



# Shabbat Announcements

Parshat Tazria-Metzorah

April 25, 2015 6 Iyar, 5775

## Rabbi Jonathan Sacks on Parshat Tazria-Metzorah

**TORAH**  
ARTSCROLL 608  
HERTZ 459

**HAFTARAH**  
ARTSCROLL 1172  
HERTZ 477

It is hard to trace with any precision the moment when a new idea makes its first appearance on the human scene, especially one as amorphous as that of love. But love has a history. There is the contrast we find in Greek, and then Christian thought between eros and agape: sexual desire and a highly abstract love for humanity in general. There is the concept of chivalry that makes its appearance in the age of the Crusades, the code of conduct that prized gallantry and feats of bravery to "win the heart of a lady." There is the romantic love that makes its appearance in the novels of Jane Austen, hedged with the proviso that the young or not-so-young man destined for the heroine must have the right income and country estate, so as to exemplify the "truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife." And there is the moment in Fiddler on the Roof where, exposed by their children to the new ideas in pre-revolutionary Russia, Tevye turns to his wife Golde, and the following conversation ensues:

Tevye: Shh!

Golde: If that's not love, what is?

Tevye: Then you love me!

Golde: I suppose I do!

The inner history of humanity is in part the history of the idea of love. And at some stage a new idea makes its appearance in biblical Israel. We can trace it best in a highly suggestive passage in the book of one of the great prophets of the Bible, Hosea. Hosea lived in the eighth century BCE. The kingdom had been divided since the death of Solomon. The northern kingdom in particular, where Hosea lived, had lapsed after a period of peace and prosperity into lawlessness, idolatry and chaos. Between 747 and 732 BCE there were no less than five kings, the result of a series of intrigues and bloody struggles for power. The people, too, had become lax: "There is no faithfulness or kindness, and no knowledge of God in the land; there is swearing, lying, killing, stealing and committing adultery; they break all bounds and murder follows murder" (Hos. 4: 1-2). Like other prophets, Hosea knew that Israel's destiny depended on its sense of mission. Faithful to God, it was able to do extraordinary things: survive in the face of empires, and generate a society unique in the ancient world, of the equal dignity of all as fellow citizens under the sovereignty of the Creator of heaven and earth. Faithless, however, it was just one more minor power in the ancient Near East, whose chances of survival against larger political predators were minimal.

What makes the book of Hosea remarkable is the episode with which it begins. God tells the prophet to marry a prostitute, and see what it feels like to have a love betrayed.

Only then will Hosea have a glimpse into God's sense of betrayal by the people of Israel. Having liberated them from slavery and brought them into their land, God saw them forget the past, forsake the covenant, and worship strange gods. Yet He cannot abandon them despite the fact that they have abandoned Him. It is a powerful passage, conveying the astonishing assertion that more than the Jewish people love God, God loves the Jewish people. The history of Israel is a love story between the faithful God and his often faithless people. Though God is sometimes angry, He cannot but forgive. He will take them on a kind of second honeymoon, and they will renew their marriage vows: "Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her ... I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will know the Lord." (Hosea 2: 16-22)

It is this last sentence – with its explicit comparison between the covenant and a marriage – that Jewish men say when they put on the hand-tefillin, winding its strap around the finger like a wedding-ring.

One verse in the midst of this prophecy deserves the closest scrutiny. It contains two complex metaphors that must be unraveled strand by strand: "In that day," declares the Lord, "you will call Me 'my husband' [ishi]; you will no longer call Me 'my master' [baali]. (Hosea 2: 18)

This is a double pun. Baal, in biblical Hebrew, meant 'a husband', but in a highly specific sense – namely, 'master, owner, possessor,

### Times

Candle Lighting	7:25 pm
Friday Mincha	7:00 pm
Hashkama	8:00 am
Youth Minyan	8:30 am
Parsha Shiur	8:30 am
Main	9:00 am
Beit Medrash	9:15 am
Gemara Shiur	6:20 pm
Mincha	7:20 pm
Shabbat ends	8:34 pm
Sun., Apr. 26	7:30/8:30 am
Mon., Thur.	6:35/7:45 am
Tues., Wed., Fri.	6:45/7:45 am
Mincha	7:35 pm
Latest Times for Shema/Shemoneh Esrei	
April 25	9:28/10:37 am
May 2	9:23/10:33 am
Next Shabbat Acharei Mote-Kedoshim	
Candle Lighting	7:32 pm
Mincha	7:00 pm

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controller.' It signaled physical, legal and economic dominance. It was also the name of the Canaanite god – whose prophets Elijah challenged in the famous confrontation at Mount Carmel. Baal (often portrayed as a bull) was the god of the storm, who defeated Mot, the god of sterility and death. Baal was the rain that impregnated the earth and made it fertile. The religion of Baal is the worship of god-as-power.

Hosea contrasts this kind of relationship with the other Hebrew word for husband, ish. Here he is recalling the words of the first man to the first woman: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman [ishah], because she was taken from Man [ish]." (Gen. 2: 23) Here the male-female relationship is predicated on something quite other than power and dominance, ownership and control. Man and woman confront one another in sameness and difference. Each is an image of the other, yet each is separate and distinct. The only relationship able to bind them together without the use of force is marriage-as-covenant – a bond of mutual loyalty and love in which each makes a pledge to the other to serve one another.

Not only is this a radical way of reconceptualizing the relationship between man and woman. It is also, implies Hosea, the way we should think of the relationship between human beings and God. God reaches out to humanity not as power – the storm, the thunder, the rain – but as love, and not an abstract, philosophical love but a deep and abiding passion that survives all the disappointments and betrayals. Israel may not always behave lovingly toward God, says Hosea, but God loves Israel and will never cease to do so. How we relate to God affects how we relate to other people. That is Hosea's message – and vice versa: how we relate to other people affects the way we think of God. Israel's political chaos in the eighth century BCE was intimately connected to its religious waywardness. A society built on corruption and exploitation is one where might prevails over right. That is not Judaism but idolatry, Baal-worship.

Now we understand why the sign of the covenant is circumcision, the commandment given in the first of this week's parshiot, Tazria. For faith to be more than the worship of power, it must affect the most intimate relationship between men and women. In a society founded on covenant, male-female relationships are built on something other and gentler than male dominance, masculine power, sexual desire and the drive to own, control and possess. Baal must become ish. The alpha male must become the caring husband. Sex must be sanctified and tempered by mutual respect. The sexual drive must be circumcised and circumscribed so that it no longer seeks to possess and is instead content to love.

There is thus more than an accidental connection between monotheism story: Adam and Eve, one man, one woman. Whenever in Genesis a patriarch marries more than one woman there is tension and anguish. The commitment to one God is mirrored in the commitment to one person.

The Hebrew word emunah, often translated as "faith," in fact means faithfulness, fidelity, precisely the commitment one undertakes in making a marriage. Conversely, for the prophets there is a connection between idolatry and adultery. That is how God describes Israel to Hosea. God married the Israelites but they, in serving idols, acted the part of a promiscuous woman (Hos. 1-2). The love of husband and wife – a love at once personal and moral, passionate and responsible – is as close as we come to understanding God's love for us and our ideal love for Him. When Hosea says, "You will know the Lord," he does not mean knowledge in an abstract sense. He means the knowledge of intimacy and relationship, the touch of two selves across the metaphysical abyss that separates one consciousness from another. That is the theme of The Song of Songs, that deeply human yet deeply mystical expression of eros, the love between humanity and God. It is also the meaning of one of the definitive sentences in Judaism: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength" (Deut. 6:5).

Judaism from the beginning made a connection between sexuality and violence on the one hand, marital faithfulness and social order on the other. Not by chance is marriage called kiddushin, "sanctification." Like covenant itself, marriage is a pledge of loyalty between two parties, each recognizing the other's integrity, honoring their differences even as they come together to bring new life into being. Marriage is to society what covenant is to religious faith: a decision to make love – not power, wealth or force majeure – the generative principle of life.

Just as spirituality is the most intimate relationship between us and God, so sex is the most intimate relationship between us and another person. Circumcision is the eternal sign of Jewish faith because it unites the life of the soul with the passions of the body, reminding us that both must be governed by humility, self-restraint and love.

Brit milah helps transform the male from Baal to Ish, from dominant partner to loving husband, just as God tells Hosea that this is what He seeks in His relationship with the people of the covenant. Circumcision turns biology into spirituality. The instinctive male urge to reproduce becomes instead a covenantal act of partnership and mutual affirmation. It was thus as decisive a turn in human civilization as Abrahamic monotheism itself. Both are about abandoning power as the basis of relationship, and instead aligning ourselves with what Dante called "the love that moves the sun and other stars." Circumcision is the physical expression of the faith that lives in love.



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

**Rabbi Dale Polakoff, Rabbi**  
**Rabbi Ian Lichter, Assistant Rabbi**  
**Dr. Ephraim Wolf, z"l, Rabbi Emeritus**  
**Zeev Kron, Cantor**  
**Eleazer Schulman, z"l, Cantor Emeritus**  
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**Dr. Hal Chadow, President**  
**Harold Domnitch, Chairman of the Board**  
**Dena Block, Yoetzet Halacha 516-320-9818**



**Ambassador**  
**John Bolton**

**Sunday Evening, May 3**  
**Sponsored by**  
**The GNS Men's Club**  
**&**  
**The Long Island Chapter of ZOA**



**Lunch on April 25, 2015  
With Rabbi Dov Lipman**

**RESERVATIONS REQUIRED**

**A WEEK OF YOM HAATZMAUT EVENTS AT GNS**

Screening of the critically acclaimed  
**BENEATH THE HELMET**  
**SATURDAY NIGHT**  
**APRIL 18 - 9:00PM**



An inside look at how 5 Israeli youth transform from high school students to soldiers. Complimentary admission, Refreshments will be served

Yom HaZikaron & Yom Ha'atzmaut Services  
**WEDNESDAY NIGHT**  
**APRIL 22 - 7:45PM**



Guest Speaker:  
**MR. STEPHEN FLATOW**  
• Noted speaker on terrorism and victim's rights  
• Founder, Alisa Flatow Memorial Fund

Children's Israeli Carnival  
**THURSDAY**  
**APRIL 23RD - 5:00-7:00PM**

Community Yom Ha'atzmaut Shabbat Luncheon  
**APRIL 25 - 12:30PM**



Guest Speaker:  
**RABBI DOV LIPMAN**  
Member of the 19th Knesset (Yesh Atid)  
*"Religion and State in Israel: Where are we heading?"*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

#Adults \_\_\_\_\_

#Teens \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
#Children under 12 \_\_\_\_\_

Price \$36 per adult  
\$25 per teen \$15 child  
\$125 Family Max

Check enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Seating request  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Reservations Required for Shabbat Luncheon  
RSVP at [www.gns.org](http://www.gns.org), or contact the synagogue office.  
Sponsorships available - and welcome!

GREAT NECK  
BIKUR CHOLIM

**1ST ANNUAL YIGN & GNS  
BIKUR CHOLIM EVENT**

**There and Back:  
Perspectives on Recovery  
From Serious Illness**

PANELISTS:  
DR. FARLA FRUMKIN  
RABBI SHMUEL ISMACH  
RABBI YAACOV LERNER  
RABBI IAN LICHTER  
RABBI DALE POLAKOFF

MODERATOR:  
ROBYN BLUMNER

**Tuesday April 21, 2015  
8:00 PM at  
Great Neck Synagogue**

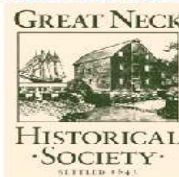
**Great Neck Synagogue Men's Club**

**Do you know the history of Great Neck?  
Or the history of our GN Synagogue?**

**Wednesday, April 29, at 8:00 pm**

Come listen and learn from

**Alice Kasten and Leila Mattson  
of the Great Neck Historical Society**



Great Neck has one of America's most fascinating histories, beginning with its early days as a forested area inhabited by the Matinecock Indians and developing into today's flourishing, modern town.

**AND**

**Sharon Goldwyn, of the Great Neck Synagogue**



who will take us through the history of our beloved Great Neck Synagogue, from our founders' dreams to today's thriving community.

Refreshments served  
All Welcome

# 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 EXT 220**

## RABBI POLAKOFF-OPEN OFFICE HOURS

Rabbi Polakoff will have open office hours each week on Tuesdays 10am - noon and on Thursdays 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), through his cell phone 516-637-3674 (call or text) or through email at [rabbi@gns.org](mailto:rabbi@gns.org).

## HASHKAMA KIDDUSH

Kiddush is sponsored in honor of the return to the minyan of Mel Fox.

## MEN'S CLUB

### WED., APRIL 29, 8:00PM: HISTORY OF GREAT NECK

Do you know the history of Great Neck? Or the history of our Synagogue? Alice Kastan, of the GN Historical Society and Sharon Goldwyn, of GN Synagogue, will delight and inform you of the history of the wonderful town of Great Neck and of our beloved Synagogue. Refreshments served. All welcome.

**TUES MAY 12 & MAY 13, (7 to 10 pm)** The Men's Club annual **Defensive Driving** Course will be presented by AAA. Take the course every 3 years to save on your car insurance, premiums and reduce any points you may have. The cost is \$30.00. Please make checks payable to GNS Men's Club. Please contact Jerry Siegelman 516-712-7538/ [jerrysiegelman@hotmail.com](mailto:jerrysiegelman@hotmail.com).

**SUN JUNE 7, 9:00AM** Annual Fishing Trip, \$50 adults, \$40 children 6-11 (no children under 6). Breakfast and Lunch included. Details to follow. **Mark Friedman 448-4890, Hilly Milun 482-1062.**

## SAVE THE DATE

Ambassador **John Bolton**, nationally known TV foreign affairs analyst and author, will speak at GNS **Sun. evening May 3rd**. The event is sponsored by Zionist Organization Of America (ZOA) Long Island Chapter and **GNS Men's Club**. There is no charge for admission.

## THE FLORENCE SHAFFER SCHOLARSHIP

The deadline for Florence Shaffer Scholarship applications is Friday May 29.

## SISTERHOOD ZUMBA GOLD CLASS

**Wednesday/ May 6 / 8:00 pm** at **ConfidanZe and Fitness studio**. Zumba Gold is for any age! Class size will be limited. Call **Judy** at 487 6845 for more information on how to pay and reserve your spot.

## UPCOMING EVENTS AT GREAT NECK SYNAGOGUE

April 21: Bikur Cholim Event  
 April 22: Yom Hazikaron/Yom Haatzmaut: Stephen Flatow guest  
 April 26: Blood Drive  
 April 28: Sisterhood Event  
 April 29: Men's Club & Great Neck Historical Society: History of GNS  
 May 3: Ambassador John Bolton guest  
 May 5: Health & Halacha Evening at NSHA Cherry Lane  
 May 9: Mother/Daughter Shabbaton: Jackie Bitton guest  
 May 12 & 13: Men's Club Defensive Driving Course  
 May 14: GNS Annual Congregation Meeting  
 May 17: Men's Club presents: "In Quest of Immortality" by Paul Marcus  
 May 27: Israel Bonds: Malcolm Hoenlein guest  
 May 30: Sokol Heisler Lunch: Yoram Hazoni guest  
 May 30: Annual Youth End Of Year Bash  
 June 7: Men's Club Fishing Trip  
 June 9: Mets Vs Giants: CitiField  
 June 20: Graduation Kiddush

## WITHIN OUR FAMILY

**Mazal Tov to Rona & Reuben Askowitz and Burt Greenberg**, on the engagement of their daughter, **Alyssa to Ofer Gottesman** son of **Tami and Shimshon (z"l) Gottesman** of Haifa, Israel.

## NORTH SHORE MIKVAH ASSOC. ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

Please join the North Shore Mikveh Association for its Annual Fundraising Event In Memory of **Bella Goldwyn, Z"L**, co-sponsored by Great Neck Synagogue and Young Israel of Great Neck - A Health and Halacha Evening: Introspection For Women By Women. An informative panel discussion: Enhancing our physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing through self-awareness with panelists: Heather Appelbaum, MD FACOG, Dena Block, M.A., GNS Yoetzet Halacha & Rachel Hercman, LCSW at North Shore Hebrew Academy, 16 Cherry Lane on **Tuesday, May 5th at 7:30 PM**.

## PESACH UNUSED CAN/BOX FOOD DONATION

Please donate your unopened Passover boxes and cans of food to needy families. Items can be dropped off at Great Neck Synagogue.

## IYAR ROSH CHODESH CHALLAH BAKE:

**Thursday April 23rd at 6pm** at the home of Dahlia Abraham-Klein Come and learn the spiritual significance of baking challah through out the Omer. As we knead, we will focus on a specific quality within ourselves, perfecting areas of our emotions to reach a holy place for receiving the Torah. Please RSVP to [silkroadvegetarian@gmail.com](mailto:silkroadvegetarian@gmail.com)

## SNOW BIRDS

Please notify the office on your return from Florida.

## SOLICITING NOMINEES

We are currently soliciting nominees to be considered for the **David and Ellie Werber Chesed Award**. This is an award presented to a child/teenager from our community who performs chesed in a notable way. Please email Mark Twersky ([mtwersky@gns.org](mailto:mtwersky@gns.org)) with the name of your nominee and a brief description of why you think he or she is deserving of this award. All nominees will be considered by the committee, and are confidential.

## Y A H R Z E I T

### Saturday, 6 Iyyar

Sheila Bachman for Florence Gur  
 Halina Greenwald for Pola Salpeter  
 Ephraim Slonim for Jacob Slonim  
 Sam Yehaskel for Lucy Yehaskel

### Monday, 8 Iyar

Fay Smith for Lester Smith

### Tuesday, 9 Iyar

Tammy Jampel for Amnon Abramov

### Thursday, 11 Iyar

Mark Bunim for Louise A. Bunim  
 Harriet Nathel for Pauline Chalfin  
 Arlette Shaya for Odette Dayan  
 Rafael Gad for Yacob Gad  
 Herschel Flax for Issy Pasvolsky  
 Mary Flax for Issy Pasvolsky  
 Osnass Shein for Isaac Shein  
 Helene Peyser for Paula Stadtmuer  
 Deborah Hollander for Rabbi Joseph Warren  
 Joseph Sokol for Rabbi Joseph Warren

### Friday, 12 Iyar

Joseph Gil for Akiva Gil  
 Jerry Gil for Akiva Gil