



Agudas Achim Newsletter

August 2022

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

Save the date

August 5, 2022

Gather at 7:00

7:30 PM Services

Levins begin welcoming the Sabbath*

LIVE SERVICES beginning at 7:30 PM

Rabbi's Message

One of the old borscht belt comics, used to tell this profoundly theological story: "Schwartz goes to Temple to talk to God." He said "I go to Temple to talk to Schwartz." That's it. A nutshell of contemporary Jewish philosophy as influenced by the most impactful theologian of our times, Martin Buber.

Martin Buber was an Austrian Jewish and Israeli philosopher best known for his philosophy of dialogue, a form of existentialism centered on the distinction between the I-Thou relationship and the I-It relationship. Buber taught that to relate to a person in authenticity, not to see an individual as an objectified "other," but to strive to see and encounter his or her humanity, self, vulnerability, essence, was the basis for connected interpersonal relationship. In German he called this essential relationship, Ich-du. It was translated into English as I-Thou. Not, I-You, but the word thou was used to create an image of the other person as having a holy essence upon which a holy-esque relationship could be created.

If we consider another with whom we engage as an object, as a thing, as trader or consumer only, the connection was call an I-It relationship by Buber. He wrote that most of our interactions occur on that level. He taught that Jewish teaching urges us to strive for that elevated level of I-Thou.

Schwartz went to shul to talk to God. The comic went to shul to talk to Schwartz.

Schwartz and the comedian seemed to have had what

Buber described as an I-Thou relationship. This often happens among members of a synagogue community. It is one of the hallmarks of the Agudas Achim family. Together, we have celebrated life cycle events together and shared the simcha, the celebration of fellow congregants.

I have in my memory, I have officiated, in the midst of the congregation, baby naming's, Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremonies, Confirmations, Conversions where seekers chose to join the Jewish People. There have been weddings shared. We have prayed for healing for each other and for friends and relatives. I have seen tears in the eyes of Agudas Achim members as we prayed in gratitude for ones who have returned to the congregation from the hospital. I have seen tears in the eyes of members beyond the family when I conducted a funeral at our house of prayer, and for the Yahrzeit of those we recall, lovingly.

In joy we danced and sang at Simchat Torah and Chanukah and Purim. The blessing of the congregation is that newer members are immediately absorbed into the Fellowship and Fellowship of our congregation. We, as in most synagogue communities, see and feel the Thou in the oldest and youngest members. Buber taught that there is a holiness in entering into an I-Thou connection with another human being. In seeing their uniqueness, their warmth, their strengths and weaknesses while still affirming the connection. Such is congregation. At Agudas Achim, ourselves and for the guests we welcome on Shabbat and on the High Holydays. We feel the connection when we sit together in our historic pews. Or greet one another in our social hall.

The comic went to talk to Schwartz, but Schwartz went to talk to God.

This is the second part of Martin Buber's teaching. It's especially important in the summertime when traditionally, Jews begin a personal spiritual inventory in preparation for the High Holydays. Buber urged each to seek an I-Thou relationship with God.

Don't think of Adonai as a distant thing or force that one either accepts or denies. Not to believe in or to reject. Rather to attempt to pursue some sense, some feeling, some understanding of a personal relationship with what the Jewish Mystics called the Unending Source. To search for the Thou of God's presence.

To encounter God as an It, is to objectify the Holy Presence by embracing only a God concept that we learned as children. One that did not grow with us as our intellect, and imagination, and world view grew. Buber taught that the spirit of God beckons each of us to see the Divine Force, not as an It, but as a Thou.

There are many names for God in our tradition. There is an infinite possibility to find our own personal and private connection with the Holy Other of our prayerbook and our Tradition. Our Tradition teaches that the God of Abraham and Sarah was experienced differently by Isaac and Rebecca, just as Jacob, and Rachel, and Leah sought their own understanding of God.

Just as Schwartz had his own I-Thou relationship with God. Perhaps when the comedian sat in shul talking to Schwartz, he too, learned to talk to God as a friend, feeling the holiness.

As we gather, in our synagogue, or on Zoom, may we as well, continue to experience all of those holy connections.

My family and I look forward to seeing you, and being with you at our August fifth service.

Join Us

Love
Rabbi Fred Pomerantz

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

On August 5th, after services we will dedicate the stage downstairs in memory of Allan Schneider. In 1957 Allan graduated from Livingston Manor Central School. He went on to earn a B.Ch.E. from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and an M.S. from Pennsylvania State University. After a year working at the Dupont Experimental Station in Wilmington, Delaware, he enrolled at the University of California at Berkeley, where he earned a Ph.D. in 1968. Allan then completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel, was a staff fellow at the National Institutes of Health, an associate member at the Sloan Kettering Institute in New York City and then joined the Department of Pharmacology and Neuroscience at Albany Medical College as a professor. There he taught medical and graduate students and conducted research on molecular mechanisms of neuroendocrine secretion. Sadly, Allan passed away in 2019.

Throughout his life, Allan held a special place in his heart for Livingston Manor and particularly Agudas Achim. He brought his bride, Mary-Jane with him and introduced her to the Livingston Manor community. Every year they travel from their home in the Albany area and would attend High Holiday services. Throughout those years they developed and maintained relationships with members of the community. When Allan passed, Mary-Jane and her children generously chose to honor his memory with a substantial donation to Congregation Agudas Achim.

Please join us for this very special event on August 5th. Agudas Achim cannot maintain and certainly cannot grow without a community that gives. We hope to be here for generations and the best way to ensure that is through the generosity of our members. We are deeply indebted to the Schneider family and to all who provide us with the sustenance to continue as best as you are able. We absolutely cannot continue without you.

L' Shalom,

Judy Siegel, President
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Jewish Education News

Smack in the middle of our beautiful Catskills summer falls a commemoration day on the Jewish calendar called Tisha B'Av, the 9th day of the Hebrew month Av. This day marks the destruction of the ancient Temple in Jerusalem, both the first temple in 586 BCE (before common era) and the 2nd temple in 70 CE (common era). [Side note: Jewish people do not use BC and AD because they are referring to time centering around Jesus' life. Instead, we, as well as the academic and scientific community use the non-religious BCE and CE.] Tisha B'Av also marks several tragedies in Jewish history including the decree that during the time of Moses, the Israelites wandered the desert for 40 years before entering the holy land, to Jews being expelled from Spain in 1492 by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. [For those interested in reading more on the expulsion from Spain, please reference Joseph Telushkin's book "Jewish Literacy", pgs. 193-195, or by going to <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-spanish-expulsion-1492>.] Tisha B'Av is traditionally a day of total fasting. Jewish law says that the preceding three weeks leading up to Tisha B'Av, Jews limit rejoicing.

We move from a day of grief and mourning to a day of joy, love and celebration. Six days later, on the 15th of Av, (this year on August 12th), we celebrate Tu B'Av, a little known mini-holiday as the Jewish day of love, with only slight resemblance to Valentine's Day. What? You might be saying, a Jewish Valentine's Day? Well... yes, kind of. The 15th of Av is a full moon, and often full moons are connected with romance and love. Just think about all the songs and movies written about the "light of the silvery moon". This full moon in ancient times, by some sources going back to the time of the 2nd temple, served as a match-making day for unmarried women. However, in the modern State of Israel, it has evolved to be a day of romance and love, with cards and flowers. Some Israeli communities promote festivals with singing and dancing. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks Z"L reminds us: "Love transforms us. It makes us beautiful in the eyes of those who love us. It makes us real."

Hebrew School

We have been preparing for another wonderful school year. Morah Mindy and Mr. Chiger are eager to welcome their students. We have interactive programs for the students, new family programs, holiday celebrations and more. Classes will begin September 13th. To those families in our congregation who have younger children and are not registered in our school, you are missing a wonderful Jewish opportunity for your child to learn about their heritage in a warm interactive environment. Please speak to me, so we can work together to make Hebrew School a wonderful, meaningful, successful learning environment for your child. Morah Mindy and I look forward to welcoming all our students and their families.

Shalom u'Verachah ~ Peace and Blessings
Tobi Innerfield, Director of Education
tinnerfield@gmail.com

HIGH HOLIDAYS

Rosh Hashanah begins September Sunday evening September 25th. As per our tradition we will hold services that evening and the next morning. We expect to have those services in person and via zoom.

Yom Kippur begins Tuesday, October 4th. As per our tradition we will begin the services with Kol Nidre on Tuesday evening and will hold services the next morning and afternoon. We expect to have those services in person and via zoom.

Happy Anniversary

Hope Blecher & Ray Croney 8/8
Neil & Lea Schwartz 8/23

Happy Birthday

Hope Blecher 8/1
Kathie Sachs 8/11
Randy Katz 8/13
Linda Berkowicz 8/22
Lynn Skolnick 8/26
Karisa Yoli 8/30
Tobi Innerfield 9/3

UPCOMING SHABBAT SERVICES

*Due to ongoing covid concerns the decision regarding live attendance of Rabbi Pomerantz and our Cantorial Duo will remain fluid.

August 5, 2022

Gather at 7:00

7:30 PM Services

Levins begin welcoming the Sabbath

LIVE SERVICES beginning at 7:30 PM

A zoom link will be provided for anyone that cannot or
Prefers not to attend in person. HINT: it is the same every
month

POST SERVICE DEDICATION: please join us as we honor the
Schneider family and dedicate the stage downstairs in honor of
Allan and Joseph Schneider.

September 2, 2022

The format of this service preparing for the holidays is still
being determined

September 11, 2022

SAVE THE DATE! Join us as we participate in the daffodil
project (see below). This beautiful project in memory of the 1.5
million children who lost their lives during the Holocaust.

DAFFODIL PROJECT

The Daffodil Project aspires to build a living Holocaust remembrance by planting 1.5 million daffodils around the world in memory of the 1.5 million children who perished in the Holocaust and in support for children suffering in humanitarian crises in the world today. We will gather to plant a bed of 250 daffodils on the lawn of Agudas Achim. Every year the beautiful yellow flowers will bloom and welcome spring while we remember those lost and those that still need our help.

COVID PROTOCOLS

Covid concerns change regularly and the necessary protocols need to change with them. While not required, we ask that those attending services in person be considerate of those that have health concerns and be vaccinated.

We will require that everyone wear a mask during services. NOTE: Due to ongoing covid concerns the decision regarding live attendance of Rabbi Pomerantz and our Cantorial Duo will remain fluid.

DONATIONS

Our in-person contact (and thus our fundraising efforts) is limited. Our philosophy has always been to maintain low dues and keep an open-door policy so that anyone can join us in person when available or now virtually. But that philosophy depends on generous donations from people like you. Please consider donating to Congregation Agudas Achim ... no amount is too large or too small! You can donate and designate it to one of the following:

Security
Building fund
Cemetery fund
Endowment fund
Mailing costs
Mitzvah fund
Tzedakah fund

or consider making a donation in honor or memory of a friend, a loved one or someone you care about with a lasting memorial donation by purchasing an honorary:

Chair \$36
Rosh Hashanah Prayer Book \$36
Yom Kippur Prayer Book \$36

BEST WAY TO DONATE:

By Check: mail to PO Box 714, Livingston Manor, NY 12758

By Credit Card website (congregationagudasachim.org) and click donate now

MEMBERSHIP

Thank you to those of you that have become members or maintained your membership this year. We have a number of new members and most members have renewed. Every one of you is valued and treasured.

WANT TO BE INVOLVED ?

Are you interested in becoming involved in the direction of Agudas Achim? We really don't ask too much of your time but anything you want to give will be appreciated. Just let us know! Send me an email or text or write to virtualshabbat@gmail.com We would love to hear from you.