



Agudas Achim Newsletter

August 2023

E-mail: agudasachim@hvc.rr.com or Telephone (845) 439-3600

Save the date!

Friday, August 4th 7:15 pm Gather in person at Agudas Achim or on Zoom
7:15 pm Levins will open the service with 15 minutes of music
7:30 pm Levins begin welcoming the Sabbath* live and via Zoom*

Rabbi's Message



THE CRISIS IN ISRAEL, NOW

In August, during Elul, the last month of the Hebrew Calendar, before the High Holydays, I prefer to consider with you, spiritual matters. Elul is a time of reflection on the year past. A time to review mistakes and opportunities lost. A time of renewal, in anticipation of the possibilities of the year ahead. In Elul, Jewish tradition encourages each of us to be thoughtful about the way that our life is going, and to be circumspect about changes we might make in the year ahead. It's a time of spiritual reflection.

But this year, as we are about to enter Elul, a crisis is being fomented in the Land of Israel that will damage both the Jewish State, and the Jewish Family throughout the world.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's plan to overhaul the country's judiciary has sparked unprecedented protests across Israel. After a brief pause, hundreds of thousands are back in the streets. Adjusted for population difference, this would be similar to tens of millions of protesters on the streets here in the U.S. Why are they

protesting? Though the State of Israel which celebrates its 75th anniversary this year has no constitution, it's based on a parliamentary system similar to that of England, where the courts, especially the Supreme Court, maintain democracy through a balance of power.

The demonstrators in Israel, and large segments of the military, are objecting to the fact that in Israel's parliamentary system a very small segment (in this case the nationalists and the ultra-orthodox which comprise only 3% of the electorate) can insist on their agenda, or threaten to leave the ruling coalition, bringing down the government. With only three percent, the extremist can push through their agenda which begins with weakening the courts and giving them authority over large swaths of the government itself.

The fear is that the rights of all Israelis (including non-orthodox Jews as well as Arab citizens, will be diminished) as may be the prospects for a two-nation settlement, as may be the possibility of a lasting, if imperfect peace. Moreover, citizens object to the ultra-orthodox who generally do not serve in the military (which is mandatory for all other citizens/men and women.) The extremists are generally unemployed on or underemployed, preferring to study, and generally are on a form of welfare, thus paying no taxes in a country where citizens pay the highest taxes in the western world. The objections are this minority now has the potential power to change the nature of the entire country.

The national entity of Israel is a modern state that takes care of the physical welfare of all its citizens from national security to social welfare along with all the benefits of modern life. But Israel itself also belongs to

the worldwide Jewish Family. Our family.

In 1948, with Jews in real trouble in the displaced persons camps in Europe, and other places, American Jews especially, along to a lesser extent, other Jewish communities raised the money to transport the holocaust survivors and to maintain them in the Land of Israel. They were all part of the Jewish Family.

When the Jews of Yemen were in trouble, an airlift organized by the American CIA, and underwritten again, by the Jewish Family moved them to Israel, the Jewish State.

So, it was with Russian Jewry when four million Israelis absorbed a million Russian Jewish Immigrants, again with financial support from the world Jewish family. And when the Jews of Ethiopia were about to be destroyed another airlift (ironically, again organized by the CIA) took them to Israel. We here, and elsewhere in the West raised funds to integrate them into Israeli society, because we are all one family. Israel is ours as well. Finally, it is no accident that Israel is the number one recipient of U.S. grants and military aid.

Extremist have told world Jewry that we have no stake in Israel. But Israel is an everlasting part of the world Jewish family. we are not here only to write checks. While we are dedicated American citizens with a love of our country, Israel remains part of the Jewish soul, the Jewish family. Jerusalem, the everlasting capitol is ours as well.

Some say that Israel may be close to civil war. We pray that this is not so, and that a peaceful way to preserve democracy may yet be found. We pray that Israel remains safe from her enemies while this threat to democracy lessens her security. We pray that our brothers and sisters there are not pushed into a theocracy that might become as fundamentalist as that of Iran.

Elul will come and go this year, and amidst this threat and in this time of danger, we will yet find a way to prepare for this New Year's High Holydays. Even during the Yom Kippur War, Jews found time to pray for both physical safety, as well as the life of the soul. May the entire Jewish Family find renewal in the year ahead.

Love
Rabbi Fred Pomerantz

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

Watching Agudas Achim grow is encouraging and exciting. Just this month we have purchased new sound equipment so that everyone on zoom will be able to clearly hear the same wonderful sounds of the Levins that those of us that attend live get to hear. And, we had so much fun at the Craft Beer and *spirituality* event where we were able to spend time relaxing eating, drinking, meeting new friends and just enjoying each other's company. (We'll be gathering again at The Smoke Joint - August 26.) In addition, we've welcomed some new members and have recently received some very generous donations. And there is more...our 100th anniversary year is coming up and that is a lot to celebrate. To honor that milestone, the Livingston Manor Trout Parade Committee has asked that we be the grand Marshalls next year! Mark your calendar for June 8th. Thank you to everyone from around the country that helps makes Agudas Achim such a rewarding congregation. And, for those that have not found their way to enjoy the experiences, the whole point is that we continue to work to be here when you are ready!

Please look below. There is information regarding some fun events, some services and information regarding the High Holidays and Yizkor memorial opportunities. Please check and be sure to participate when and where you can. Each person supporting Agudas Achim helps insure our future in their own way.

L'Shalom

Judy Siegel, President

845-798-0783

Jewish Education News

If you have been in temple or on Zoom when the parokhet, the curtain in front of the ark is drawn back, and the doors are open, you have seen that inside our ark are several Torah scrolls. Some are originally from Agudas Achim and others came from other congregations when they closed. In those cases, we became the custodians of those scrolls, a sacred task. Torah scrolls are handwritten in Hebrew without any vowels, by a sofer, a Torah scribe. Everything that makes up a Torah was alive at one point, from the parchment that the words are written on to the thread with which each of the sheets of parchment are sewn together, to the wooden handles, called Eitz Chaim. It takes a sofer an entire year to write and assemble a Torah.

The Torah is referred to as an Eitz Chaim as well, a Tree of Life. We read in the Siddur at the end of the Torah service, when the Torah is returned to the ark, "it is a Tree of Life to those who hold fast to it, and all its supporters are happy. Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace." (Proverbs 3:18). The Tree of Life talked about here is not the physical scroll, but the teachings contained within it. Those teachings along with the narratives they come from help us understand our history, our people and ourselves. They teach us how to live in a civilized society. Torah teaches us to love God and each other, and to treat each other with chesed, kindness. We read about the many gifts we received from God in the Torah. We were given the gift of Shabbat, a day of rest, we were given Torah at Mount Sinai and we were given laws to live by.

In our yearly Torah reading cycle we are now in the final book of the Torah, Devarim, Deuteronomy. (There are 5 books Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.) The words 'love' and 'heart' are mentioned more in this book than all the other 4 books before it, combined. It is in this book that we get the Sh'ma and the V'ahavtah, our prayer of love for God, which we read at every service. The Sh'ma, the watchword of our faith declares that we have one God, and God is one with us, in love. In the V'ahavtah we are commanded to teach these words to our children, and we do. Join us as Sammy Maout is called to the Torah on August 5th as he becomes a Bar Mitzvah. Educating our young is of utmost importance for the continuation of our faith and our people.

Our Zoom Hebrew School for the 2023-24/5784 school year will begin in September, where we will teach our children about our people's journey through the stories that we read in the Torah, and they will explore the relevance of these narratives in their own lives. Torah is a living Torah, it is an Eitz Chaim, always teaching us how we can live better lives today. Our students will learn to read Hebrew, say our prayers and blessings, experience our holidays, and so much more. I look forward to speaking with any family who wishes to talk to me about enrolling their child(ren) in our Hebrew School.

Shalom u'Verachot ~ Peace and Blessings
Rabbi Tobi Innerfield
Director of Education

UPCOMING SERVICES

***Services continue to be virtual throughout the year.**

Email virtualshabbat@gmail.com for the link. In additions, services are in person from May through the High Holidays

Friday, August 4th 7:15 PM Gather In person at Agudas Achim or on zoom

7:30 PM Levins begin welcoming the Sabbath* live and via zoom*

Sept FIRST FRIDAY SHABBAT SERVICE WILL BE DEFERRED TO SEPTEMBER 15

Rosh Hashanah Services

Friday, September 15	Ere of Rosh Hashanah
Saturday, September 16	Rosh Hashanah Morning Services

Yom Kippur Services

Sunday, September 24	Kol Nidre
Monday, September 25	Morning Services
	Yizkor
	Afternoon Services
	Community Break Fast

CONGRATULATIONS Rabbi Innerfield

On behalf of the Agudas Achim community, we want to congratulate Tobi Innerfield on completing her Rabbinical training and being ordained as a Rabbi. This is quite an accomplishment, and we are very proud of Tobi and look forward to watching her path continue to grow.

CRAFT BEER AND SPIRIT UALITY - August 26th - 3:30 pm -5:00 pm

Join us at The Smoke Joint (630 Old Route 17, *Livingston Manor*) as we move toward the end of Shabbat with some great music presented by Ira and Julia Levin and sampling of some of the best local beer and spirits.

This is a free event building community awareness and connections. Stop on by!

HIGH HOLIDAY 5784

YIZKOR

Yizkor means remember. The Yizkor service at Yom Kippur is an opportunity to honor those that have passed by giving *zedakah* [charity] in their memory, on the theory that the good deeds of the survivors elevate the souls of the departed.

We will once again provide an opportunity to have the names of any of your loved ones who have passed scrolled on our zoom feed during Yizkor. Please send the names that you would like listed with a donation to:

Congregation Agudas Achim, PO Box 714, Livingston Manor, NY 12758

Suggested Yahrzeit Donation(s)

\$18 ____ \$36 ____ \$100 ____ \$180 ____ \$250 ____ \$360 ____
\$500 ____ \$750 ____ \$1000 ____ Other \$ ____

Names inscribed on the memorial boards in the sanctuary are read out loud during Yizkor.

BREAK THE FAST WITH YOUR COMMUNITY!

September 25th: Community Break Fast is back! Bring your family, join old friends, make new ones. Plan on a great meal downstairs after Yom Kippur afternoon services.

More information will follow in a separate email.

NEWSLETTERS; Limited Hard Copies

The cost of mail continues to rise and, as such, we are limiting the number of hard copy mailings we provide each year. If you have an email address on record you will continue to see the monthly newsletter in your inbox. If you want to be sure to receive a hard copy either email us at virtualshabbat@gmail.com or write us a letter to Congregation Agudas Achim, PO Box 714, Livingston Manor, NY 12758. Hard copies will continue to be sent monthly to those that do not have an email address on file.

SORRY WE MISSED IT!

Happy Anniversary to Paul and Susan Schiff (June 27) and Happy Birthday to Paul (July 3). Their family has been a part of Congregation Agudas Achim for decades and somehow these milestones weren't on the list. We look forward to wishing them well for many years to come.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR June 8, 2024

In honor of our 100th anniversary, we have been given the honor of serving as grand marshals of the 2024 Trout Parade!! Be sure to mark June 8, 2024, as Livingston Manor day and come be a part of the festivities!

ZOOM IMPROVEMENTS

Thank you, Ira and Julia Levin and Max Siegel, for the time and knowledge that you have provided to help make the sound at the synagogue the best it can be. Thanks also to Steve Innerfield for your continuing efforts to provide a zoom experience that will work for people around the country. We are continuing to work to provide the best experience we can for those that attend services in person and those that are on zoom. Few things are as important to the leadership as the attendance of those around the country. If you have compliments, complaints or suggestions, please don't hesitate to reach out!

YOUR PATIENCE IS SO APPRECIATED

We are, mostly, volunteers and there are many of us doing our best to get it all right—the life event notifications, the dues notices, the acknowledgements, the zoom services, the Onegs and much more. Your patience is appreciated when we miss. Many of you let us know gently, some not so much. Just keep in mind that a lot of effort goes into making it right. We appreciate your gentle understanding.

JOIN US IN ISRAEL!

CD Trips, LLC (Owned and operated by Gary and Judy Siegel) is running a trip to Israel in December 5-14, 2023. They will donate a portion of each ticket booked by anyone that mentions Agudas Achim to them at the time of booking. Check out the trip at cdtrips.com and click Iconic Israel

Message from the Levins

Thanks so much to everyone who joined us for our first, in person, "SPIRITual Havdalah Experience!" It was wonderful to see so many familiar faces that we haven't seen since the beginning of the month, or maybe even the beginning of the pandemic. We joined together and greeted the new faces that were drawn to the festivities and, hopefully, they too, will one day become familiar. It was a summer highlight, and we are already looking forward to next time on August 26th. Much mazel to Judy Siegel and all who helped organize this, as well as our fabulous hosts, Jen and the Smoke Joint. Thanks to you all for circling round and singing with us. Our voices coming together lifts up more than we know.

Our August 5th Bar Mitzvah - Sammy (Samuel) Maout

Sammy is 13 years old and lives in Paris, France. He is bilingual and loves sailing. He also loves his dog, Simon. Sammy is looking forward to his Bar Mitzvah at Congregation Agudas Achim this summer.



Happy Anniversary

Ray Croney & Hope Blecher 8/8
Neil & Lea Schwartz 8/23
Mike & Wendy Uretsky 9/10

Happy Birthday

Steve White 8/7
Kathie Sachs 8/11
Randy Katz 8/13
Natasha Hirschhorn 8/14
Linda Berkowicz 8/22
Lynn Skolnick 8/26
Suzanne White 8/29
Karisa Yoli 8/30
Rabbi Tobi Innerfield 9/3

Thank you for your donation!

David Schneyer

Cemetery Fund

Tedda & Ron Lindeman

In honor of Tobi Innerfield's Ordination

Daniel & Gayle Gropper
Louisa Young

Tzedakah Fund

Sara & Charles Herbstman