



4839 Market Street, Unit C, Ventura, Ca. 93003

Phone (805) 644-2899

June 2023

www.congregationAmHaYam.com



From the Rabbi's Study

How to Experience G!d

It is important to realize that G!d is to be experienced. It is equally important to understand that G!d cannot be captured in any one thing, nor reduced to a single moment or phenomenon.

We sometimes think we can contain G!d in a thing, and thereby G!d is with us. For example, some put a little statue or a small box with a religious symbol on the dashboard of their car—and think they have captured G!d, and thereby G!d will protect them. Is this not naive? For what can save a person if they drive carelessly?

Some think they can represent G!d in a religious symbol and place this symbol on a string, and tie it around their neck and that thereby G!d will be with them in person. But thinking this through, how can this symbol of the Divine protect us from an illness, for example, if we do not take the normal precautions of rest, proper diet, and good health?

Some think they can take a sacred text about G!d and put it into a small box and nail it to the doorpost of their home—and thereby G!d will always protect their home. They do not consider the importance of maintaining their home properly in accordance with laws and guidelines to prevent fire, mold, or insect infestations.

Some even believe that they can put G!d in a box in an Ark, or store G!d up in an altar—and there G!d will be. We do not truly understand that these are merely the symbols of G!d's moral and ethical teachings.



I am not trying to impugn the value of a mezuzah or a Torah scroll—or any other object. I am objecting to people mistaking that thing's religious and symbolic value for some guarantee of G!d's protective Presence at all costs. And I am objecting to anyone considering any of these things a relationship with G!d.

A carriage driver once came to the Chassidic master Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev with a serious religious problem. He explained, "Rabbi, I would like to come to synagogue more often and be in the Presence of G!d. But, unfortunately, my business keeps me so busy carrying others that I have little time to do this. Perhaps I ought to change my job."

Reb Levi responded, "When people come to hire your carriage do you charge everyone the same price?"

"Yes," the carriage driver responded. "Of course, I treat everyone alike."

"Well, sir, what do you do if they are poor?"

"Rabbi, if those cases, I do not charge them at all."

Reb Levi Yitzchak exclaimed, "My friend, without even realizing it you are already living in the Presence of G!d."

While we might sense G!d's Presence attending synagogue services on Shabbat and holy days, we realize, of course, that we might experience G!d anyway, because of course G!d is everywhere. It is not a matter of reciting a specific number of prayers that somehow summons G!d into our Presence. Rather, we try to live prayerfully—with the values of love, kindness, gratefulness, and hope that our prayers inculcate and reinforce within us.

The Talmud states¹ that

Where people gather for worship, where judges sit as a court, and where even one person engages in study, the Presence of G!d is there.

We would surely add that where people engage in kindness, where lend support to another in need, and where people stand up for justice, G!d's Presence is there.

Let us treasure our symbols—as symbols. May we see them and be reminded of the important values by which we strive to live. And then may we humbly live in such a way that renders G!d's Presence in our lives not a question but a response.

Rabbi J.B. Sacks

¹ B. *B'rachot* 6a.

From Our Student Rabbi's Desk

Reflections on My Time At CAH

Dear Am HaYam,

After two and a half years here, the time has come for me to take the next step in my professional journey. While I am excited to go study in Israel, this is a bittersweet moment for me, and I will miss CAH dearly.

When I first decided to join this holy community, I hadn't even heard of it. I simply gave a call to Rabbi Sacks, who had taught me in high school, and asked him if there might be a role for me at his congregation. I was so grateful that he was willing to take me under his wing, but I really had no idea what I was walking into. He assured me that this was a special place, and I believed him. But hearing about it and experiencing it are two very different things.

As a child, I got to experience many different congregations, both due to my father's shifting pulpit positions, and because as a day school student, my friends' b'nei mitzvah ceremonies were all across Los Angeles. Even though I joined CAH at a time when we were entirely online, I could immediately tell something about this congregation was different. Something here was special.

Yes, Rabbi Sacks leads a brilliant and often unique service, and yes, the small size of the congregation means everyone here knows one another by name, which is a beautiful thing. But what truly made CAH special to me was the character of everyone in the community. I was immediately struck by how genuine everyone at CAH was, and this only became more apparent when we were able to return to our building. The love in the room, for Judaism and for each other, has always been palpable. Both in person and online, everything here is done with *ruach*, such passion and spirit.

Whether it's dedicating your time to one of the synagogue committees, staying late to help clean up, driving long distances to deliver apples and honey bundles, coming together as a congregation to help honor or care for other members, doing a reading in services or during a class, or any other form of participation, it's been so amazing to see how much people here truly care. I hopefully have a long career ahead of me, but I honestly believe I will never again see a culture like the one here at Am HaYam.

It has been such an incredible privilege to be a part of this community. I have learned so much from each of you, and it has been a pleasure getting to know you all. I am forever changed by you.

I must give a special thank you to Rabbi Sacks and Fran for taking me under their wing and teaching me so much, and to Brenda, for her loving hospitality and for setting the tone of the beautiful culture here. And, of course, thanks to all of *you* for accepting me, allowing me to grow, and letting me experience the gem that is Am HaYam.

In love and gratitude,
Maayan

Message From Brenda Rich



Greetings: The month of June brings the start of summer and even though we find ourselves in a season of growth, renewal and celebration, we face sadness as we say goodbye to Maayan Lev as he leaves as to continue his education in Israel. Maayan has been with us for over 2 years, and we have gained so much with his presentations at services and his many zoom classes. His warmth and sincerity could always be felt as he interacted with all during our after-service gatherings. He will be missed.

We had many events In May, but I am just going to mention one of them. On May 7, we had an unforgettable experience with our visit to the "Auschwitz: Not Long Ago, Not Far Away" exhibit at the Ronald Reagan Library. This moving exhibition transported us back in time, reminding us of the importance of remembrance and education. We were deeply touched by the stories and artifacts that bore witness to the horrors of the Holocaust, emphasizing the resilience of the Jewish people. It will be there until at least August. I urge you to make this a priority for your summer plans.

This month, we have an important Congregational meeting scheduled for **June 25th at 11 a.m.** which will take place on Zoom. I invite you to join us as we reflect upon the accomplishments of the past year and unveil our plans for the future. It is an opportunity for you to actively participate in shaping the direction of our temple community and ensure that your voice is heard.

Our congregation meeting will include the election of the Board of Directors and acceptance of our new budget. All qualifying members have received their ballots in the mail and you **Must** vote and return your ballot by **June 21**. You can choose to accept, reject or abstain. So, there is no reason not to return your voted ballot.

Also coming in June will be the billing, in advance of the new fiscal year of Am HaYam which begins in July. There has been no increase in your dues. Please keep in mind that we **MUST** continue to provide a home for Conservative Judaism in Ventura County. Let our temple community flourish and grow together. Your presence and active engagement contribute to the richness of our shared experiences. I am grateful for each and every one of you, and I look forward to our continued journey of faith, learning, and togetherness.

Looking forward, I encourage each and every one of you to make attending our events and services a priority. Our congregation is a vibrant tapestry of diverse backgrounds and experiences, and when we come together, we strengthen our bonds and deepen our sense of belonging.

Shalom,
Brenda

GIVING

**SUPPORT YOUR SYNAGOGUE WHEN YOU DINE, SHOP,
TRAVEL OR FOR ENTERTAINMENT**

**PURCHASE GIFT CARDS (SCRIP) FOR YOUR FAVORITE
RESTAURANT, STORE (INCLUDING MARKETS), GAS
STATIONS AND/OR MOVIE THEATERS, ENTERTAINMENT
VENUES AND MORE.**

**YOU GET DOLLAR FOR DOLLAR VALUE FOR
WHATEVER YOU PURCHASE, WHILE AM HAYAM GETS A
PERCENTAGE.**



Click picture above for link to retailer list.

CONGREGATION AM HAYAM LIFE-LONG LEARNING
CLASSES AND EVENTS

<p style="text-align: center;">The Life, Thought, and Legacy of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel</p>	<p>Rabbi Dr. J.B. Sacks</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Alternate Thursdays, 7-8 P.M.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Via Zoom</p> <p style="text-align: center;">See Calendar</p>	<p>This class will help us understand the depth, insight, spirituality, and enduring influence of one of the great figures of the twentieth century. We will learn of his life, read from his philosophy and poetry, and watch portions of the new documentary of his life.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Middot: Using Our Character Strengths Through Tough Times</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Fran Lande, Life-Long Learning Chair</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Alternate Thursdays, 7-8 P.M.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Via Zoom</p> <p style="text-align: center;">See Calendar</p>	<p>Participants will continue to explore character strengths and middot as we navigate our journey through daily life. By accessing our strengths, we are able to enhance our daily living and journey. Each session will include a study of a Jewish text, value and/or concept. Come participate in a thoughtful and intriguing discussion.</p>

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SIGNIFICANT BOOK CLUB

On Wednesday, May 10, 2023, participants met on Zoom to discuss the book *Can we Talk About Israel? A Guide for the Curious, Confused and Conflicted*. The discussion began with a brief overview of Part One of the book, examining how Israel got to the current situation.

The rest of the evening was spent examining the more difficult issues that define Israel and the challenges it faces today.

The author, Daniel Sokatch, is the chief executive officer of The New Israel Fund. He was named to the *Forward's, Forward 50*.

The discussion began with understanding Sokatch's premise/agenda/focus "that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is, essentially, a struggle between two peoples, both with legitimate connections and claims to the land, who have been victimized by the outside world, each other, and themselves". He further believes that everyone, Israelis and Palestinians alike, should have their equal rights and security guaranteed.

Our discussion focused around the questions surrounding Israel:

- What does it mean for a country that calls itself the Jewish state to have a non-Jewish minority that makes up a full fifth (20 %) of her citizenry?
- And how can a country that considers itself a democracy guaranteeing equality for all of its citizens even describe itself as a state that belongs only to one particular class of those citizens?

These questions represent the balancing act Israel attempts as it tries to be all these things at the same time. Additionally, we explored some of the current issues and laws that are being grappled with and discussed in the media and within various communities.

At the end of the evening, all who participated stated that they had learned more and had even more questions. It was suggested that we have a program next year that involves different faith communities and learn with them about this important topic.

Now that is a successful evening of learning!

The schedule of the next Significant Book Club (Books and dates) will be forthcoming. Look for it around the High Holy Days.

Thank you to all who participated.



SCHOLARSTREAM

A PARTNERSHIP OF THE CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT

Thank you all for your participation in ScholarStream this year. We hope to begin classes again in August.

June: Get in on All the Excitement Here at CAH!

Here at CAH we offer an extensive set of ongoing, recurring events.

Having regular opportunities to be together, to learn, to pray, to sing, to share has been very nurturing of all of us during this pandemic and has strengthened us as a community. We are proud of all these offerings and are grateful to all the event leaders. Thank you! Brenda sends out the link for the Zoom or YouTube link ahead of time, so that it will be towards the top of your Email inbox. Services are coordinated by Rabbi Sacks; all other events are coordinated by our Life-Long Learning Chair, Fran Lande. If you have questions about our non-service offerings or have suggestions for other events, please contact Fran. Please contact fblande@gmail.com

EVENT	LEADER	DAY and TIME	DATES
Erev Shabbat (Friday night) services	Rabbi Sacks	Fridays, 7 p.m. on Zoom	June 2, 16
Shabbat services	Rabbi Sacks	Saturdays 10a on Zoom	June 3, 17
The Life, Thought, and Legacy of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel	Rabbi Sacks	Thursdays 7p on Zoom	June 8, 22
Middot: Using Our Character Strengths Through Tough Times	Fran Lande	Thursdays 7p on Zoom	June 15, 29
Ritual Meeting (via Zoom)	Neal Abramson	Sunday 10a on Zoom	June 25
Annual Congregational Meeting (Via Zoom)	Brenda Rich	Sunday 11a on Zoom	June 25

Tributes

Adrienne Morris to Jodi Dionne IMO Phyllis Greene, mother of Jodi & Debbie & sons.

Ruth Resnick to Maayan Lev, Thank you for all you've done for us.

Lois Lebman to Maayan Lev, It's been a pleasure knowing you and wish you a successful future.

Trees For Israel

Elaine Hanig IMO Sy Berger, Loving Husband of Shirley Gutowitz

Birthdays

6/9 Andrea Massion

Anniversaries

6/18 Rabbi Sacks & Steven Karash

Get Well

Fil Barton	Steven Goch
Alma Boronkay	Fran Lande
Eva Lowe	Judy Newberger
Sheila Myles	Mayaan Lev
Lee Rothschild	

heart hope blessing spirit prayer love trust
RENEWAL rejuvenate help hug restore
COMFORT courage strength MI-SHEBEIRACH
calm ease ADONAI wellbeing soothe refresh dear
sing Amen healing body soul
reassure r'fuah-sh'leimah



Yahrzeit

Friday, June 2 & Saturday, June 3

Nathan Matlin, Grandfather of Myra Matlin

Herman Spunt, Grandfather of Fil Barton

*Rosa "Tweety" Kaufman, Mother-in-Law of Neal Abramson

Ira Berk, Father of Errol Berk

Norma S. Lande, Mother of Fran Lande

Friday, June 16 & Sat June 17

*Boris Skuratovsky, Father of Leonid Skuratovsky

David Goch, Father of Steve Goch

*Henry Kaufman, Father of Murray Kaufman z"l

Freda Fingerhut, Mother-in-Law of Neill Fingerhut

*Benjamin Weiner, Father of Myrna z"l

*Arnold Rich, Husband of Brenda Rich & Father of Mark Rich

*Richard Schneeberger, Husband of Eileen Schneeberger z"l

CAH Protocols for Moving Back into Our Building

(Revised, February 2022)

Now that the Omicron surge has waned, we look forward to again having services live in our own CAH home. To do so, these are the protocols we will be following. We thank you in advance for helping make our synagogue space warm, welcoming, and safe for all.

1. Everyone must be fully vaccinated to come to services and events held in our CAH home. Proof of vaccination should be shown the first time entering.
2. Social distancing will be maintained. All rows can be utilized.
3. Wearing masks is optional (as all are fully vaccinated).
4. For those who cannot attend services, we will continue live-streaming our services.
5. Service will continue as we have been doing, with aliyot and honors from the front of the Sanctuary, and not from the bimah.

Best Practices/Etiquette Upon Moving Back

Not everyone is equally comfortable with touch at this time, whether it is a handshake, a hug, or a Shabbat shalom kiss. We can express our joy in seeing each other without these, but if it's something any of us want to do, please ASK the person you are about to greet in a physical way first. Please do not take anyone's "NO" as a rejection. Please support everyone in the comfort level in which they find themselves.

ORDERING MEMORIAL WALL PLAQUES AT CAH

Jewish tradition sees memory as a sacred act, allowing us to be inspired by the good in a loved one's life and live more fully in our own days. A yahrzeit plaque allows for a permanent remembrance of a loved one, ensuring that his or her name will be recalled in perpetuity in our congregation. It is very meaningful to see the memorial plaque of your loved one on the High Holy Days, especially at the Yom Kippur Yizkor (Remembrance) service, on the Shabbat close to the yahrzeit, and at other special moments (including Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot Yizkor services).

Names on the plaque are automatically recalled publicly at the Shabbat prior to the yahrzeit at both our Friday night and Saturday morning services just before Mourner's Kaddish.

Ordering a plaque is a wonderful way to pay tribute to that special person or persons of blessed memory.

The current cost of ordering a bronze plaque for the memorial wall is \$360.00 per plaque. If you would like to order two plaques now, the cost will be \$330.00 per name. For 3 or more plaques the cost is \$300.00 per name.

Thank you for considering doing this for your loved ones. Their lives will be remembered and an inspiration to many.

Sincerely,

Brenda Rich

PLAQUE #1–Name of deceased: _____

Relationship _____

Hebrew Name _____ (son/daughter of) _____ and _____

Date of death English

Date of death Hebrew

Before or after sundown _____

PLAQUE #2–Name of deceased: _____

Relationship _____

Hebrew Name _____ (son/daughter of) _____ and _____

Date of death English

Date of death Hebrew

Before or after sundown _____

PLAQUE #3–Name of deceased: _____

Relationship _____

Hebrew Name _____ (son/daughter of) _____ and _____

Date of death English

Date of death Hebrew

Before or after sundown _____

If you have more than three plaques, please place information on additional sheets of paper.

Please mail this form with your check for the amount in full to:
Congregation Am HaYam; Attn: Brenda Rich; 4839 Market St. Unit C; Ventura, CA 93003

June 2023

Sivan/Tammuz 5783

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
					Erev Shabbat Services 7:00p on Zoom Light Candles 7:47p	Shabbat Services 10a on Zoom Shabbat ends at 8:49p
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
IMO Norma S. Lande			IMO Nathan Matlin	Life...of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel 7p on Zoom IMO Herman Spunt	Light Candles 7:50p Andrea Massion B/D	Shabbat ends at 8:53p
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
				Middot 7p on Zoom IMO Rosa "Tweety" Kaufman	Erev Shabbat Services 7:00p on Zoom Light Candles 7:53p IMO Ira Berk	Shabbat Services 10a on Zoom Shabbat ends at 8:56p
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
IMO Boris Skuratovsky Rabbi Sacks & Steven Karash Anniv				Life...of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel 7p on Zoom IMO David Goch	Light Candles 7:55p	Shabbat ends at 8:57p
25	26	27	28	29	30	
Ritual Meeting 10a on Zoom Congregational Meeting 11a on Zoom IMO Henry Kaufman				Middot 7p on Zoom IMO Freda Fingerhut	Light Candles 7:55p IMO Benjamin Weiner	



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Arnie Fingerhut z'l
Jerry Ruthman z'l
Peter Shack z'l
Brenda Rich

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Oneg Shabbat - Fil Barton
Tributes - Lois Lebman
Purchasing - Ruth Resnick
Yahrzeits - Brenda Rich
Migdalar - Mark Rich
Webmaster - Mark Rich

Rabbi J.B. Sacks

rabbijbsacks@gmail.com Phone # 323-387-0096

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brenda.bashful16@gmail.com Phone # 805-469-0268

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