



Carnegie Shul Chatter

September 15, 2022



Shabbat Services

The Carnegie Shul continues to offer hybrid Shabbat services. If you want to attend services in the sanctuary, please join us, providing you have been vaccinated for Covid 19. Masks are optional, and there is plenty of room for social distancing. Or participate via Zoom. Rosalyn Hoffman will send a Zoom link. If you don't receive it, contact her at rjlynman@yahoo.com. Either way, please help us make a minyan this week.

An Impact Beyond Our Numbers

Rabbi Sacks concludes his commentary in this week's Chatter by saying: We may be the fewest of all peoples but when we heed God's call, we have the ability, proven many times in our past, to mend and transform the world."

Of this there can be no doubt.

Of the 7.9 billion people in the world, the Jewish population represents less than a fifth of 1 percent. In other words, there are 99.8% Gentiles and .2% Jews on the planet and yet, of the more than 900 Nobel Prize winners, at least 20 percent have been Jewish.

And Jews have won Nobels in every category, and especially in medicine where 57 Jews have captured the award, and that doesn't even include Drs. Jonas Salk and Albert Sabin who for some reason did not win Nobels for their development of polio vaccines.

Yes, Jews have mended and transformed the world. Jews have changed the course of history. We were chosen to receive the Torah, The Ten Commandments, and to have a special covenant with God. And I am certainly happy that He chose us.

Ki Tavo in a Nutshell

Deuteronomy 26:1–29:8

From Chabad.org

Moses instructs the people of Israel: When you enter the land that G-d is giving to you as your eternal heritage, and you settle it and cultivate it, bring the first-ripened fruits (bikkurim) of your orchard to the Holy Temple, and declare your gratitude for all that G-d has done for you.

Our Parshah also includes the laws of the tithes given to the Levites and to the poor, and detailed instructions on how to proclaim the blessings and the curses on Mount Gerizim and Mount Eival—as discussed in the beginning of the Parshah of Re'eh. Moses reminds the people that they are G-d's chosen people, and that they, in turn, have chosen G-d.

The latter part of Ki Tavo consists of the Tochachah (“Rebuke”). After listing the blessings with which G-d will reward the people when they follow the laws of the Torah, Moses gives a long, harsh account of the bad things—illness, famine, poverty and exile—that shall befall them if they abandon G-d's commandments.

Moses concludes by telling the people that only today, forty years after their birth as a people, have they attained “a heart to know, eyes to see and ears to hear.”

“The Chosen People”

We live in a time of political correctness, a time when some scorn the concepts of winning and competitiveness. We recognize that everyone has value regardless of race, creed, sexual identity, or religion. No one is better than anyone else. All men are created equal. And so, some reject the idea that Jews are a chosen people. But doesn't it say so right here in this week's parshah? Doesn't Moses tell the people, “You are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be His people, His treasured possession”?

Why are we chosen? What does it mean to be a chosen people? Beginning on the next page is what Rabbi Jonathon Sacks has to say on the issue.



Covenant & Conversation

Buried inconspicuously in this week's parsha is a short sentence with explosive potential, causing us to think again about both the nature of Jewish history and the Jewish task in the present.

Moses had been reminding the new generation, the children of those who left Egypt, of the extraordinary story of which they are the heirs:

Has anything so great as this ever happened, or has anything like it ever been heard of? Has any other people heard the voice of God speaking out of fire, as you have, and lived? Has any god ever tried to take for himself one nation out of another nation, by testings, by signs and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, or by great and awesome deeds, like all the things the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes? (Deut. 4:32-34)



The Israelites have not yet crossed the Jordan. They have not yet begun their life as a sovereign nation in their own land. Yet Moses is sure, with a certainty that could only be prophetic, that they were a people like no other. What has happened to them is unique. They were and are a nation summoned to greatness.

Moses reminds them of the great Revelation at Mount Sinai. He recalls the Ten Commandments. He delivers the most famous of all summaries of Jewish faith: "Listen, Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one." (Deut. 6:4) He issues the most majestic of all commands: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." (Deut. 6:5) Twice he tells the people to teach these things to their children. He gives them their eternal mission statement as a nation: "You are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be His people, His treasured possession." (Deut. 7:6)

Then he says this:

The Lord did not set His affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you are the fewest of all peoples. (Deut. 7:7)

The fewest of all peoples? What has happened to all the promises of Bereishit, that Abraham's children would be numerous, uncountable, as many as the stars of the sky, the dust of the earth, and the grains of sand on a seashore? What of Moses' own statement at the beginning of Devarim?

“The Lord your God has increased your numbers so that today you are as numerous as the stars in the sky.” (Deut. 1:10)

The simple answer is this. The Israelites were indeed numerous compared to what they once were. Moses himself puts it this way in next week’s parsha: “Your ancestors who went down into Egypt were seventy in all, and now the Lord your God has made you as numerous as the stars in the sky” (Deut. 10:22). They were once a single family, Abraham, Sarah and their descendants, and now they have become a nation of twelve tribes.



But – and this is Moses’ point here – compared to other nations, they were still small.

When the Lord your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations—the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you ... (Deut. 7:1)

In other words, not only were the Israelites smaller than the great empires of the ancient world. They were smaller even than the other nations in the region. Compared to their origins they had grown exponentially but compared to their neighbours they remained tiny.

Moses then tells them what this means:

You may say to yourselves, “These nations are stronger than we are. How can we drive them out?” But do not be afraid of them; remember well what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt. (Deut. 7:17-18)

Israel would be the smallest of the nations for a reason that goes to the very heart of its existence as a nation. They will show the world that a people does not have to be large in order to be great. It does not have to be numerous to defeat its enemies. Israel’s unique history will show that, in the words of the Prophet Zechariah (4:6), “‘Not by might nor by power, but by My spirit,’ says the Lord Almighty.”

In itself, Israel would be witness to something greater than itself. As former Marxist philosopher Nicolay Berdyaev put it:

I remember how the materialist interpretation of history, when I attempted in my youth to verify it by applying it to the destinies of peoples, broke down in the case of the Jews, where destiny seemed absolutely inexplicable from the materialistic standpoint . . . Its survival is a mysterious and wonderful phenomenon demonstrating that the life of this people is governed by a special predetermination, transcending the processes of adaptation expounded by the materialistic

interpretation of history. The survival of the Jews, their resistance to destruction, their endurance under absolutely peculiar conditions and the fateful role played by them in history: all these point to the particular and mysterious foundations of their destiny. (Nicolay Berdyaev, *The Meaning of History*, Transaction Publishers, 2005, p. 86)

Moses' statement has immense implications for Jewish identity. The proposition implicit throughout this year's Covenant & Conversation is that Jews have had an influence out of all proportion to their numbers because we are all called on to be leaders, to take responsibility, to contribute, to make a difference to the lives of others, to bring the Divine Presence into the world. Precisely because we are small, we are each summoned to greatness.

Y. Agnon, the great Hebrew writer, composed a prayer to accompany the Mourner's Kaddish. He noted that the children of Israel have always been few in number compared to other nations. He then said that when a monarch rules over a large population, they do not notice when an individual dies, for there are others to take their place. "But our King, the King of Kings, the Holy One, blessed be He ... chose us, and not because we are a large nation, for we are one of the smallest of nations. We are few, and owing to the love with which He loves us, each one of us is, for Him, an entire legion. He does not have many replacements for us. If one of us is missing, Heaven forbid, then the King's forces are diminished, with the consequence that His kingdom is weakened, as it were. One of His legions is gone and His greatness is lessened. For this reason it is our custom to recite the Kaddish when a Jew dies."^[1]

Margaret Mead once said: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." Gandhi said: "A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history."^[2] That must be our faith as Jews.

Yahrtzeits

This week the Carnegie Shul acknowledges the yahrtzeits of:

Charles Israel Perlman

Herbert Isaacs

Eli Moskowitz

Ike Sax

Sarah Mashah Lederstein

Harry Bales

Adolph Stern

May their memories be for a blessing.

- ◆ **Please see next page for Carnegie Shul**
- ◆ **High Holiday information.**

High Holidays 5783 / 2022

The Carnegie Shul will once again offer hybrid services on the High Holidays.

In-Person Attendance: Covid vaccinations required. • Wearing of masks is optional. If you do not wear a mask, please respect those who are by not sitting in close proximity to them. • Advanced reservations are not required, nor will seats be assigned. • Only those attending in person will be given aliyahs.

On Zoom: The link for will be emailed to members the week before Rosh Hashanah. If you do not receive it, please email: rjlynman@yahoo.com.

Tentative Schedule

Rosh Hashanah

Sunday, September 25

Maariv 7:15 pm

Monday, September 26

Preliminary Service..... 8:30 am

Shacharis 9:00 am

Torah Reading 10:00 am

Sermon 10:45 am

Musaf 11:15 am

Recess..... 1:15 pm

Taschlich 6:15 pm

Minchah 7:00 pm

Maariv 7:15 pm

Tuesday, September 27

Preliminary Service..... 8:30 am

Shacharis 9:00 am

Torah Reading 10:00 am

Sermon 10:45 am

Musaf 11:15 am

Recess..... 1:15 pm

Mincha..... 7:00 pm

Maariv 7:15 pm



Yom Kippur

Tuesday, October 4

Kol Nidre..... 6:50 pm

Maariv 7:05 pm

Wednesday, October 5

Preliminary Service..... 9:00 am

Shacharis 9:30 am

Torah Reading..... 10:30 am

Sermon 11:15 am

Yizkor 11:45 am

Musaf 12:15 pm

Recess..... 2:30 pm

Minchah 5:30 pm

Neila 6:45 pm

Shofar 7:45 pm