

## Jacob: Man of Vigor, Drive, Initiative, and Tenacity

What is the Torah's point in telling us the story about how Jacob meets Rachel? Some might explain it as a tale of romance and chivalry, a tale of Jacob's great love for Rachel and how it led Jacob to defy custom and one-handedly move the huge stone which capped the well without the usual assistance of others. I would agree that there is some degree of "romance" and a tale of the power of love and attraction here. But for me, that love is only one aspect of an overall story-line which describes, throughout this and following narratives, a man of great vigor, initiative, energy, and zeal. That tenacious vigor and drive was already on display in last week's Parasha, in Jacob's pursuit of Esau (from the very womb) to gain the birthright. Isaac's allowing Jacob's blessing to stand was probably a concessionary acknowledgment that Jacob was indeed the most vigorous and driven of his two sons and hence most likely to flourish.. Esau's hunting pursuit of prey required tenaciousness, but Jacob's determined pursuit of his brother's birthright ultimately showed more.

At the well, Jacob seems to sneer at the laziness of the local shepherds and the lack of initiative and wastefulness involved in their procedure. Instead of letting their flocks continue to graze and pasture in the fields, precious time was being wasted at watering time, having all the animals crouch down and wait for all the shepherds and flocks to gather. Perhaps the stone well-cap was indeed large, and they were following a certain customary procedure, but the shepherds were certainly not particularly productive that way! And the way the narrative speaks about Laban's sons seems to pour scorn upon their laziness, in contrast to Jacob's drive.

Jacob's greater vigor paid off, not only with regard to his personal fertility in siring his brood, but also in the fecundity of his flocks, in comparison with the flocks of his father-in-law, brothers-in-law, and the local shepherds. If Jacob could remove the capstone, then the others could have, as well; they were just too lazy! It is interesting that Rachel shepherds Laban's flocks, instead of her brothers; that also may be impugning that they lacked drive. Jacob's brothers-in-law later reportedly complained that Jacob seems to have taken all the wealth of their father which they had expected to inherit. But they had allowed Jacob to be the active one in mating the flocks and don't seem to have taken much initiative themselves; hence, to their sisters, their complaints seem baseless. Jacob himself seems to be the one who is rightfully responsible for the increase in Laban's flocks. And he is actually also the one who cared for the flocks personally, staying out in the cold pastures at night, as he says to Laban in 31:40. That is why that increase is deemed by his wives (and confirmed by God) to be rightfully Jacob's.

Jacob's vigor and tenacity is also, of course, on display in the story of the wrestling with the angel at the end of the Parasha. Jacob's tenacity in struggling on through the night forces the concessionary acknowledgment of his opponent, and is indicated by the name "Israel." Such drive, vigor, and tenacity are indeed rare, and are difficult to emulate as virtues, since they are in themselves a Divine blessing. Yet our Parasha certainly finds this a virtuous character trait worthy of our aspiration. Israelites may not be the most physically numerous of peoples. But something of the drive, vigor, and initiative of Jacob, later focused into religious zeal, along with the concomitant scoffing at laziness, has always remained basic to the Jewish ethos.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL  
The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

## Shabbat Vayetse *November 12-13, 2021*

### SCHEDULE

**Candle Lighting** | 4:22 pm

**Friday Evening Services** | 4:30 pm

**Friday Night Lights** | following services | *2021-22 season sponsored by the Julis-Rabinowitz family* | *Sponsored by Manuel Vazquez-Senior*

**Zemirot** | 8:30 am

**Shahrit** | 9:00 am

**Jr. Congregation** | Led by Teen Leaders & Mrs. Lisa Rohde | following services (approx. 10:45 am)

**Outdoor Kiddush** | following services | *Sponsored by the Neumark and Herlands families, in honor of Melvin Neumark's birthday*

**Shabbat Afternoon Class** | 3:35 pm | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik *open to fully vaccinated individuals only* | *Sponsored by Tikva Ostrega, in memory of her father, Ezra Meir Shohet, on the occasion of his nabala*

**Shabbat Afternoon Services** | 4:20 pm

**Shabbat Ends** | 5:07 pm

**Virtual Habdala Service** | Rev. Z. Edinger | 5:30 pm

### Weekday Service Times

#### Morning Services

Sunday: 8:05 am | Monday- Friday: 7:05 am

#### Evening Services

Sunday (Minha/Arbit): 4:30 pm | Monday-Thursday (Arbit only): 6:30 pm

*Reminder: If you choose not to wear a mask when permissible, you represent and warrant that you are fully vaccinated (+ 14 days). If requested, you must wear a well-fitted mask wherever and whenever required.*

***If you're eligible for the vaccine booster, we encourage it, and if your child is eligible to be vaccinated, we encourage that too. Once you've been boosted/vaccinated, please send vaccination proof to [info@shearithisrael.org](mailto:info@shearithisrael.org).***

---

## THIS SHABBAT

---

### *Friday Night Lights*

**IN PERSON, Fridays | Following Evening Services**  
*2021-22 season sponsored by the Julis-Rabinowitz family*  
*This session sponsored by Manuel Vazquez-Senior*

*To sponsor a future session, visit [shearithisrael.org/fnl5782](http://shearithisrael.org/fnl5782).*

---

## THIS SUNDAY

---

### **First Responder Youth Appreciation Event**

**THIS Sunday, November 14**

**11:00 am | Meet promptly in front of FDNY Engine 74 (120 West 83 St)**  
**11:30 am | NYPD 20th Precinct (120 West 82 Street)**

Our youth and their families are invited to meet our local FDNY and NYPD and show their appreciation!

We'll get to visit our local police precinct and the firehouse, ask questions, and learn all about what it's like to be a first responder. We'll be bringing treats to brighten their day!

**Please have your children prepare notes, cards, or posters of appreciation to bring to the event.**

---

## ONGOING

---

### **The Temple: A Hanukkah Tour Through Time**

*A 7-Part Series Leading Up to Hanukkah*

**Rabbi Meir Soloveichik**

**Tuesdays | 7:30 pm | via conference call**

**New Dial-In Number:**

**667-770-1689**

**Participant code: 124005#**

*To register or sponsor, visit [shearithisrael.org/hanukkah-series5782](http://shearithisrael.org/hanukkah-series5782).*

---

## COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

---

Happy 94th birthday to **Melvin Neumark!**

Condolences to the Nasser and Abitbol families, on the passing of Robert Abitbol.

---

## PRESERVING PAVED PARADISE

---

We hope you have had the pleasure of experiencing our beautiful, safe and accessible outdoor pavilion, "Paved Paradise." If not, you must.

Louis Solomon recently announced the launch of our second phase of fundraising, which will enable us to preserve and maintain this wonderful outdoor space.

### **Our Phase 2 Fundraising Goal: \$150,000**

**Please help us make the necessary investments to ensure the ongoing maintenance and beautification of this valuable outdoor space, "Paved Paradise," so we can enjoy it now and for years to come.**

*To donate, visit [shearithisrael.org/preserving-paved-paradise](http://shearithisrael.org/preserving-paved-paradise).*

---

## THANKSGIVING AT SHEARITH ISRAEL

---

### **Annual Thanksgiving Pack-A-Thon**

*A Hunger Alleviation Event in Support of MASBIA*

**Thursday, November 25 | 9:30 am**

**IN PERSON, Outdoors on Paved Paradise**

*Register & Donate at [shearithisrael.org/packathon2021](http://shearithisrael.org/packathon2021)*

We are proud to once again join with our community faith partners, The Jewish Center, West End Church, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, to celebrate Thanksgiving in the true spirit of the day - by giving to others.

This year's Pack-A-Thon will be in person, in our beautiful, COVID-safe outdoor pavilion, Paved Paradise. We will pack nutritious food packages for those in need, and MASBIA will distribute them. More than ever, we need volunteers so we can secure a safe and smooth event. **Please consider joining our team of captains!**

Help us feed hundreds of struggling families!

Again this year, thanks to an anonymous donor, all contributions (up to \$10,000) will be matched. **Together, we can reach our goal of \$18,000!**

---

### **Thanksgiving Parade Viewing for Youth**

**Thanksgiving Day, November 25**

Our Portico provides one of the best Thanksgiving Parade views in the city.

This year, in order to avoid crowding on the Portico, the parade viewing is for school-aged children who do not need an adult by their side. Sorry, adults and very young children cannot be accommodated on the Portico steps this year.

*To register your child, visit [shearithisrael.org/parade2021](http://shearithisrael.org/parade2021).*