

# The Agudagram

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November 2022 Volume 72, No. 3  
Cheshvan/Kislev 5783

## Agudas Israel Congregation

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### Officers:

Richard Kline, Ritual Leader

Debbie Walko, President

Marlene Leonard, Vice President

Richard Rockman, Secretary

Helene Kline, Treasurer

Al Rosen, Financial Advisor

Richard Kline, Financial Officer



### SHABBAT CANDLELIGHTING TIMES & IMPORTANT DATES TO NOTE

November 4- Parshat Lech Lecha- 5:38pm candlelighting

November 6 2am- Daylight Savings Time Ends

November 11- Parshat Vayeira- 4:31pm candlelighting (Veteran's Day)

November 18- Parshat Chayei Sarah- 4:25pm candlelighting

November 24- Thanksgiving Day

November 25- Parshat Toldot- 4:21pm candlelighting



Upcoming Leisure Lounge Lunch at Tom's Kitchen in Conyngham November 15 at noon. Call Christina (570-764-4156) to inform her if you will be attending by November 11. We will be collecting non-perishable food items to be donated to our local food bank for Thanksgiving.



AIC will hold a Board Meeting Monday, November 7 at 7pm to discuss building repairs, centennial celebration plans, and cemetery updates.

## What's the Truth about... "Mar Cheshvan" ?

RABBI DR. ARI Z. ZIVOTOFSKY



Misconception: The complete and correct name for the month following Tishrei is Cheshvan, and it is a quaint tradition to call it Mar Cheshvan because it is bitter (Hebrew: *mar*) due to its lack of holidays.

Fact: The correct name for this fall month is the one word Marcheshvan/M'rachsh'van<sup>1</sup> (*Aruch Hashulchan, Even Ha'ezer* 126:17).

Background: The Bible usually refers to the months by their ordinal numbers, although occasional ancient Israelite names are also

used.<sup>2</sup> The currently used Jewish names for the months were imported from *Bavel* (Babylonia),<sup>3</sup> and many of them appear in post-exilic books of the Bible.<sup>4</sup> Some of these are derived from the names of ancient gods, such as Tammuz which is thought to come from the Assyrian Du-mu-zu, an Egyptian god, and is mentioned as the name of an idol in Ezekiel (8:14).<sup>5</sup>

Marcheshvan is probably derived from its location in the calendar. In Akkadian (Babylonian/Assyrian), "w" (*vav*) and "m" (*mem*) sounds can interchange. As a result, Marcheshvan which is from the two words "m'rach" and "shvan," would have been "warh" and "shman," in Akkadian, corresponding to the Hebrew "*yerech shmuni*," thus "eighth month."<sup>6</sup> In the Yemenite tradition, the name of the month is pronounced Marach-sha'wan, not Marcheshvan as in the Ashkenazic tradition, and this would seem to preserve a greater fidelity to the original.<sup>7</sup>

Older sources attest to the name as being the longer name Marcheshvan/M'rachshwan (as opposed to just Cheshvan). When the eighth month is mentioned in the Mishnah and Talmud, it is referred to as Marcheshvan. A few examples include: *Taanit* 1:3,4; *Pesachim* 94b; and *Rosh Hashanah* 7a; 11b. Throughout all of Rashi's Biblical and Talmudic commentary, he also refers to the month as Marcheshvan. A few examples are: *Rosh Hashanah* 11b, s.v. *v'azda l'tamahu*; 16a s.v. *D'miz'daran*; *Beitzah* 40a, s.v. *bir'vi'ah*. The Rambam<sup>8</sup> and Ibn Ezra (commentary to *Leviticus* 25:9) also use the complete name.

This misconception has halachic implications. Since the mistaken practice of simply calling the month Cheshvan is so widespread, either Cheshvan or the two word Mar Cheshvan is now acceptable, post-facto, if erroneously used in a legal document such as a *get* (*Aruch Hashulchan, Even Ha'ezer* 127:17). The Ramah (*Even Ha'ezer* 127:7) lists only Marcheshvan as

the month's name and does not give the *halachah* if one wrote either just Cheshvan or the two word Mar Cheshvan. Others even accept post-facto the Biblical name of the month, "Bul," if it was used in a document. The *Aruch Hashulchan* states that the *halachah* is the same for the imprecise "Menachem Av" (*Even Ha'ezer* 127:16).<sup>9</sup>

Surprisingly, there are even customs that developed around the error. The assumption is that it is called Mar Cheshvan (the bitter Cheshvan) either due to its lack of holidays or because it is when Sarah the Matriarch died.<sup>10</sup> Because of those negative associations, there are those who refrain from getting married in Marcheshvan (*Shut Lev Chaim* 2:26). The *Sdei Chemed* (*Ma'arechet Chason v'Kallah*:23) claims that this was the *minhag* in Jerusalem. *Shulchan Ha'ezer* (4:5:8) writes that in his locale people are not concerned with this and get married in Cheshvan [sic!]<sup>11</sup>

The *Pri Chadash* (*Even Ha'ezer* 126:7) offers the only explanation that I have found for calling this month by the two-word name Mar Cheshvan. He suggests that the name Mar Cheshvan is based on the fact that it is the beginning of the rainy season. The Targum translated *mar* as *tipah*, a drop, in the verse "Hen goyim k'mar midli – Behold, the nations are as a drop of [water from] a bucket" (Isaiah 40:15). As such, the name means the "rainy Cheshvan," and far from *mar* meaning bitter, it connotes a month of blessed rain.<sup>12</sup>

The Bnei Yissaschar (2:56-57) relates a beautiful *midrash* about the future of Marcheshvan indicating that the dedication of the Third Temple will occur in Marcheshvan, removing any doubt about it being a bitter month.

Notes:

1. Despite the fact that the second pronunciation is probably more authentic, as will be demonstrated below, the first will be used most of the time in this article since it is the more common and familiar version.

2. For example: *Aviv* (first month – Nissan) appears six times in the Pentateuch (*Ex.* 13:4, 34:18 [x2], *Deut.* 16:1 [x2]); *Ziv* (the second month – Iyar) is found in *I Kings* 6:1 and 6:37; *Yerech Etanim* (seventh month – Tishrei) is used in *I Kings* 8:2; and *Bul* (eighth month – Marcheshvan) is used in *I Kings* 6:38. There are homiletical Talmudic (e.g. *Rosh Hashanah* 11a) and Midrashic (*Yalkut Shimoni* to *I Kings*, Chapter 6, *remez* 184) explanations of these names (See also Radak and Rashi to *I Kings* 6:38 on *Bul*.) It may be that *aviv* is not a proper name, but simply a reference to the "spring month," hence it is always *chodesh he-aviv* not *chodesh Aviv*.

3. According to the Jerusalem Talmud (*Rosh Hashanah* 1:2), three things were imported with the Jews who returned from Babylonia: the names of the months, the names of the angels, and the currently used script (*Ktav Ashuri* as opposed to the ancient *Ktav Ivri*).

4. Nissan (*Esther* 3:7; *Nechemiah* 2:1), Sivan (*Esther* 8:9), Elul (*Nechemiah* 6:5),  
Kislev (*Zechariah* 7:1, *Nechemiah* 1:1), Tevet (*Esther* 2:16), Shevat (*Zechariah* 1:7),

Adar (*Esther* 3:7). Each of these occurrences gives not only the name of the month, but its number, and every one corresponds to our current use of the name. Iyar, Tammuz, Av, Tishrei, and Marcheshvan are not found in the Bible. Some of these names are also found in the apocrypha and *Megillat Ta'anit*.

5. This is the only place in the Bible where the pagan deity Tammuz is mentioned. See Rashi and Radak on *Ezekiel* 8:14 for a discussion of the name and its meaning.

6. Similarly, in the Julian calendar, October means eighth month, which it was in the original calendar in which the first month of spring, March, was the first month.

7. Many in the Yemenite community lost the original meaning and have ascribed new meaning to it. They note that *marachsha'wan* means spreading or smoothing the grain. This is the final agricultural process before the grain is stored. It is done in the eighth month before the rains start.

8. In Zev Vilnay, *Matzeivot, Kodesh B'Eretz Yisrael*, 3rd edition, 1985 cites from the letters of the Rambam about his trip to Israel in which he refers to Marcheshvan several times.

9. There are those who write just "Menachem" as the name of the month, even on legal documents. I have not seen a discussion of the validity of that custom.

10. *Esther Rabbah* 7:13 states that Sarah died in Marcheshvan, but no specific date within the month is given. Commenting on this *midrash*, the *Anaf Yosef* notes that there are many conflicting sources that give alternate dates for Sarah's death, one of which is in Nisan, immediately following the *akeidah* (binding of Isaac).

11. See also *Shut B'tzel Hachochmah* 2:60 and *Binyamin Adler, Ha'nisuin K'hilchatum*, 5:56.

12. Rashi says it means a "bitter drop" in this verse.

GET WELL WISHES ARE EXPRESSED TO: BRUCE MILLER, BOBBIE KLEMOW, LEANNE TRATTNER, SHIRLEY BRENNER, & EILEEN BRENNER.

SHOULD ANYONE HAVE ANY NEWS TO SHARE WITH THE AIC FAMILY, PLEASE EMAIL IT TO [AGUDASISRAELHAZLETON@GMAIL.COM](mailto:AGUDASISRAELHAZLETON@GMAIL.COM) TO RUN IN THE NEXT AGUDAGRAM!





AS THERE HAVE BEEN ISSUES WITH THE MAIL LOCALLY AND NATIONALLY, IF YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED YOUR REMINDER OR NEED AN ADDITIONAL REMINDER, PLEASE REFER TO THE YAHRZEIT LIST SHOULD YOU NEED A YAHRZEIT DATE, EMAIL US, OR CALL CHRISTINA SHOULD YOU NEED ASSISTANCE.

**‘Kanye is right about the Jews,’ antisemitic group says on Los Angeles highway banner**  
BY [PHILISSA CRAMER](#) OCTOBER 23, 2022

([ITA](#)) – Drivers heading south on a major freeway in Los Angeles Saturday could view a Kanye West-related provocation by a vocal group of antisemites.

“Kanye is right about the Jews,” read a banner hung by members of the Goyim Defense League, a white supremacist group, over the 405 freeway. It was a comment on the rapper and conservative figure’s string of antisemitic comments on social media and in interviews in recent weeks, [beginning with a vow to “go death con 3 on Jewish people.”](#)

The banner appeared alongside another crediting Goyim TV, one of several calling cards of the Goyim Defense League, alongside distributing antisemitic literature in local communities. The group has hung prominent antisemitic banners before, including in [Los Angeles \(“Jews want a race war,” 2020\)](#) and [Austin, Texas \(“Vax the Jews,” 2021\)](#). Shortly after the Austin demonstration, a teenager was arrested after allegedly [setting fire to a synagogue there](#).

Members of the Goyim Defense League, including its founder Jon Minadeo, stood on an overpass while the banners hung, according to pictures taken by drivers and [shared widely](#) on social media this weekend. Several of them appeared to be giving Nazi salutes.



The group is [reportedly pleased by outrage over its stunts](#) because it calls attention to them. And indeed, the latest display appears to have drawn more widespread attention than some of the group's other stunts in large part because the frenzy over West's recent comments has caused more than antisemitism watchdogs to decry it.

"Really great to see slurs about Jews shared across social media because a few parasites went on a bridge over the 405 and spread propaganda," tweeted Elad Nehorai, a Jewish activist who lives in Los Angeles, on Sunday. "Congrats to those who've shared it: you've done their work for them and spread it to millions."

Many of the people sharing the photos – including the gun control activist [Shannon Watts](#), actress Busy Phillips and artist [Zoe Buckman](#) – included criticism of [Adidas, the athletic company that maintains a lucrative partnership with West](#).

Adidas, whose founders were Nazis, has said it has placed its contract with West "under review" but has not severed its ties, despite calls to do so by the Anti-Defamation League and others. The West collaboration reportedly brings in \$2 billion a year, 10% of the company's revenue. "I can literally say antisemitic s— and they cannot drop me," West bragged last week.

Oren Segal, the head of the ADL's Center on Extremism, [noted on Twitter](#) that the Goyim Defense League frequently livestreams its activity and solicits donations during those broadcasts, as it did on Saturday. He said the group's ability to springboard off of West's comments represented a potent danger.

"While Ye (formerly Kanye West) has been no stranger to controversy in recent years, his most recent rhetoric has helped advance the spread of longstanding hateful and false narratives shared by extremist groups," Segal tweeted.

**SHEILA IS RESIDING AT ST. LUKE'S PAVILION.  
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PUBLIC. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEND HER A CARD OR  
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C/O ST. LUKE'S PAVILION  
1000 STACIE DR. ROOM 202  
HAZLETON, PA 18201**

## 2023 Calendar

Calendar subscriptions will be going out very soon. If you have any leads on advertisers for next year's calendar, please contact Christina in the office.





## From Cantor Tasat's Yom Kippur Messages:

### Explanation before the torah reading:

"The aim of the priestly atonement ritual was to ensure the spiritual and physical well-being of the community. "rough rites of sacrificial blood and the ritual of the scapegoat, the sanctuary was purified, thereby creating a reconciliation with the Deity, who had been alienated by sin and transgression. "The distinctive rites prescribed here involve rare practices called riddance, which affect the removal and destruction of impurity. The transgressions of the Israelites and their priests, which produce impurity, are dramatically transferred to the scapegoat, which is driven into the wilderness, never to return. Certain parts of sin offerings are burned to ashes outside the encampment rather than on the altar. Leviticus 16 also ordains the use of sacrificial blood in unusual ways during the purification of the sanctuary. These two processes – purification through sacrificial blood and purification by riddance – are woven into one of the most complex rituals to have reached us from any ancient society" (*Baruch Levine*).

By the time of the prophets, the idea of purging sin through the rituals of a sacrificial cult began to evolve. The prophets stressed the human-centered ethical understanding of sin and atonement, strongly opposing any notion that the rituals of the sacrificial cult could automatically purge sin. They warned that wicked people who brought sacrifices with the expectation of automatic atonement did nothing more than desecrate God's Temple, thereby compounding their sins: *Isaiah declares: "What need have I of all your sacrifices? says the Eternal One. . . . Wash yourselves clean; put your evil doings away from my sight. Cease to do evil; learn to do good. Devote yourselves to justice; aid the wronged. Uphold the rights of the orphan; defend the cause of the widow" . "I desire lovingkindness and not sacrifice"* proclaimed Hosea. And Micah similarly speaks forth: *"Would the Eternal be pleased with thousands of rams, with myriads of streams of oil? . . . It has been told to you, O mortal, what is good and what the Eternal One asks of you: Only to do justice, to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God"* (*Micah 6:7-8*).

### A Neilah meditation from Sidney Greenberg:

O God of forgiveness, we came into Your presence on Kol Nidre Night to confess our mistakes and to acknowledge our many failures. We came with remorse and guilt for things which we did but should not have done, and for things we did not do but should have done. Throughout this Yom Kippur, we have been burdened by the weight of our transgressions.

Now, as we conclude this day of worship and reflection, we are still mindful of our failings; but we are heartened by the reassuring message which the ancient prayers speak to us.

O Lord, You know our many weaknesses; we are frail, we are prone to miss the mark, to succumb to temptation, to betray the best that we have been taught.

But You have given us the great gift of repentance; we can turn from the path we have followed; we can set forth on a new and better way.

Help us, O Lord, to repent sincerely, so that we may merit forgiveness. Help us to live honorably and to avoid the transgressions for which we have asked Your pardon.

As Yom Kippur draws to its close, we pray; May our thoughts and words find favor before You; and may our hopes and deeds be worthy of Your blessings.

During the Yamim Nora'im we have asked God to *inscribe* us in the book of life. Now as we enter the silent 'Amidah of Neilah, we ask God to seal us (*hotmenu*) in the Book of Life.

This is a time, as the sun begins to go down and the shadows lengthen, to express our deepest prayers and feelings to God before our sacred Torah, to get close to kedusha, to holiness, to open the gates that are closing.

## OCTOBER DONATIONS RECEIVED

### Yahrzeit Fund

#### From:

Gary Mednitsky  
Maxine Yeager  
Michele R Goldberg  
Faye & Richard Bishop  
Gail Burger  
Nathan & Laura Katz  
Ruthie Goldstein  
Ruthie Goldstein  
Faye & Richard Bishop  
Faye & Richard Bishop  
Faye & Richard Bishop  
Beryl Brown  
Harriet & Jay Harowitz  
Martin Cohn

#### In Memory Of:

Samuel Mednitsky, Father  
Myrtle Schlesinger, Mother  
Sadie Goldberg, Mother  
Fannie Gandell, Grandmother  
Rose Weissberger, Grandmother  
Marilyn Katz, Mother  
Morris Hoffman, Grandfather  
Henry Goldstein, Father  
Altheda Ziff, Mother of Friend  
Minnie Chaskin, Neighbor & Mother of friend  
Rose Bishop, Grandmother  
Morris Feller, Grandfather  
Ben Mason, Father  
Hannah Sarah Cohn, Daughter

### General Fund Donations:

Samuel Eisen  
Renee Barson  
Rachel Freedman

We greatly appreciate donations for yahrzeits, life events, and other celebrations! They truly keep the shul running and show how strong our congregation is.

If you'd like information about donating, please email us at [agudasisraelhazleton@gmail.com](mailto:agudasisraelhazleton@gmail.com) or call the shul.



November (Cheshvan/Kislev) Yahrzeits

*May the memory of the righteous endure as a blessing.*

The yahrzeit plaque lights are on in the sanctuary in memory of our departed loved ones.

\*Numbers before each name correspond to the Hebrew date of their passing. The date after each name is the secular day of the yahrzeit. Yahrzeit candles should be lit the evening before this date burning through the day of their passing. Kaddish should be said the evening before and the day of the date of passing.

Cheshvan

8 Benjamin Levy 11/2  
10 Charles Chenetz 11/4  
10 Meril Frucht 11/4  
10 Fay Gold 11/4  
11 Rochelle Spizer 11/5  
11 Hy Feller 11/5  
11 Anna F. Oberson 11/5  
14 Irving Brown 11/8  
14 Eva Cutler 11/8  
17 Abe M. Bloch 11/11  
17 Gary David Taub 11/11  
19 Joseph Abramson 11/13  
19 Milton Yust 11/13  
19 David Rosen 11/13  
20 Morris Levine 11/14  
20 Esther Mednitsky 11/14  
20 Rose Shamieh 11/14

23 Reuben Cohn 11/17  
24 Hasia Burkat 11/18  
26 Jan M. Levy 11/20  
26 Rochelle Solomon 11/20  
27 Betty Brenner 11/21  
27 Etta Brownstein 11/21  
27 Ruth Eisenberg 11/21  
28 Lillian Bohorad 11/22  
28 Milton Miller 11/22  
30 Samuel Koplín 11/24

Kislev

1 Rabbi Michael Michlin 11/25  
3 Ethel Pegalis 11/27  
3 Leroy Orkin 11/27  
3 Selma Sebrans 11/27  
6 Fannie Aranoff 11/30  
6 Lena Levine 11/30

*Prayers To Recite When Lighting the Yahrzeit Candle*

“I light this candle to bring peace to the soul of \_\_\_\_\_ (insert Jewish name) ben/bat (son of/daughter of) \_\_\_\_\_ (insert father’s Jewish name).”  
The human soul is a light from God. May it be your will that the soul of (*insert name*) enjoy eternal life, along with the souls of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah, and the rest of the righteous that are in Gan Eden. Amen.

*Neir Adonai Nishmat Adam. Yehi Ratzon Milfanacha, Adonai Eloheinu Veilohei Avoteinu, Shetehei Nishmat (insert name) Tzerurah betzeror hachayim, im nishmot Avraham Yitzchak ve’Ya’akov, Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel VeLeah. Tehi Menutchatah kavod, Selah*

## NOVEMBER PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – originally delivered during Yom Kippur services



Dear Friends,

Agudas Israel, with its ups and downs, curve balls and windstorms, water and roof damage, plaster and window problems, Cantor Barry Butensky breaking the news that he wasn't coming back and we only had a short period of time before the High Holidays; and I am proud to say, look at us here and now. I am in awe that we are being entertained in prayer by amazing musicians sharing with us sweet delicacies of hope, feeling and love! Just please God, keep the rain away so the Tasats can drive back to Maryland without using a rowboat.

Life is not lived in a straight line, there are definitely twists and turns along the path, and we have to embrace new opportunities in a positive light. At Rabbi Michlin's recent unveiling service, it became so apparent that he made his mark by bringing light to so many different people. Many described how he befriended and helped with his selfless demeanor. He did not like negative confrontation, but he also taught us that we have to experience the lows in life to really appreciate the good times. I'm glad to say that his legacy is one where many were touched by his positiveness. May He Rest In Peace.

So much preparation took place for the High Holidays. I'm so grateful for each person on this Agudas team who assists us in moving forward with the unknowns that we've faced in the past few years. We need to add more team members that play such an important part to keep this legacy going forward.

As we embark on our 100-year anniversary, which stemmed back to June of 1923, please come forward with not only ideas but your time and energy to make this centennial anniversary the highlight of the Hazleton area. I would like this to be the fundraiser to help offset the costs for the plaster and paint restoration project. As we know maintaining the building is not only challenging but also expensive.

We appreciate and need donations, whether it be Yahrzeit memorial's, Mitzvah fund, Yom Kippur and floral donations or another of your choice. Your generosity is so very necessary for our future of Agudas. Many of us are 2nd, 3rd and 4th generations here so keep it moving forward by stepping up and volunteering in our ancestors' memories.

We want to bring back the Leisure Lounge lunches. It's important for us to interact and communicate with our families. We need your participation and attendance and any good or even not so good, cooks to step forward and assist. I'm not sure if everyone is aware that Christina, along with her amazing computer and tech background, has a science degree and has started an organic farm where she also works very hard at. Christina is very knowledgeable with healthy foods and is willing to assist the JCC in the kitchen with others in preparing kosher meals.

I would like to thank all of our stars here that come together to align us in keeping this Jewish community and our traditions alive. Please make an effort to attend Shabbat Services so that we have a

Minyan. Also, it's awesome that we continue our weekly Mi Shebeirach tradition for our friends and family who are in need of prayers.

Thank you to Cantor Ramon and his lovely and talented wife, Roanne for extremely meaningful, uplifting, and enjoyable High Holiday services. I felt like I was sitting in a New York Broadway Opera Theatre during Kol Nidre services. Thanks for your preparation, participation and hard work to Richard Kline, Christina Ferry, Marlene and Jimmy Leonard and Howard Narrow, who shared his birthday with us at yesterday's services.

All the best,

*Debbie Walker*