CHAI CYCLE
CYCLING, CONVERSATION, JEWISH COMMUNITY

After Tisha B'Av: Choosing Hope

Based on the writings of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

Opening (2–3 minutes)

> "Just a few days ago we observed Tisha B'Av, the saddest day on the Jewish calendar, when we remember the destruction of both Temples and countless other tragedies in Jewish history. Yet Judaism never ends with mourning. Beginning immediately afterward, we enter seven weeks of consolation leading toward the High Holidays. I thought today we'd explore one of Rabbi Jonathan Sacks' central teachings: the difference between optimism and hope."

Text

> **"Optimism and hope are not the same. Optimism is the belief that things will get better. Hope is the belief that together we can make things better."**
>
> **"Hope is born when people discover that they can act together to change the world for the better."**
>
> **"To be a Jew is to be an agent of hope in a world serially threatened by despair."**

Discussion Questions

Part 1 – Understanding the Text

- What words or phrases immediately stand out to you?
- Why do you think Rabbi Sacks distinguishes between optimism and hope?
- Can you be hopeful even when you're not optimistic?

Part 2 – Personal Reflection

- Tell us about a time when you couldn't control a difficult situation but still found hope.
- Has another person ever helped you become more hopeful?
- When have you helped create hope for someone else?

Part 3 – Jewish Perspective

- Why do you think hope has become such a central Jewish value?
- How has the Jewish people maintained hope through repeated loss and exile?
- What practices or rituals help keep hope alive?

Part 4 – Today

Without making it political:

- Where do you see hope in Jewish life today?
- What small acts strengthen our community?
- What does it mean to be an "agent of hope"?

Closing

Invite everyone to complete this sentence:

> **"One way I want to practice hope this week is..."**