



# Shabbat Announcements

Parshat Yitro

February 7, 2015 18 Shevat, 5775

**TORAH**  
**ARTSCROLL, 394**  
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**HAFTORAH**  
**ARTSCROLL, 1154**  
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**BAT MITZVAH**  
**KAYLA HUTT**

## Rabbi Jonathan Sacks on Parshat Yitro

This week's parsha consists of two episodes that seem to be a study in contrasts. In the first, in chapter 18, Yitro, Moses' father-in-law, a Midianite priest, gives Moses his first lesson in leadership. In the second, the prime mover is God himself who, at Mount Sinai, makes a covenant with the Israelites in an unprecedented and unrepeatable epiphany. For the first and only time in history God appears to an entire people, making a covenant with them and giving them the world's most famous brief code of ethics, the Ten Commandments.

What can there be in common between the practical advice of a Midianite and the timeless words of revelation itself? There is an intended contrast and it is an important one. The forms and structures of governance are not specifically Jewish. They are part of chokhmah, the universal wisdom of humankind. Jews have known many forms of leadership: by prophet, elders, judges and kings; by the Nasi in Israel under Roman rule and the Resh Galuta in Babylon; by town councils (shiva tuvei ha-ir) and various forms of oligarchy; and by other structures up to and including the democratically elected Knesset. The forms

of government are not eternal truths, nor are they exclusive to Israel. In fact the Torah says about monarchy that a time will come when the people say, "Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us," – the only case in the entire Torah in which Israel are commanded (or permitted) to imitate other nations. There is nothing specifically Jewish about political structures.

What is specifically Jewish is the principle of the covenant at Sinai, that Israel is the only nation whose sole ultimate king and legislator is God himself. "He has revealed his word to Jacob, his laws and decrees to Israel. He has done this for no other nation; they do not know his laws, Halleluyah" (Psalm 147: 19-20). What the covenant at Sinai established for the first time was the moral limits of power. All human authority is delegated authority, subject to the overarching moral imperatives of the Torah itself. This side of heaven there is no absolute power. That is what has always set Judaism apart from the empires of the ancient world and the secular nationalisms of the West. So Israel can learn practical politics from a Midianite but it must learn the limits of politics from God himself.

Despite the contrast, however, there is one theme in common to Yitro and the revelation at Sinai, namely the delegation, distribution and democratization of leadership. Only God can rule alone. The theme is introduced by Yitro. He arrives to visit his son in law and finds him leading alone. He says, "What you are doing is not good" (Ex. 18: 17). This is one of only two instances in the whole

Torah in which the words lo tov, "not good," appear. The other is in Genesis 2, where God says, "It is not good [lo tov] for man to be alone." We cannot lead alone. We cannot live alone. To be alone is not good.

Yitro proposes delegation: You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. Teach them his decrees and instructions, and show them the way they are to live and how they are to behave. But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. (Ex. 18: 19-22) This is a significant devolution. It means that among every thousand Israelites, there are 131 leaders (one head of a thousand, ten heads of a hundred, twenty heads of fifty and a hundred head of tens). One in every eight adult male Israelites was expected to undertake some form of leadership role.

In the next chapter, prior to the revelation at Mount Sinai, God commands Moses to propose a covenant with the Israelites. In the course of this, God articulates what is in effect the mission statement of the Jewish people: You yourselves have

### Times

Candle Lighting	5:00 pm
Friday Mincha	5:00 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	3:55 pm
Mincha	4:55 pm
Shabbat Ends	6:09 pm
Sunday Feb. 8	7:30/8:30 am
Mon. Thurs.	6:35/7:45 am
Tues., Wed., Fri.	6:45/7:45 am
Mincha	5:10 pm
Latest Times for Shema/Shemoneh Esrei	
February 7	9:35/10:26 am
February 14	9:31/10:24 am
Next Shabbat Mishpatim-Shekalim	
Candle Lighting	5:08 pm
Mincha	5:10 pm

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**RACHEL BAT CHAIM,Z"L.**

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**DIDI & ADAM HUTT**  
**IN HONOR OF THE BAT MITZVAH**  
**OF THEIR DAUGHTER KAYLA.**

seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' (Ex. 19: 4-6)

This is a very striking statement. Every nation had its priests. In the book of Genesis, we encounter Malkizedek, Abraham's contemporary, described as "a priest of the most high God" (Gen. 14: 18). The story of Joseph mentions the Egyptian priests, whose land was not nationalized (Gen. 47: 22). Yitro was a Midianite priest. In the ancient world there was nothing distinctive about priesthood. Every nation had its priests and holy men. What was distinctive about Israel was that it was to become a nation every one of whose members was to be a priest; each of whose citizens was called on to be holy.

I vividly recall standing with Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz in the General Assembly of the United Nations in August 2000 at a unique gathering of two thousand religious leaders representing all the major faiths in the world. I pointed out that even in that distinguished company we were different. We were almost the only religious leaders wearing suits. All the others wore robes of office. It is an almost universal phenomenon that priests and holy people wear distinctive garments to indicate that they are set apart (the core meaning of the word kadosh, "holy"). In post-biblical Judaism there were no robes of office because everyone was expected to be holy (Theophrastus, a pupil of Aristotle, called Jews "a nation of philosophers," reflecting the same idea).

Yet in what sense were Jews ever a kingdom of priests? The Kohanim were an elite within the nation, members of the tribe of Levi, descendants of Aaron the first high priest. There never was a full democratization of keter kehunah, the crown of priesthood.

Faced with this problem, the commentators offer two solutions. The word kohanim, "priests," may mean "princes" or "leaders" (Rashi, Rashbam). Or it may mean "servants" (Ibn Ezra, Ramban). But this is precisely the point. The Israelites were called on to be a nation of servant-leaders. They were the people called on, by virtue of the covenant, to accept responsibility not only for themselves and their families, but for the moral-spiritual state of the nation as a whole. This is the principle that later became known as the idea that kol

Yisrael arevin zeh ba-zeh, "All Israelites are responsible for one another." Jews were the people who did not leave leadership to a single individual, however holy or exalted, or to an elite. They were the people every one of whom was expected to be both a prince and a servant, that is to say, every one of whom was called on to be a leader. Never was leadership more profoundly democratized.

That is what made Jews historically hard to lead. As Chaim Weitzmann, first president of Israel, famously said, "I head a nation of a million presidents." The Lord may be our shepherd, but no Jew was ever a sheep. At the same time it is what led Jews to have an impact on the world out of all proportion to their numbers. Jews constitute only the tiniest fragment – one fifth of one per cent – of the population of the world, but an extraordinarily high percentage of leaders in any given field of human endeavor. To be a Jew is to be called on to lead.



GNS Yoetzet 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: gnsyoetzet@gmail.com All conversations/ emails



**Great Neck Synagogue**  
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**
- Zehava & Dr. Michael Atlas, Youth Directors**
- Mark Twersky, Executive Director**
- Dr. James Frisch, Assistant Director**
- Rabbi Avraham Bronstein, Program Director**
- Ari Lipsky, Rabbinic Intern**
- Dr. Hal Chadow, President**
- Harold Domnitch, Chairman of the Board**
- Dena Block, Yoetzet Halacha 516-320-9818**

*Please join us*

*The Mitzvah of Intimacy:  
Behind the Scenes of  
Jewish Marriage, Part II*

**Tuesday February 3rd • 8:00 pm**

*at the home of Karen Hammerman  
2 North Clover Drive*

A Fireside Chat with  
Yoetzet Halacha Dena Block and  
Rabbi Dale Polakoff  
will address common challenges  
that couples face regarding  
physical intimacy and give  
women tools to better  
communicate about these issues.

For more information please contact Dena Block (516) 320-9818 | gnsyoetzet@gmail.com



**MOVIE NIGHT**

Great Neck Synagogue  
presents on  
Saturday night February 7th

**7:30 pm**

**A Spy Shaped by Manipulation  
and Shame**

**'The Green Prince,'  
About a Hamas Son  
Recruited by Israel**

GNS February Chesed Collection

**Don't know what to do with medical supplies you no longer need?**

**DONATE THEM**

To help underserved people, clinics and hospitals,  
in US, Israel, Haiti, and Africa.

**FEBRUARY 3<sup>RD</sup> – FEBRUARY 23<sup>RD</sup>**  
**LEAVE SUPPLIES BY FRONT DOOR:**  
**13 CHURCH STREET**  
**GREAT NECK**

**WE ARE COLLECTING:**

wheel chairs, canes, walkers, commodes, eyeglasses,  
bandages, cribs, drains, tubing, face masks, gloves,  
catheters, IV kits, soap, autoclaves, shower seats, raised  
toilet seats, hospital beds, crutches, sutures, braces, etc.  
**NO PRESCRIPTION MEDS NO POST EXPIRATION DATES**

Donations will be distributed by:

[www.afyafoundation.org](http://www.afyafoundation.org)

FOR MORE INFO, CALL Nechama 516-773-3572

**Men's Club and Sisterhood  
Sat. Night, Feb. 21**



**First Tennis Extravaganza.**

Tennis, Food and Good Friends, Singles, Men's  
Doubles, Women's Doubles, Mixed Doubles.  
Please let us know if you are a Beginner,  
Intermediate or Advanced. Come to Play,  
Socialize and Eat or Just Socialize & Eat.

**6TH-9TH  
GRADE  
BASKETBALL  
SKILLS  
COMPETITION**

**SATURDAY  
NIGHT  
FEB. 14TH  
8:00 PM  
AT GNS**



**THREE POINT CONTEST!**  
**DRIBBLING COMPETITION!**  
**GROUP GAMES!**  
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**\$10 ENTRANCE FEE**  
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**GREAT NECK SYNAGOGUE MEN'S CLUB NIGHT  
WITH THE NEW YORK ISLANDERS**  
**SUNDAY, MAR. 29TH @5PM**  
**VS RED WINGS**

TICKETS:  
**\$40** ATLANTA BRONCOS WARRIORS  
SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

Come down for a night of fun with the Great Neck Synagogue Men's Club and support the Islanders in their final season at Nassau Coliseum!

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

**RABBI POLAKOFF'S SHABBOS DRASHA THROUGH 5775, IS DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF PINCHAS BEN YOSEPH FOR OTHER SUCH OPPORTUNITIES PLEASE CONTACT HOWARD WOLF**  
[212-686-9800](tel:212-686-9800) EXT 220

## SUNDAY BREAKFAST

Breakfast is sponsored by **Phyllis and Arthur Kirsch** in memory of the **50th yahrzeit** of his father **Avraham Yehoshua Heschel ben Aaron Moshe Halevi**.

## RABBI POLAKOFF-OPEN OFFICE HOURS

Rabbi Polakoff will have open office hours each week on **Tuesday from 10am - noon and on Thursday from 1:00pm - 3:30 pm**. Barring any emergencies, he will be in his office during these times so please feel free drop by to shmooze, discuss issues about GNS, share personal concerns or learn some Torah. He can be reached at other times through the synagogue office ([516-487-6100](tel:516-487-6100)), through his cell phone [516-637-3674](tel:516-637-3674) (call or text) or through email at [rabbi@gns.org](mailto:rabbi@gns.org).

## YOUTH EVENTS

**Saturday night Feb. 7.** Mini Shabbaton 5th 7th grade girls.

**Saturday night, Feb.14**

6th-9th grade Basketball skills competition, 8 pm in the Shul gym. \$10 entrance fee. RSVP by Feb.6 to [mjatlal1@yahoo.com](mailto:mjatlal1@yahoo.com).

## YOETZET HALACHA EVENT

"The Mitzvah of Intimacy: Behind the Scenes of Jewish Marriage, Part II". This Fireside Chat with Yoetzet Halacha Dena Block and Rabbi Dale Polakoff will address common challenges that couples face regarding physical intimacy and give women tools to better communicate about these issues. **February 3rd** at the home of Karen Hammerman, 2 North Clover Drive at 8 pm. See page 2

## MOVIE NIGHT

We will be showing the award winning movie "THE GREEN PRINCE" about the son of a Hamas founder recruited by Israel. On **Sat. Night Feb. 7th at 7:30 pm**.

## MEN'S CLUB

**SAT. FEB. 21, 8:00 - 11:30 PM**

Join us for the first **TENNIS EXTRAVAGANZA** run by both Men's Club and Sisterhood. Additional sponsor Yonni Mrejen, Tennis, Food and Good Friends, Singles, Men's Doubles, Women's Doubles, Mixed Doubles. Please let us know if you are a Beginner, Intermediate or Advanced. Come to Play. Prices for Couples, \$75 for Food & Tennis, \$50 for Food. Prices for Singles, \$37.50 for Food & Tennis, \$25 for Food. Play and Eat or Just Socialize & Eat. For info: Jack Lipsky (516) 384-1482 [jblrefl@aol.com](mailto:jblrefl@aol.com).

**SUN. MAR 15, 10:00 AM:** Breakfast and talk by authors

**Hershey Friedman** and **Linda Weiser Friedman** on their new book, **God Laughed: Sources of Jewish Humor**.

**SUN MAR 29, 9:30 AM:** The Annual Rabbinic Dialogue to be held at Temple Beth El this year.

**SUN MAR. 29, 5:00 PM:** Join us as the Islanders Hockey team play the Detroit Red Wings at the Coliseum. Tickets \$40 (for paid-up Men's Club members). Contact **Steve Blumner 639-8941**.

## PURIM CARDS

The Sisterhood will once again have Purim cards. Please email **Judy Lillien** at [syny98@gmail.com](mailto:syny98@gmail.com) to place your order. You may call the shul office as well. Cards are 10 for 25 dollars or 3 dollars each. There is a limited supply. Don't be left out.

## SECURITY

In an effort to improve security in accessing our building, the code to enter the building has been changed effective 1/13/15. To obtain the new code, please email [jfrisch@gns.org](mailto:jfrisch@gns.org), or [mtwersky@gns.org](mailto:mtwersky@gns.org). There are a limited number of key fobs available (no need to enter a code if you have a key fob). The cost is \$25 to obtain a key fob: Contact **Jim Frisch** in the office.

## WITHIN OUR FAMILY

**Mazal Tov** to **Lisa & Eli Schilowitz** on the birth of a son. **Mazal Tov** to **Didi & Adam Hutt** on the Bat Mitzvah of their daughter **Kayla**.

## DIARIES

This year we will not be mailing the **Jack Herskowitz Emergency Fund Diaries** as in the past. We have them available in the office for pick-up where you can drop off your donation and get it at the same time.

## COMMUNITY NEWS

### NSHA DIAMOND JUBILEE JOURNAL DINNER , MARCH 24TH

Celebrating 60 years, honoring, **Daniel and Marcy Aharon & Jonathan and Stefanie Hazghyian**. There will be a memorial tribute to its Honorary Dean and First Principal, **Rabbi Dr. Ephraim & Rebbetzin Elaine Wolf**, its long time former Principal, **Rabbi Nathan Horowitz** and its long time former Dean Of Students, **Rabbi Aron Sternberg, z"l**. Those wishing to help, please contact **Glenn Zuckerman** or **Laura Cohen**. They are asking for any old photos of Rabbi & Rebbetzin Wolf, Rabbi Horowitz or Rabbi Sternberg from their yearbooks, old journals or personal photos that will help in the video tribute chaired by **Sharon Goldwyn, Judy Blatter and Debbie Hollander**. For further info, to place an ad and/or to make a reservation, please contact **Arnie Flatow** at [aflatow@nsha.org](mailto:aflatow@nsha.org) or call the Business office at **487-8687 x2**.

### HAZHARAH LE'ILUY NISHMAT HADASSAH BEN-ZVI

An invitation from her children: Nomi, Roy, Benyamin, Libi and Leah. Please join us to celebrate the memory of our loving mother, who was an inspiration to all. **February 12th at 7:30 pm** at the Young Israel of GN.

### MELAVA MALKA

There will be a Melava Malka/Parlor meeting next motzei Shabbos, **Feb 7th** at the home of **Sam & Magda Yehaskel**, 23 Old Mill Rd. to raise funds for Kollel Tefillas Channah, a new pre-Neitz early morning Kollel in Eretz Yisroel. Refreshments will be served. For more information see **Meier Stein**.

### MAGAZINES

Still collecting for N.S.U. Hospital. **Must be no older than three months**. Please cut off your name and address labels (**do not rip off**) and bring them to shul office.

## Y A H R Z E I T

### Saturday, 18 Shevat

Leon Fuks for Bonnye Fuks  
Didi Hutt for Moshe Cohen

### Sunday, 19 Shevat

Elena Berkowitz for Dvora Fridman  
Marc Epstein for Fred Epstein  
Hedva Kessler for Ray Majus  
Cindy Liebmann for Ralph Geller  
Ellen Siegel for Alter Aviezer Givner  
Fay Smith for Richard E. Smith

### Monday, 20 Shevat

Robert Knepper for Elizabeth Knepper  
Tricia Moslin for Harry Solomon  
Robert Sperber for Pearl Sperber

### Tuesday, 21 Shevat

Idida Kaplan for Aba Abramovsky  
Iraj Kashani for Monavar Kashani  
Gitty Louzoun for Israel Malek  
Gitty Louzoun for Pessel Neuwirth  
Sydelle Slochowsky for Max Olshin

### Wednesday, 22 Shevat

Arnie Flatow for Morris Flatow  
Diane Seidle for Louis Melnick  
Rita Silverman for Dora Pentol

### Thursday, 23 Shevat

Sheila Bachman for Max Bachman  
Philip Hanfling for Yehuda Schneider  
Albert Safdieh for Irene Lipstein

### Friday, 24 Shevat

Matthew Gartenhaus for Stanley Gartenhaus