



# Agudas Achim Newsletter

## November 2022

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

### Save the date

**Friday, November 4<sup>th</sup>**

**Gather at 7:00**

**7:30 PM Services**

**Levin's begin welcoming the Sabbath\***

**\*LIVE SERVICES beginning at 7:30 PM\***

#### Rabbi's Message

Can you imagine a world with The State of Israel crushed and destroyed? Its people murdered?

It almost happened fifty years ago during the Yom Kippur War, when Egypt and Syria's unexpected successful attack from the north and the south on the holiest day of the Jewish year.

The vaunted Israel intelligence community had failed to detect the planned Arab offensive. Hubris on the part of the Israel Defense Forces, based on the successes of the Six Day War, in 1967, and the lack of detecting Russia's training and supplying the armies and air forces of Egypt and Syria all contributed to the near catastrophe.

The popularity of a new series in Israel and the US, called in English, "The Valley of Tears," dramatizing in minute details the slaughtering of Jewish servicemen by Syria's overwhelming tank corps and divisions of foot soldiers, as well as confusion in Israel's military community, and the unexpected loss of so many Israeli planes and pilots, as they attempted to destroy Russian missiles used by Syria, led to a decision this week, by the IDF, to release the censored diaries and journals of the Israel military and political leaders written especially during the early days of the war when catastrophe seemed imminent.

Golda Meir, the Prime minister said, "If, heaven forbid, we don't win, all is lost." Commanders were quoted as saying that there wasn't enough materiel or manpower to repel the enemy. Moshe Dayan was worried that Jordan and Iraq would see that Israel wasn't invincible and would create an eastern front with their tanks

crushing, unopposed, into Israel's populated midsection. Dayan wanted to give instruction to young boys and old men as to how to stop tanks with explosives. Suicide pills were passed out to women in northern cities where the Syrian soldiers had threatened to ravage and murder them.

Trainees who hadn't yet qualified as pilots were put into the cockpit. Undermanned tank brigades held off thousands of tanks that weren't known to exist. Uncommon valor to protect Israeli citizens was common among the military.

The newly released diaries show that Henry Kissinger was telling Israel's political leaders that they had to score victories before "the world" would support them. Kissinger said that a weakened Israel would be an unpopular ally. Kissinger said that as a Jew and American, he wanted to help but that "his hands were tied." Israel, an ally of the US, and a bastion for democracy in the near east, was on its own until it could recover, militarily. After nearly a week of uncertainty, the tides of war began to change. The Golani armor brigade miraculously held off the Syrian armor onslaught at a high price of lives. IDF columns were on the way to Damascus. In the Sinai, Arik Sharon's armor brigade crossed the Suez Canal at once encircling the Egyptian third army and sending a column towards Cairo.

Responding to Jewish American leadership urging that treaties be honored to honor promises made to the Jewish State, and- here is the most important fact- Jewish leaders in the Republican party, and members of the Republican Jewish Caucus urged the administration to resupply Israel, as Russia had done to

the Arab combatants in a massive airlift. Republican Jews were responsible, in large part, for the thousands of tons of ammunition and material that the Nixon administration airlifted to Israel, honoring the treaty commitments.

We in America, Republicans and Democrats, are obligated by agreements to help protect Israel from enemies that rise up against it. (Whether hostile countries, or terrorists. - the most profound case being the US sharing of iron dome technology to protect against terrorist rockets raining down in cities)

How sad then that those in the current Republican Jewish Conference our fellow Jews have been hesitant to speak out against recent implicit political threats implying that support for Israel may be dependent on the way Jewish Americans vote in upcoming elections. What lack of leadership and courage that these Jews are reluctant to stand fast to protect their brothers and sisters in the Land of Israel. This is not a matter of Republican vs. Democrat. It is heartening to the teaching that all Jews are responsible one for the other. It is about courage to stand for what is right, regardless of political gain. Israel was almost destroyed in the Yom Kippur War fifty years ago. Courageous citizen soldiers and the resupply of an ally, saved the nation and her people.

May the friendship which began in 1948 between America and Israel with the founding of the then nascent Jewish State, be buttressed and upheld by Americans of good faith, regardless of political party. Are you making your voice heard?

See you at services at Agudas Achim, or on Zoom. I look forward to being back in the sanctuary, but online praying is also blessed.

Rabbi Fred Pomerantz

### **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](mailto:virtualshabbat@gmail.com)  
We would love to hear from you.

### **PRESIDENTS MESSAGE**

A number of recent experiences brought thoughts of Agudas Achim to the forefront of my mind and left me feeling inspired about the future.

A number of people reached out to me to express how special the High Holiday Services were this year. Having hybrid services did what we had hoped it would do; those that wanted to attend in person were able to do that and congregated with their community. The building is beautiful and being inside it in prayer provides an inspiring spiritual experience for those that are able to be there. And, for those that needed to or chose to stay at home they were able to share in community prayer from their own private sanctuaries. Many let me know that they enjoyed the experience differently but just as much. Collaborating with new and seasoned members to accomplish the goal was rewarding to all involved.

There were a number of new faces at services. It was so nice to see them! There are not enough words to express how inspiring it is to be a congregation that is available to anyone that wants to join us. And there are not enough words to express how blessed I feel we are to have the invested members we have that worked to make sure the experience was fulfilling for all who were attending live and virtually.

A number of children and grandchildren (even great grandchildren) of original families have reached out asking to be on our mailing list and have made contributions to support Agudas Achim. One of my concerns about our future has been that we don't have a strong foundation from our past. Having the reach of zoom allows us to stay connected to our history and I hope this will carry us through to future generations.

Gary and I visited Italy after the High Holidays. One stop was Venice where we visited the Jewish Ghetto. In speaking with a local shopkeeper, we learned that there are, perhaps, 350 Jews in Venice, just 20 in the Ghetto area. He said sadly "And I go to more funerals than weddings" I left there thinking 'who will tell their story?' Then I thought of the wonderful history of Agudas Achim and once again I feel fortunate to have an avenue to continue to tell the story of Jews in Livingston Manor.

I see that we have a bright future as we grow our base of historic families to solidify our roots and welcome new members so that we can continue to grow in different ways. We are fortunate and the future is bright.

L' Shalom, Judy Siegel, President  
[Jsiegel523@gmail.com](mailto:Jsiegel523@gmail.com) 845-798-0783

## Jewish Education News

A few weeks ago, I was speaking with someone about the High Holy Days, including Sukkot and Simchat Torah. They mentioned that it will be a while before there is anything else on our calendar, because the next thing coming up is Hanukkah. Well yes, Hanukkah is the next big celebration, I agreed with them, it is full of lights, family and fun. But there is something that comes before that. Really? they responded, what is next? I'm a fairly knowledge Jew. I know my holidays, what did I forget? I told them, Kristallnacht. We will be commemorating Kristallnacht, literally, the night of Broken Glass, on November 9th. Kristallnacht had totally gone out of their mind.

I remember Kristallnacht as a precursor to World War II. These events happened before I was born. It is history to those in my generation and younger, not ancient history, but history nevertheless. The bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7th was rightly defined by President Roosevelt as "a day that will live in infamy", but I wasn't there in person to experience it. I know about Pearl Harbor from my father-in-law, of blessed memory. He was a second-year college student at the University of California Berkeley at the time. Dad told us that one of his fraternity brothers who had a ham radio and came downstairs asking "Does anyone know where Pearl Harbor is?" He had heard about the bombing almost immediately after it happened. Within days, many students left college and immediately enrolled in the army, even before there was a call for recruits. My father-in-law and many others left college in the next wave when the call for recruits went out. Yet, he always remembered Pearl Harbor Day, he always remembered WWII and Kristallnacht, because he lived it, it was part of him. We read in the Talmud, "An extraordinary event is remembered by people", as it was for Dad.

So... how do we keep memory alive to those who were not around during those events? To me the Vietnam War was in the forefront of my mind, yet to my children, the Vietnam War was ancient history. It was not part of their lifetime. In each generation there are events that happen and for those not yet born, there is a chance for those events to fade as part of our history. I think about how the young children and teenagers of today will remember the events of 9-11, which was 21 years ago and a defining moment for my generation, and my children's.

In no less than 169 places in the Torah we are directed to remember. However, memory does not stand alone, memory by itself is not enough, for we Jews are a people of action. We perform deeds and do mitzvot. The duality of remembrance sparking action gives us our balance. They go together and are intertwined. Yosef Yerushalmi in his book *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* suggests that memory is selective and not everything that happened in history is meaningful or worthy of recollection.

The memories of the whole of our people are our collective memories. As time goes by, the collective memory of Judaism changes. As we add memories, as we add history. Not everyone will remember every event, nor do we need to remember everything, but it is crucial that we are all active participants in the maintenance of our collective memory. Dad did this when he marched as part of the Jewish War Veterans on Memorial Day, just as we do when we read stories of the Night of Broken Glass on November 9th, and hear witnesses share their memories. Since part of who we are is where we have been, we need to remember, and when we ritualize these memories through acts or action, they stay with us. As Abraham Joshua Heschel said "To us, recollection is a holy act; we sanctify the present by remembering the past."

The students in the Hebrew School, under the guidance of Morah Mindy learned that on Sukkot, we invite guests, Ushpazim into our Sukkah. We say a prayer, we remember our ancestors as we welcome, our patriarchs and matriarchs Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rachel, Rebecca and Leah into our Sukkah. In November the class will be marking Kristallnacht and remembering the lives of those that lived through that time.

Shalom u'Verachah ~Peace and Blessing,  
Tobi Innerfield  
Director of Education

#### UPCOMING SERVICES

November services will be our last live, in person services until spring of 2023.

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

Friday, November 4<sup>th</sup>

Gather at 7:00

7:30 PM Services

Levin's begin welcoming the Sabbath\*

\*LIVE SERVICES beginning at 7:30 PM\*

Friday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>

7:00 PM Social Time with your beverage of choice

7:30 PM Services

Channukah begins December 18 and ends December 26

Post services zoom gathering with Levins and congregants attending

Friday, January 6<sup>th</sup>

7:00 PM Social Time with your beverage of choice

7:30 PM Services

*Post services zoom gathering with Levins and congregants attending.*

*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*

#### DONATIONS....please consider.

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](http://congregationagudasachim.org)) and click donate now

## HOPE(ful) INFORMATION

Thanks to Hope Blecher for sharing her writing with the Times of Israel, and us. You can read her most recent blog at <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/how-volunteering-makes-my-life-sustainable/>

## HELP US PRESERVE OUR HISTORY!!!!

Do you have a story to share now? Some knowledge or memories of these and other Livingston Manor families? Please send me an email and share your piece(s) of history. Send the request on to family and friends. Be a part of preserving our history for the future.

# Havdalah Service

### What is Havdalah?

Havdalah is the Jewish religious ceremony that marks the symbolic end of Shabbat and ushers in the new week. This beautiful, brief ritual (less than ½ hr) involves lighting a special Havdalah candle with several wicks, blessing a cup of wine and smelling sweet spices.

Havdalah takes place after the sun is set on Saturday evening.

Although Havdalah is weekly, Tobi Innerfield will be sharing, via Zoom, a Havdalah service once a month.

### Save the dates!

Saturday, Nov. 19<sup>th</sup> @ 7 pm

Saturday, Dec. 17<sup>th</sup> @ 7 pm

Saturday, Jan. 21<sup>st</sup> @ 7 pm



(Watch for an updated flyer with the Spring dates and times.)

Use this Zoom Link to come into the Havdalah.

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/71950737639?pwd=yDFMo4a1KYbcnHNgZSr1BUQRmrU621.1>

(Note: This is a unique Zoom link, and is NOT the link that we use for Shabbat services.)

To heighten your personal Havdalah experience, it is suggested that you have some sweet spices with you...cinnamon, cloves or allspice. Some people will take an orange and stick whole cloves into it.

We look forward to your joining us on Zoom!  
RSVP not required!



Happy Anniversary  
Jerry Burd & Patrice Held 11/20  
Alan & Karen Blocker 11/22

Happy Birthday  
Matt Strassman 11/3  
Ronald Elinoff 11/3  
Jonell Watson 11/4  
Eva Heisler 11/8  
Bob Freedman 11/9  
Joshua Pomerantz 11/18  
Bonnie L. Katz 11/21  
Debra Fuchs Nadeau 11/25  
Miranda Yoli 11/27

Pictures from Daffodil Project – September 11, 2022



## From a Bergen County walk to a Sullivan County project

While taking a walk in Teaneck, NJ during a visit with her mom, little did Parksville resident Hope Blecher know that would be the beginning of a project in Livingston Manor.

While walking from one town into another and along a busy road, she noticed a circular patch of daffodils starting to bloom. She saw a sign and kept walking. Then she backtracked, read it and stopped for a few minutes.

Why? She had come upon a daffodil garden planted as part of the Worldwide Daffodil Project. The mission of this global project is “to build a worldwide Living Holocaust Memorial by planting 1.5 million Daffodils in memory of the children who perished in the Holocaust and in support for children suffering in humanitarian crises in the world today.”

Upon returning to Sullivan County, Hope reached out to Judy Siegel, president of Congregation Agudas Achim (CAA). After a short chat and further conversations with the leadership team, the decision was made to participate. This led to the engagement of Tobi Innerfield the Director of Education for CAA and then working out the details.

There are two ceremonies taking place as part of this project, one in September 2022 and the second during Spring 2023. The tilling occurred on the sunny day of September 10, 2022. The community members participated in the planting of 250 Narcissus Dutch Master daffodils from Holland during a few rain showers on September 11, 2022.

That date was chosen as the one to symbolically connect remembrance with resilience and rebirth. During opening remarks by Hope, a commemorative statement from Tobi, and then a sharing by Steve Innerfield, participants came full circle to Judy planting the first bulb.

According to Tobi, “As we add memories, we add history ....it is crucial that we are all participants in the maintenance of our collective memory....Since part of who we are is where we have been, we need to remember, and when we ritualize these memories through acts or action, they stay with us.

Steven Innerfield shared something that brought tears to some, hugs, and choked throats. He taught about his experience on 9/11 and that of Scott. Out of iron from one of the twisted remains of the Twin Towers, some iron workers crafted crosses to mark the caskets of the fallen. When Scott requested a Star of David and subsequently drew one in the dust, the workers created it. That star is what Steven shared with the participants while gathered on the front lawn. That artifact that memento, was available for people to see and to touch.

As president Judy Siegel planted the first bulb in its earthen hole, she had these words to share.

“Agudas Achim is a small and intimate congregation in Livingston Manor that continues to reach individuals throughout the region,” she said. “It is heartwarming to be part of a community that works together like this, today. It is inspiring that events like this bring together new community members and those who have lived in Livingston Manor for nearly 70 years. Now every spring we will have a flood of beautiful yellow to remind us of the children lost and inspire us to continue creating and growing.”

Thanks go to the Innerfields for their tiller, to Don Simkin for helping to till and move the sod, and to Judy for photos and recordings. Thank you to Ray Croney for carrying the bags of mulch and soil. Thank you to the congregants of Agudas Achim, and community members representing Holocaust survivors, Liberty Rotary, Parksville, Livingston Manor, Liberty and other towns in Sullivan County. Those gathered reflect the unity in community.

As the rain began to come, that didn't dampen the spirit of those engaged in conversations about the Spring 2023 event and signage for the property. Looking ahead to the Spring 2023 ceremony, the participants look forward to standing near the yellow daffodils blooming in Livingston Manor, in the shadow of the congregation's historic marker. At that time, there will be a presentation, the music of local musician, Sarah Weber, along with remarks from invited guests.