



# Shabbat Announcements

Parshat Nitzavim

October 1, 2016 28 Elul, 5776

**TORAH**  
**ARTSCROLL 1086**  
**HERTZ 878**

**HAFTORAH**  
**ARTSCROLL 1202**  
**HERTZ 883**

**BAR MITZVAH**  
**OF**  
**AARON OSHRY**

## Rabbi Jonathan Sacks on Nitzavim

This week's parsha raises a question that goes to the heart of Judaism, but which was not asked for many centuries until raised by a great Spanish scholar of the fifteenth century, Rabbi Isaac Arama. Moses is almost at the end of his life. The people are about to cross the Jordan and enter the Promised Land. Moses knows he must do one thing more before he dies. He must renew the covenant between the people and God. Their parents had entered into that commitment almost forty years before when they stood at Mount Sinai and said, "We will do and obey all that God has declared" (Ex. 24:7). But now Moses has to ensure that the next generation and all future generations will be bound by it. He wanted no-one to be able to say, "God made a covenant with my ancestors but not with me. I did not give my consent. I was not there. I am not bound." That is why Moses says: It is not with you alone that I am making this sworn covenant, but with whoever is standing here with us today before the Lord our God, and with whoever is not here with us today. (Deut. 29:13-14) "Whoever is not here" cannot mean Israelites alive at the time who were somewhere else. The entire nation was present at the assembly. It means "generations not yet born." That is why the Talmud says: we are all mushba

ve-omed me-har Sinai, "foresworn from Sinai." Hence one of the most fundamental facts about Judaism: converts excepted, we do not choose to be Jews. We are born as Jews. We become legal adults, subject to the commands, at age twelve for girls, thirteen for boys. But we are part of the covenant from birth. A bat or bar mitzvah is not a "confirmation." It involves no voluntary acceptance of Jewish identity. That choice took place more than three thousand years ago when Moses said "It is not with you alone that I am making this sworn covenant, but with... whoever is not here with us today," meaning all future generations.

But how can this be so? There is no obligation without consent. How can we be subject to a commitment on the basis of a decision taken long ago by our distant ancestors? To be sure, in Jewish law you can confer a benefit on someone else without their consent. But though it is surely a benefit to be a Jew, it is also in some sense a liability, a restriction on our range of legitimate choices. Why then are we bound now by what the Israelites said then? Jewishly, this is the ultimate question. How can religious identity be passed on from parent to child? If identity were merely ethnic, we could understand it. We inherit many things from our parents – most obviously our genes. But being Jewish is not a genetic condition. It is a set of religious obligations. The sages gave an answer in the form of a tradition about today's parsha. They said that the souls of all future generations were present at Sinai. As souls, they freely gave their consent, generations before

they were born. However, Arama argues that this cannot answer our question, since God's covenant is not with souls only, but also with embodied human beings. We are physical beings with physical desires. We can understand that the soul would agree to the covenant. What does the soul desire if not closeness to God? But the assent that counts is that of living, breathing human beings with bodies, and we cannot assume that they would agree to the Torah with its many restrictions on eating, drinking, sexual relations and the rest. Not until we are born, and are old enough to understand what is being asked of us can we give our consent in a way that binds us. Therefore the fact that the unborn generations were present at Moses covenant ceremony does not give us the answer we need. In essence, Arama was asking: why be Jewish? What is fascinating is that he was the first to ask this question since the age of the Talmud. Why was it not asked before? Why was it first asked in fifteenth century Spain? For many centuries the question, "Why be Jewish?" did not arise. The answer was self-evident. I am Jewish because that is what my parents were and

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**IN MEMORY OF**  
**HIS FATHER,**  
**AVRAHAM**  
**ROUHOLLAH**  
**BEN FARAJOLLAH Z"l.**

### Times

Hashkama	8:00 am
Youth Minyan	8:30 am
Parsha Shiur	8:30 am
Main	9:00 am
Beit Midrash	9:15 am
Gemara Shiur	5:10 pm
Mincha	6:10 pm
Shabbat Ends	7:26 pm
Sun. Oct. 2	7:30/8:30 am
Week's Schedule	See page 3
Mincha (Thurs.)	6:10 pm
Latest Times for Shema/Shemoneh Esrei	
Oct. 1	9:48/10:46 am
Oct. 8	9:50/10:47 am
Next Shabbat Vayeilech	
Candle Lighting	6:08 pm
Mincha	6:10 pm

theirs before them, back to the dawn of Jewish time. Existential questions arise only when we feel there is a choice. For much of history, Jewish identity was not a choice. It was a fact of birth, a fate, a destiny. It was not something you chose, any more than you choose to be born. In fifteenth century Spain, Jews were faced with a choice. Spanish Jewry experienced its Kristallnacht in 1391, and from then on until the expulsion in 1492, Jews found themselves excluded from more and more areas of public life. There were immense pressures on them to convert, and some did so. Of these, some maintained their Jewish identity in secret, but others did not. For the first time in many centuries, staying Jewish came to be seen not just as a fate but as a choice. That is why Arama raised the question that had been unasked for so long. It is also why, in an age in which everything significant seems open to choice, it is being asked again in our time. Arama gave one answer. I gave my own in my book A Letter in the Scroll. But I also believe a large part of the answer lies in what Moses himself said at the end of his address: "I call heaven and earth as witnesses that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your children may live" (Deut. 30:19). Choose life. No religion, no civilization, has insisted so strenuously and consistently that we can choose. We have it in us, says Maimonides, to be as righteous as Moses or as evil as Jeroboam. We can be great. We can be small. We can choose.

The ancients with their belief in fate, fortune, moira, ananke, the influence of the stars or the arbitrariness of nature, did not fully believe in human freedom. For them true freedom meant, if you were religious, accepting fate, or if you were philosophical, the consciousness of necessity. Nor do most scientific atheists believe in it today. We are determined, they say, by our genes. Our fate is scripted in our DNA. Choice is an illusion of the conscious mind. It is the fiction we tell ourselves. Judaism says No. Choice is like a muscle: use it or lose it. Jewish law is an ongoing training regime in willpower. Can you eat this and not that? Can you exercise spiritually three times a day? Can you rest one day in seven? Can you defer the

gratification of instinct – what Freud took to be the mark of civilization? Can you practice self-control – according to the "marshmallow test", the surest sign of future success in life? To be a Jew means not going with the flow, not doing what others do just because they are doing it. It gives us 613 exercises in the power of will to shape our choices. That is how we, with God, become co-authors of our lives. "We have to be free", said Isaac Bashevis Singer, "we have no choice!" Choose life. In many other faiths, life down here on earth with its loves, losses, triumphs and defeats, is not the highest value. Heaven is to be found in life after death, or the soul in unbroken communion with God, or in acceptance of the world-that-is. Life is eternity, life is serenity, life is free of pain. But that, for Judaism, is not quite life. It may be noble, spiritual, sublime, but it is not life in all its passion, responsibility and risk. Judaism teaches us how to find God down here on earth not up there in heaven. It means engaging with life, not taking refuge from it. It seeks, not so much happiness as joy: the joy of being with others and together with them making a blessing over life. It means taking the risk of love, commitment, loyalty. It means living for something larger than the pursuit of pleasure or success. It means daring greatly.

It does not deny pleasure. Judaism is not ascetic. It does not worship pleasure. Judaism is not hedonist. Instead it sanctifies pleasure. It brings the Divine presence into the most physical acts: eating, drinking, intimacy. We find God not just in the synagogue but in the home, the house of study and acts of kindness, in community, hospitality and wherever we mend some of the fractures of our human world. No religion has ever held the human person in higher regard. We are not tainted by original sin. We are not a mere bundle of selfish genes. We are not an inconsequential life form lost in the vastness of the universe. We are the being on whom God has set his image and likeness. We are the people God has chosen to be his partners in the work of creation. We are the nation God married at Sinai with the Torah as our marriage contract. We are the people God called on to be his witnesses. We are the ambassadors of heaven in the country called earth. We are not better, or worse, than others. We are simply different, because God values difference whereas for most of the time, human beings have sought to eliminate difference by imposing one faith, one regime or one empire on all humanity. Ours is one of the few faiths to hold that the righteous of all nations have a share in heaven because of what they do on earth.

Choose life. Nothing sounds easier yet nothing has proved more difficult over time. Instead, people choose substitutes for life. They pursue wealth, possessions, status, power, fame, and to these gods they make the supreme sacrifice, realizing too late that true wealth is not what you own but what you are thankful for, that the highest status is not to care about status, and that influence is more powerful than power. That is why, though few faiths are more demanding, most Jews at most times have stayed faithful to Judaism, living Jewish lives, building Jewish homes and continuing the Jewish story. That is why, with a faith as unshakeable as it has proved true, Moses was convinced that "Not with you alone do I make this covenant and this oath...but also with those who are not with us today." His gift to us is that through worshipping something so much greater than ourselves we become so much greater than we would otherwise have been. Why Judaism? Because there is no more challenging way of choosing life.



**Great Neck Yoetzet Halacha Lisa Septimus**  
 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: 516.415.1111  
 Email: [greatneckyoetzet@gmail.com](mailto:greatneckyoetzet@gmail.com).  
 All conversations and emails are kept confidential.



**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**  
**Dov Sassoon, President**  
**Harold Domnitch, Chairman of the Board**  
**Lisa Septimus, Yoetzet Halacha 516-415-1111**

## Schedule of Services Yomim Noraim 5777

### Sunday, Oct. 2 Erev Rosh Hashana

Selichot: 6:30/7:30 am  
Shacharit: 7:30/8:30 am  
Candle Lighting: 6:16 pm  
Mincha: 6:15 pm

### Monday, Oct. 3 Rosh Hashana I

Shacharit (all minyanim): 8:00 am  
Mincha: 6:15 pm  
Candle Lighting after: 7:13 pm

### Tuesday, Oct. 4 Rosh Hashana II

Shacharit (all minyanim): 8:00 am  
Mincha: 6:15 pm  
Yom Tov Ends: 7:21 pm

### Wednesday, Oct. 5 Tzom Gedalyah

Fast Begins: 5:35 am  
Shacharit: 6:20/7:45 am  
Slichot: 7:15 am  
Mincha: 6:05 pm  
Fast Ends: 7:03 pm

### Thursday, Oct. 6

Shacharit: 6:20/7:45 am  
Slichot: 7:15 am  
Mincha: 6:10 pm

### Friday, Oct. 7

Shacharit: 6:30/7:45 am  
Slichot: 7:15 am  
Candle Lighting: 6:08 pm  
Mincha: 6:10 pm

**Hear the candidates at  
Great Neck Synagogue**

**share their views on  
Foreign Policy in the Middle East**



**Tom Suozzi (D)**  
October 1st

**Jack Martins (R)**  
October 8th

**Following Shabbat Morning Services**

**New York's 3rd District  
Congressional Race**

### ROSH HASHANA CARDS

Sisterhood is selling beautiful Rosh Hashana cards designed by Celia Lemonik, 10 cards for \$25.00, \$3.00 per card. Call Judy Lillien 516-487-6845 or pick up cards in the synagogue office.



# Erev Rosh HaShana Youth Programs at GNS

Sunday October 2  
10:45-12:45pm

## Sports & Fun Games with Coaches

Grades 1-4

NSHA Lunchroom

\$18 per person

\$40 per family



Includes pizza lunch

## Fun Bus & Crafts with Morah Zehava

Ages 3-6

Braun Youth Center

\$18 per person

\$40 per family



Includes pizza lunch

(please contact Dr. Mike- [michaelatlaspsyd@gmail.com](mailto:michaelatlaspsyd@gmail.com) for any dietary needs)

Great Neck Synagogue  
KOL NIDRE FOOD DRIVE

*Please fill this bag with:*

**CHEERIOS, TUNA FISH, PASTA,  
COFFEE, TEA, PEANUT BUTTER,  
DRIED BEANS, GRAPE JUICE,  
SOUP, CRACKERS, DIAPERS**

And return it to:

***Great Neck Synagogue***  
**ON or BEFORE Kol Nidre Night**

**“Surely this is the fast I choose....**

**Share your food with the hungry”**

**Isaiah**

**FOOD WILL GO TO ONEG SHABBOS  
& OTHER FOOD PANTRIES**

**THANKS FOR HELPING THOSE IN NEED**



AMF Sheridan Lanes  
199 E. Jericho Turnpike  
Mineola, NY

**Come  
join the  
fun!**



**Back by Popular Demand**

# **GNS Team Bowling**

**Stop, Drop & Bowl  
Saturday night November 12  
7:30 - 10:00 pm**

**Prizes for Top Teams & Top Scores  
as well as the "Rabbi Rematch"**

**Call the shul office or go to [gns.org](http://gns.org) to make  
your reservation today!**

**Brought to you by the New Members Committee  
Debbie Chadow, Nadine Shatzkes & Katie Lichter**

**Adults Only!!**



GREAT NECK SYNAGOGUE



TEMPLE ISRAEL OF GREAT NECK  
presents



**Early Bird Prices until October 13**

Members of Sponsoring Congregations Only: \$18  
Non-Members: \$24  
\*Preferred Choice Seating: \$30

Preferred Choice  
Seating Open to All  
(choice of first four rows)

\*Entails Post Performance Reception  
Refreshments to be served

**Prices after October 13**

Members of Sponsoring Congregations Only: \$25  
Non-Members: \$35  
\*Preferred Choice Seating: \$40

**To Purchase Tickets**

Temple Beth-El contact - Debbie Eisenberg at [debbie@templebethel.org](mailto:debbie@templebethel.org) or 516-487-1900  
Great Neck Synagogue contact - Debbie Silver at [debbie@greatnecksynagogue.org](mailto:debbie@greatnecksynagogue.org) or 516-487-0100  
Temple Israel of Great Neck contact - Josh Engel at [josh@templeisrael.org](mailto:josh@templeisrael.org) or 516-482-2900  
Non-Members can contact Ariel Engel at 516-482-2900  
[www.tbethel.org](http://www.tbethel.org)

GREAT NECK SYNAGOGUE  
MEN'S CLUB & SISTERHOOD  
PRESENT

# COMEDY

SATURDAY NIGHT, NOV 19 NIGHT



GNS'S OWN  
TALI REISS MC



SHERRY DAVEY



JOHNNY LAMPERT



DR. HARRY FREEDMAN

STARTS AT 7PM - COLBEH RESTAURANT  
MEN'S CLUB & SISTERHOOD MEMBERS  
COUPLES \$130 SINGLES \$65  
NON MEMBERS COUPLES \$150 SINGLES \$75  
SPONSORSHIPS \$180



RSVP HILLY MILUN 516.504.0320 or MARK FRIEDMAN 516.384.5491



## Hoshana Rabbah Lecture Rabbi Peysach Krohn



**Saturday Night, Oct. 22  
8:30 pm GNS Sukkah**

**Rekindling the Inner Flame**

Great Neck Synagogue 26 Old Mill Rd.  
Open to the Entire Community



## MOTHER/DAUGHTER BAT MITZVAH MISSION

Led by Rebbetzin Lisa Septimus

NOVEMBER 21- 28, 2016

Inbal/Jerusalem & Dan Accadia/Herzeliya



**MISSION PRICE INCLUDES:**

- Roundtrip Air with EL-AL & transfers in Israel with group flights
- 3 Nights Inbal hotel in Jerusalem Includes: daily breakfast
- 1 Night Dan Accadia Herzeliya Includes: daily breakfast
- Shabbat at Emunah's Bet Elazraki Children's Home
- Amazing Chesed program
- Touring & Gratuities

**AIR/LAND PACKAGE\***

\$ 2575 per person double occupancy  
\$ 290 child under 18 as 3rd in room  
\$ 550 single supplement  
\*Includes fuel charge and airport tax  
Land only=deduct \$900 p/p

**EL-AL GROUP FLIGHTS\* (SPACE IS LIMITED)**

Depart: Monday Nov 21 JFK/TLV LY008 @ 11:50PM - 5:20PM  
Return: Monday Nov 28 TLV/JFK LY001 @ 12:45AM - 6:00AM

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Jerusalem Old City, Ir David, Pantry Packers, Zumba with Shaiva, Gush Ezion, Migdal Oz, Pina Chama, Yad Lakashish, Hike with One Family Fund, Shabbat @ Bet Elazraki, Music at Migdal Onr, Blind Museum, shiurim and so much more...

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL THE EMUNAH MISSIONS DEPARTMENT  
212-564-9045 debbie.x321@emunah.org or rebbetzin lisa.septimus@aol.com

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

RABBI POLAKOFF'S SHABBOS DRASHA THROUGH 5776 IS DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF **PINCHAS BEN YOSEPH** FOR OTHER SUCH OPPORTUNITIES PLEASE CONTACT HOWARD WOLF 212-843-4668

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

## YOUTH SHABBAT

Next **Shabbat, October 8th** is our annual Youth Shabbat. If interested in participating, contact Rabbi Jensen ASAP.

## THANK YOU

Thank you to **Lauren Abhesera** for hosting the Women's Lecture Series this past week. May her father's neshama have an aliyah through our learning.

## CHAVERIM

To all our friends at Chaverim, we wish you a Shana Tova and we will see you next on **Wednesday, Nov. 2.**

## THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

We want to thank our SCOPE magazine sponsors this year – nearly 70 of them – which is a record number! Their names are listed on page 9 of the recent Rosh Hashanah edition of SCOPE magazine. We are extremely grateful for their financial support which is critical to being able to continue to publish SCOPE magazine for our membership. It is not too late to be a sponsor for the remaining issues of SCOPE magazine this year (Chanukah and Pesach issues) – please contact Diane Rein [drein@verizon.net](mailto:drein@verizon.net) to add your name to the sponsorship list! If you enjoy reading SCOPE magazine – please be a sponsor! Thank you very much!

## MEN'S CLUB EVENTS

**November 6:** Der Yiddisher Mikado, Yiddish Opera in conjunction with Temple Beth-El and Temple Israel.

**November 19:** Comedy Night at Colbeh Restaurant. 7:00 pm RSVP today at shul office, Hilly Milun or Mark Friedman.

## GNS TEAM BOWLING NIGHT

Join us on **Saturday Night, November 12.** Call shul office or go on [gns.org](http://gns.org) to make reservations today.

## MIKVAH HOURS FOR MEN FOR YOM TOV

The North Shore Mikvah will be open for men only on Erev Rosh Hashanah, Oct. 2nd, and Erev Yom Kippur, Oct. 11th, from 5AM-3PM. Men must please bring their own towels. Suggested donation \$36. Sponsorships: Platinum \$500 Gold \$360 Silver \$180 Sponsor \$100.

## BOOK SALE

Rabbi Dovid M. Cohen's new book "We're Almost There: Living with Patience, Perseverance & Purpose" can be purchased at the GNS office this week for \$20 a copy.

## UPCOMING EVENTS AT GREAT NECK SYNAGOGUE

Oct. 1: Tom Suozzi Following Shabbat Services  
Oct. 2: Youth Events: Sports & Fun Bus  
Oct 8: Youth Shabbat  
Oct 8: Jack Martins Following Shabbat Services

## MAZAL TOVS & COMMUNITY NEWS

**Mazal Tov** to **Miriam Oshry** and **Dr. Evan Oshry** on the Bar Mitzvah of their son, **Aaron. Mazal Tov** to the grandparents **Estie & Larry Bernstein.**

**Mazal Tov** to **Richard & Judy Lillien** on the birth of a granddaughter, **Tirtzah Ahuva** born to their children, **Andrew & Rebecca Levitan Lillien.**

## WOMEN'S SHOES GEMACH

Sara's Shoe Store (Gemach): Collecting new and gently worn ladies shoes for a "store" to be held in Great Neck and in the Far Rockaway/5 Towns area.

Email [sarasshoegemach@gmail.com](mailto:sarasshoegemach@gmail.com) or call Ariella Lunzer 516.241.1086 to donate or to "shop" (by appointment only).

## CHESED PROJECT FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

Great opportunity for Bar/Bat Mitzvah Chesed Project to raise money to buy wheelchairs for disabled children! The Israel Sports Center for the Disabled will be in NY in November and would love to be part of your Chesed project. To learn more, visit [afiscd.org/mitzvah/](http://afiscd.org/mitzvah/) or email [Reuben.Askowitz@gmail.com](mailto:Reuben.Askowitz@gmail.com)

*The Ben-Sorek family extends its gratitude to Rabbi Polakoff, Rabbi Lichter, Cantor Kron, and Jerry Weinstein who aided in the preparation for the funeral of our beloved and sainted wife and mother, Rahel Ben-Sorek, z"l, and to the multitude of members of the Great Neck Synagogue who provided us with bountiful food for the shiva week, for the huge number of condolence visitors, for the comfort and consolation messages offered to us. The warmth and the love of the GNS members is unbelievable!! We are enriched by their generosity and their many blessings in Rahel's memory. With heartfelt thanks to all, we wish blessings of good health and long life and a good, sweet New Year. L'shana tova.*

## Y A H R Z E I T

### Saturday, 28 Elul

Louis Goldstein for Nathan Goldstein  
Ron Malen for Schmuel ben Pesachya

### Sunday, 29 Elul

Susan Mayer for Frieda Abramson  
Zachary Dicker for Mintza Dicker  
Edward Parver for Harry Parver

### Monday, 1 Tishrei

Charles Berger for Ellen Ruth Berger  
Anne Gold for Rebecca Feinstein  
Abraham Glasman for Arthur Glasman  
Chava Shalmon for Abraham Grinszpan  
George Miner for Kaminer Irving Miner  
Bijan Niknam for Avraham Rouhollah Niknam

### Tuesday, 2 Tishrei

Vicki Maher for Herschel Brzezinski  
Edward Jutkowitz for Herman Jutkowitz  
Brian Smith for Ira Wallace

### Wednesday, 3 Tishrei

Leon Fuks for Sarah Fuks  
Hillel Milun for Lynne Milun  
Charlene Milun for Lynne Milun  
Jack Wachstock for Lazar Wachstock

### Thursday, 4 Tishrei

Elizabeth Lieberman for Sarah Fox  
Sharon Goldwyn for Jennie Goldwyn  
William Helmreich for Sarah Helmreich  
Judith Weinstein for Raoul Kloogman  
Milton Mitzner for Sam Mitzner  
Howard Wolf for Herman Wolf