only life-saving blood supplies for New York, but also more than \$1,800 to be donated in memory of **Rebbetzin Elaine Wolf z"l** towards MDA's new rocket-proof blood

WOMEN'S TEFILA

PARENTS who would like to schedule a Women's Tefila Bat Mitzvah for their daughter can contact **Annie Mendelson**, annieem@optonline.net.

GNS WINTER COAT & CLOTHING CHESED COLLECTION

GNS Coat & Winter Clothing Collection. Please bring gently used coats and winter clothing (please separate) to the home of **Louise Kahn, 18 Oak Dr.** to be left in her garage. Drop off until **Nov. 9th.** Donated to Oneg Shabbos.

SCHOLAR'S PROGRAM

Yossi Klein Halevy will be our featured speaker on Friday evening, **Nov. 21.** Please call the shul office to make reservations for dinner that evening or email jfrisch@gns.org.

THANKSGIVING CHESED OPPORTUNITY

This year for Thanksgiving, you can really give thanks and be giving! Buy a Thanksgiving Dinner for a resident at Arrandale Senior Housing and make your parents proud of you. We are also looking for a limited number of volunteers (ALL AGES) to help serve the dinner, clean up, play music, sing & talk to the residents. Co-Sponsored by: GNS Hunger Initiative, Sisterhood & Women's Tefila. For more info: call Nechama at 516-773-3572 or email lisslev@verizon.net.

SNOW BIRDS

Please let the synagogue know when you are leaving asap.

WITHIN OUR FAMILY

Mazal Tov to Michal & Ron Malen on the birth of a granddaughter born to their children **Allison & Jacob Malen.** **Mazal Tov to Dr. Leon and Donna Schwechter** on the birth of a granddaughter, born to their children, **Rabbi Daniel & Yael Schwechter.** **Scott & Laura Danoff** on the birth of a granddaughter, born to their children, **Katie & Nadav Geft.** **Mazal Tov to Sandra & Michael Stern** on the birth of a granddaughter, **Ariella**, born to their children, **Alex & Lior Stern**, in Israel. **Mazal Tov to Jessica & Andrew Zinaman** on the birth of a son. **Mazal Tov** also to sister **Khloe.** **Mazal Tov to Pia & Michael Shlomo** on the Bat Mitzvah of their daughter **Davida Esther Shlomo.**

COMMUNITY NEWS

SHAARE ZEDEK CHILDREN'S CHAMPION GAME NIGHT:

Shaare Zedek Children's Champions Event will take place on **Sat. night Nov. 8 2014 at 8:30 PM**, at 404 NYC - 10th Ave. (between 32/33rd Street). Help us dedicate 4 Infant Stations and a Nurses Station in the NICU at Shaare Zedek Medical Center! Enjoy a Buffet Dinner, Games, Open Bar, and a Great Night with Friends!! To Register, Sponsor and buy Raffles www.acsz.org/404 For more info: contact: **Ilana & Aaron Wallenstein, Aliza & Dov Sassoon, Erica & Steven Parilis, Talia & Sol Goldwyn, and Lauren and Asher Abehsera.**

PIES FOR PREVENTION

Do you like to BAKE OR Do you prefer to EAT CAKE? Either way, you can help others. Pies for prevention is offering delicious pies for your Thanksgiving meal. You can volunteer to bake them in your kosher home for us to sell, or you can buy them from us for your Thanksgiving meal. All sales will support Sharsheret's unique program helping young Jewish women and their families dealing with ovarian cancer. If you would like to VOLUNTEER to be a baker, call TOVAH at 516-314-7135 or email at twerber@gmail.com. Info for buying pies coming soon!

YESHIVA HAR TORAH OPEN HOUSE

Please join us at Yeshiva Har Torah's Open House on **Mon., Nov., 10 2014** at 7pm. We invite you to see what makes our school, award-winning faculty and administration so unique. For more info or to schedule a personal tour, please call us at [\(718\) 343-2533](tel:7183432533) or visit www.hartorah.org.

Y A H R Z E I T

Saturday, 15 Cheshvan

Ira Lubin for Nathan Lubin

Brian Smith for Francine Smith

Sunday, 16 Cheshvan

Herman Davidovics for Samuel Davidovics

Sarita Greszes for Binyomin Tzvi Ben Menachem Mendel

Monday, 17 Cheshvan

Perry Schneider for Sandra Schneider

Tuesday, 18 Cheshvan

Osnass Shein for Simchat Charchat

Joyce Swartz for Geraldine Zeff

Wednesday, 19 Cheshvan

Marcelle Fischler for Charles Sussman

Jack Lemonik for Irving Lemonik

Anne Lupkin for Mary Fischler

Irene Wineman Marcus for David Wineman

Hillel Milun for Nancy Milun

Thursday, 20 Cheshvan

Victor Ancelson for Lviu Galateanu

Stanley Dacher for Samuel Dacher

Yaacov Mizrahi for Dalia Mizrahi

Morris Seidman for Kalma Seidman

Jerrald Weinstein for George Weinstein

Friday, 21 Cheshvan

Paul Brody for Ruth Schaeffer

Starting this week paying your dues with credit card will be subject to surcharge.