



# Shabbat Announcements

Parshat Bamidbar

May 23, 2015 5 Sivan, 5775

## Rabbi Jonathan Sacks on Parshat Bamidbar

**TORAH**  
**ARTSCROLL 726**  
**HERTZ 568**

**HAFTORAH**  
**ARTSCROLL 1180**  
**HERTZ 582**

BAR MITZVAH  
YONI PINSKY

### Times

Candle Lighting	7:53 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	6:50 pm
Mincha	7:50 pm
Shabbat ends	9:02 pm
<b>Sun.-Mon. May 23-24 Shavuot</b>	
<b>Please see schedule on page 2</b>	
Tuesday	6:45/7:45 am
Thursday	6:35/7:45 am
Wed., Fri.	6:45/7:45 am
Mincha	8:00 pm
Latest Times for Shema/Shemoneh Esrei	
May 23	9:15/10:27 am
May 30	9:10/10:25 am
Next Shabbat Nasso	
Candle Lighting	7:59 pm
Mincha	7:00 pm

The book of Bamidbar begins with a census of the Israelites. That is why it is known in English as Numbers. What is the significance of this act of counting? And why here at the beginning of the book? Besides which, there have already been two previous censuses of the people and this is the third within the space of a single year. Surely one would have been sufficient. And does counting have anything to do with leadership?

The place to begin is to note what looks like a contradiction. On the one hand Rashi says that the acts of counting in the torah are gestures of love on the part of God: Because they (the children of Israel) are dear to Him, G-d counts them often. He counted them when they were about to leave Egypt. He counted them after the Golden Calf to establish how many were left. And now that He was about to cause His presence to rest on them (with the inauguration of the sanctuary), He counted them again. When God initiates a census of the Israelites it is to show that He loves them. On the other hand the Torah is explicit in saying that

taking a census of the nation is fraught with risk: Then G-d said to Moses, "When you take a census of the Israelites to count them, each must give to G-d a ransom for his life at the time he is counted. Then no plague will come on them when you number them. (Ex. 30: 11-12).

When, centuries later, King David counted the people, there was Divine anger and 70,000 people died. How can this be if counting is an expression of love? The answer lies in the phrase the Torah uses to describe the act of counting: se'u et rosh, literally, "lift the head." This is a strange, circumlocutory expression. Biblical Hebrew contains many verbs meaning "to count": limnot, lifkod, lispur, lachshov. Why does the Torah not use these simple words, choosing instead the roundabout expression, "lift the heads" of the people? The short answer is this. In any census, count or roll-call there is a tendency to focus on the total: the crowd, the multitude, the mass. Here is a nation of 60 million people, or a company with 100,000 employees or a sports crowd of 60,000. Any total tends to value the group or nation as a whole. The larger the total, the stronger is the army, the more popular the team, and the more successful the company.

Counting devalues the individual, and tends to make him or her replaceable. If one soldier dies in battle, another will take his

place. If one person leaves the organization, someone else can be hired to do his or her job. Notoriously, too, crowds have the effect of tending to make the individual lose his or her independent judgment and follow what others are doing. We call this "herd behavior," and it sometimes leads to collective madness. In 1841 Charles Mackay published his classic study, *Extraordinary Popular Delusions And The Madness Of Crowds*, which tells of the South Sea Bubble that cost thousands their money in the 1720s, and the tulip mania in Holland when fortunes were spent on single tulip bulbs. The Great Crashes of 1929 and 2008 had the same crowd psychology.

Another great work, Gustav Le Bon's *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (1895) showed how crowds exercise a "magnetic influence" that transmutes the behavior of individuals into a collective "group mind." As he put it, "An individual in a crowd is a grain of sand amid other grains of sand, which the wind stirs up at will." People in a crowd become anonymous. Their conscience is silenced. They lose a sense of personal responsibility. Crowds are peculiarly prone to regressive behavior, primitive reactions and instinctual behavior. They are easily led by figures who are demagogues, playing on people's fears and sense of

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OF THEIR SON EGAL  
TO MONA SOUFERIAN

victimhood. Such leaders, he said, are "especially recruited from the ranks of those morbidly nervous exciteable half-deranged persons who are bordering on madness," a remarkable anticipation of Hitler. It is no accident that Le Bon's work was published in France at a time of rising anti-Semitism and the Dreyfus trial.

Hence the significance of one remarkable feature of Judaism: its principled insistence – like no other civilization before – on the dignity and integrity of the individual. We believe that every human being is in the image and likeness of God. The sages said that every life is like an entire universe. Maimonides says that each of us should see ourselves as if our next act could change the fate of the world. Every dissenting view is carefully recorded in the Mishnah, even if the law is otherwise. Every verse of the Torah is capable, said the sages, of seventy interpretations. No voice, no view, is silenced. Judaism never allows us to lose our individuality in the mass.

There is a wonderful blessing mentioned in the Talmud to be said on seeing 600,000 Israelites together in one place. It is: "Blessed are You, Lord ... who discerns secrets." The Talmud explains that every person is different. We each have different attributes. We all think our own thoughts. Only God can enter the minds of each of us and know what we are thinking, and this is what the blessing refers to. In other words, even in a massive crowd where, to human eyes, faces blur into a mass, God still relates to us as individuals, not as members of a crowd. That is the meaning of the phrase, "lift the head," used in the context of a census. God tells Moses that there is a danger, when counting a nation, that each individual will feel insignificant. "What am I? What difference can I make? I am only one of millions, a mere wave in the ocean, a grain of sand on the sea-shore, dust on the surface of infinity." Against that, God tells Moses to lift people's heads by showing that they each count; they matter as individuals. Indeed in Jewish law a *davar she-be-minyan*, something that is counted, sold individually rather than by weight, is never nullified even in a mixture of a thousand or a million others. In Judaism taking a census must always be done in such a way as to signal that we are valued as

individuals. We each have unique gifts. There is a contribution only I can bring. To lift someone's head means to show them favor, to recognize them. It is a gesture of love.

There is, however, all the difference in the world between individuality and individualism. Individuality means that I am a unique and valued member of a team. Individualism means that I am not a team player at all. I am interested in myself alone, not the group. Harvard sociologist Robert Putnam gave this a famous name, noting that more people than ever in the United States are going ten-pin bowling but fewer than ever are joining teams. He called it "Bowling alone." MIT professor Sherry Turkle calls our age of Twitter, Facebook, and electronic rather than face-to-face friendships, "Alone together." Judaism values individuality, not individualism. As Hillel said, "If I am only for myself, what am I?"

All this has implications for Jewish leadership. We are not in the business of counting numbers. The Jewish people always was small and yet achieved great things. Judaism has a profound mistrust of demagogic leaders who manipulate the emotions of crowds. Moses at the burning bush spoke of his inability to be eloquent. "I am not a man of words." He thought this was a failing in a leader. In fact it was the opposite. Moses did not sway people by his oratory. Rather, he lifted them by his teaching.

A Jewish leader has to respect individuals. He or she must "lift their heads." However large the group you lead, you must always communicate the value you place on everyone, including those others exclude: the widow, the orphan and the stranger. You must never attempt to sway a crowd by appealing to the primitive emotions of fear or hate. You must never ride roughshod over the opinions of others. It is hard to lead a nation of individuals, but this is the most challenging, empowering, inspiring leadership of all.



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**  
**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**

**SHAVUOT SCHEDULE**

**Saturday Night 5/23:  
 Eat Seudah Shlishit at home**

Gemorah shiur: 6:50 pm

Mincha: 7:50 pm

Shiur by Rabbi Polakoff

Calendrical Conundrums

Candle Lighting: after 9:02 pm

Tikun Leil Shavuot begins at 11:30 at GNS

**Sunday 5/24:**

Shacharit: 9:00/9:15 am

No Drashot today

Following Kiddush 12:15 pm Megillat Rut Shiur

with Rabbi Polakoff and Rabbi Lichter

Mincha: 8:00 pm

Shiur by Rabbi Lichter

How to BBQ on Yom Tov: The Continually Lit Flame

Candle Lighting: after 9:02 pm

**Monday 5/25:**

Shacharit: 9:00/9:15 am

Yizkor: approx. 10:45 am

Family BBQ: 6:30 pm

Discussion on Kibud Av V'eim: Transitioning through the Years with Rabbi Polakoff and Rabbi Lichter

Mincha: 8:00 pm

ASK THE RABBIS SESSION

**Yom Tov Ends: 9:04**

Tikun Leil Shavuot  
Great Neck Synagogue 2015

- 11:45-12:20 MS/HS Girls - Chaffin Room  
Moshé Zelman: "Getting to the Heart of the Matter"
- 12:15 Snacks, Snacks, Snacks!
- 12:30-1:15 High School - Youth Center Right Side  
Rabbi Skornitzki: "Lafet Basel, Nafet Malacha et Fardel Gashmitz in Halacha"
- 12:30-1:15 College - Youth Center Left Side  
Rabbi Jansach: "The First Book of Mikvat-Dov? Do You Mean?"
- 1:15 Make your Open Stanzas
- 1:30-3:30 High School/College Join the Adult Community in Ballroom  
Rabbi Lichter & Rabbi Jansach Debate about technology and Shabbos
- 2:00-3:00 Middle School Chaffin Room  
Rabbi Jansach: "Dove Shabbos Does Embellish Piv'Amiv"
- 3:15 Make your own Stanzas!
- 4:00-4:30 High School/College Youth Center Right Side  
Dr. Miler: "Tough! I've known a nation, do OTHER nations have antibodies?"
- 4:40 Yes! made it- Breakfast Time!

# Celebrating Shavuot 5775

**Motzei Shabbat, May 23**

**TIKUN LEIL SHAVUOT 5775 @ GNS**

**11:30 pm - 12:20 am - Ballroom**

**Rabbi Dale Polakoff**  
"An Inevitable - Is the Torah Still In Our Hands?"

**12:30 am - 1:20 am - Ballroom**

**Rabbi Yaacov Lerner**  
"The World of Prayer as Seen through the Eyes of Rav Aharon Lichtenstein at?"

**1:20 am - 1:30 am - Ballroom**

**Rabbi Ian Lichter and Rabbi Shmuel Ismach**  
"The Great Late Debate Teaser"

**1:30 am - 1:50 am**

**Break and Refreshments - Gym**

**1:50 am - 3:30 am**

**"The Great Late Debate" Between**  
**Rabbi Ian Lichter & Rabbi Shmuel Ismach**

**Back (or) To The Future - Shabbat at the Edge of Technology and Tradition**

From Kopher Switches to Shabbat Apps, from Shabbat Mode to Shab-issues, a cottage industry of 'Shabbat innovations' has appeared in recent times, promising (or threatening) to change Shabbos as we know it forever.

Of course, each of these innovations needs to be judged on its own halachic merits. But assuming that from a technical perspective they are indeed permitted, should we fear these new trends or embrace them? Is there a value in maintaining traditional practice or is it futile to attempt to stave off the inevitable creep of technology?

Using traditional sources, Rabbi Lichter and Ismach will re-create the dynamic, Talmudic method of old and debate - in classic form - this very relevant topic.

Come and be stimulated by a lively discussion, have your opinion heard, and you be the judge!

**3:40 am - 4:15 am - Ballroom**

**Rabbi Avraham Bronstein**

"From Solonica to Shabbat Text: Mystical Experiences on Shavuot Night"

Cheruta learning throughout the night in the Beit Midresh

**4:20 am - 5:00 am - Ballroom**

**Prof. Lawrence Schiffman**

"The Rabbinic Understanding of Prophecy"

Vatikin davening at 5:05 am

Sunrise 5:29 am

**OUR LEARNING THIS YEAR IS DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF RAV LICHTENSTEIN**

ל"ת הרב אהרן בן הרב ישראל



**ISRAEL BONDS AND GREAT NECK SYNAGOGUE'S MEN'S CLUB**

INVITE YOU TO A

**Dessert Reception**



**GUEST SPEAKER**

**Malcolm Hoenlein**

Executive Vice Chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES: WHAT IS REALLY HAPPENING IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 2015 · 8:00PM**

**GREAT NECK SYNAGOGUE**  
26 Old Mill Road - Great Neck, NY

**TO RSVP OR FOR INFORMATION CONTACT**  
Annie Schweitzer, Registered Representative  
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**SHABBAT, MAY 30**  
**GNS FAMILY SHABBAT LUNCHEON**  
IN MEMORY OF SHARON SOKOL HEISLER, Z"l

**Guest Speaker:**

**DR. YORAM HAZONY**

Founder, Herzl Institute of Jerusalem



Dr. Yoram Hazony is founder and President of the Herzl Institute in Jerusalem. A renowned scholar and political thinker, he was an advisor to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, then serving as opposition leader (1997-2001). Hazony was a member of the Israeli delegation to the Madrid Peace Conference (1991) and a member of The Jerusalem Post editorial staff. He is also involved with founding and serving as President of the Shalom Center in Jerusalem, Herzl College, and other non-profit organizations. Yoram Hazony has published academic works in the fields of philosophy, political theory, Zionism, Jewish and Israeli history, Middle-East Studies and economics. His books include: The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture and The Jewish State: The Struggle for Israel's Soul. Hazony is director of the John Templeton Foundation's award in Jewish Philosophical Theology, and a member of the Israel Council for Higher Education committee on Jewish Studies in Israel's universities. He is a member of the Public Council of the Orthodox religious organization, Gesh Emunim. He holds a B.A. in East Asian Studies from Princeton University and a Ph.D. in Political Theory from Rutgers University. He lives in Jerusalem with his wife Yael, where they have raised their two children.

**RESERVATIONS REQUIRED**  
**Deadline:**  
**WEDNESDAY, MAY 27**

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

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26 Old Mill Road  
Great Neck, NY 11023

# 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**

## WITHIN OUR FAMILY

**Mazal Tov to Yaffa & Ebrahim Gabbazadah** on the upcoming marriage of their son **Egal** to **Mona** daughter of **Mitra & Parviz Soufreian**.

**IF YOU KNOW OF SOMEONE WHO IS MOVING INTO THE GREAT NECK AREA PLEASE LET THE OFFICE KNOW.**

**Mazal Tov to Esther & Moshe Pinsky** on the Bar Mitzvah of their son **Yoni**.

### MEN'S CLUB

**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 or Hilly Milun 482-1062.**

**Mazal Tov to Ellen & Rabbi Dale Polakoff** on the birth of a granddaughter born to their children **Aliza & Lior Tor** in Israel. **Mazal Tov** also to big sister **Noam Shabbat**.

**TUES. JUNE 9, 7:10pm:** The Men's Club invite you to join us at CitiField where the **NY Mets** will play the **San Francisco Giants**. Tickets are \$50 (\$46 for paid-up Men's Club members). Contact **Jack Lipsky** at 829-6187 or [jlisky.lipsk01@insuremail.net](mailto:jlisky.lipsk01@insuremail.net) or call the GNS office 467-6100.

**Mazal Tov to Ladan & Elyahu Mehdizadeh Elyassoff and Yaffa & Behnam Azizian** on the birth of a grandson born to their children **Tova Shireen & Isaac Mehdizadeh Elyassoff**.

### MONTHLY CHESED

GNS May Chesed Collection to Camp Kaylie run by OHEL is in great need of new and gently used sports equipment to be used for special needs programs and after school and summer programs. Please drop off at the **Brody home, 7 Hickory Drive**.

**Mazal Tov to Celia & Jack Lemonik** on their son **Yonah** receiving his PhD in Theoretical Physics and his wife **Rachel** receiving her PsyD in Psychology.

June Chesed Collection- Spring/Summer clothing, contact **Sharon Goldwyn** to volunteer [917 287 7334](tel:917-287-7334).

**Mazal Tov to Tovah & Josh Marmer** on the birth of a baby girl. **Mazal Tov** to grandparents **Ellie & David Werber** and great-grandmother **Millie Werber**.

### ANNUAL SOKOL HEISLER LUNCHEON

Please join us for the Annual Sokol Heisler Luncheon in memory of **Sharon Sokol Heisler, z"l**, taking place on **Saturday May 30**. **Yoram Hazony** will be the guest speaker. Please go to [www.gns.org](http://www.gns.org) to make your reservation or call the shul office. The GNS Youth Dept. will hold the Annual Youth End Of Year Bash on that day as well.

### EMUNAH LUNCHEON

**Dr. Joyce Rydzinski** from Great Neck will be honored at the upcoming EMUNAH Spring Luncheon "Empowering Women." The event will be held in NYC on **May 19th**. Anyone interested in making a reservation or a donation in honor of Dr. Rydzinski can contact the EMUNAH office at [212-564-9045 ext 315](tel:212-564-9045).

### SIVAN ROSH CHODESH CHALLAH BAKE

**Thursday May 21st** at 6pm at the home of **Dahlia Abraham-Klein**. Come and learn the spiritual significance of baking challah as we approach Shavuot. Please RSVP to [silkroad-vegetarian@gmail.com](mailto:silkroad-vegetarian@gmail.com)

### ISRAEL CULTURE FESTIVAL

Celebrate Israel Festival, the largest celebration of Israeli culture in New York, will take place on **Sun., May 31, 2015** from 2pm 7pm at Pier 94 (located at 711 12th Ave, New York). Community members will celebrate the State of Israel with live entertainment, family activities, culture, food & art.

### THE FLORENCE SHAFFER SCHOLARSHIP

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

*Carol Karbowitz and Lynn Steinberg & families would like to thank Rabbi Polakoff, Rabbi Lichter, Chazzan Kron, Chevra Kadisha and the entire GNS community for their outpouring of support and sympathy following the loss of their mother Elizabeth Katzwer, z"l.*

### CANDIDATES FOR SUMMER INTERN AT GNS

If you are interested in volunteering over the summer at GNS, please email resumes to Mark Twersky at [mtwersky@gns.org](mailto:mtwersky@gns.org).

### ISRAELI DAY PARADE

Celebrate the Israeli Day Parade on **Sun. May 31st** from **1-5 pm**.

### LOST & FOUND

We have a lost & found box in the shul office. Please come to claim your lost items.

## UPCOMING EVENTS AT GREAT NECK SYNAGOGUE

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  
June 20: Perek in the Park

## Y A H R Z E I T

### Saturday, 5 Sivan

Fay Smith for Ruth Brafman  
Osnass Shein for Isaac Charchat  
Marc Gottlieb for Bernhard Gottlieb  
Edward Mazur for Rose Mazur  
Pamela Shrock for Isaac David Shubitz  
Robert Spitalnick for Oscar Spitalnick

### Sunday, 6 Sivan

Rita Gordonson for Lewis C. Gordonson  
Roselin Wagner for Fannie Tarnofsky

### Monday, 7 Sivan

Michelle Berman for Sara bat Moshe Aharon  
Sanford Brand for Aron Brand  
Leslie Kahn for Sally Krawchuk

### Tuesday, 8 Sivan

Murray Frank for Meyer Frank  
Roselin Wagner For Anna Seider  
Jerrald Weinstein for Abraham Weinstein

### Wednesday, 9 Sivan

Serge Fischler for Hanny Fischler  
Carol Karbowitz for Jacob Katzwer  
Heather Siegelman for Eric Levi

### Thursday, 10 Sivan

Idida Kaplan for Ahuva Abramovsky