

JEWISH EDUCATION AT SHEARITH ISRAEL IN 5779

To sponsor a single class or an entire semester, visit
shearithisrael.org/sponsoraaclass.

WEEKLY CLASSES:

Saadia Gaon's Book of Beliefs and Opinions

Rabbi Sjimon den Hollander | Sundays | 8:45-9:45 am

Entering the Land: The Book of Joshua

Rabbi David Silber | Sundays | 10:00 -11:30 am
(Tuition is \$275, but FREE for Shearith Israel members)
See inside for class details.

Rabbi Soloveichik's History Lectures

Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | On Select Mondays | 7:00 pm
See important note below.

Rabbi Soloveichik's Talmud and Torah Lectures

Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | On Select Tuesdays | 7:00 pm
See important note below.

Tuesday Morning Women's Class

Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | Tuesdays | 9:00 am
IMPORTANT! Sign up to receive class notifications at
shearithisrael.org/join-our-email-lists.

Friday Night Lights

Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | Fridays | Following Evening Services

A NOTE ON RABBI SOLOVEICHIK'S 5779 MIDWEEK
EVENING CLASSES

Dates for these classes will be announced in advance, so it is more important than ever for participants to **subscribe to Shearith Israel's emails, and specifically, to Rabbi Soloveichik's email distribution** for alerts and updates on these classes at shearithisrael.org/join-our-email-lists.

OPEN BET MIDRASH

Most Weekday Evenings | 5:15 pm until Evening Services
Learn your way: join a *habruta*, hear a short *debar torah*, or simply pick a *sefer* off the shelf.

DEBAR TORAH: ACTS OF SELF-PRESERVATION

— Z. EDINGER, SHAMASH —

One of the troubling stories in this week's portion is that of Abraham's deception regarding his relationship to Sarah (Gen. 12: 10-20.)

Abraham and Sarah go to Egypt in order to escape famine in the Land of Israel. Abraham is fearful that his wife's beauty will attract men willing to kill him in order to have Sarah for themselves. So, he asks Sarah to say that she is his sister instead of his wife. Once in Egypt, Sarah's beauty is praised and she is brought to Pharaoh. Pharaoh gives Abraham great wealth on account of taking his sister. God then afflicts Pharaoh until he realizes or is told that Sarah is not simply Abraham's sister but in fact his wife. Pharaoh then returns Sarah and expels Abraham and his household from Egypt.

The story is troubling for many reasons— Abraham appears willing to give his wife over to another man, he either lies (or obscures the truth) about his relationship to Sarah, and on top of all this, he seems to profit from these morally questionable decisions. It is a difficult story to understand.

Abraham in his introductory questions on this chapter asks: What elevated man would choose life with such terrible dishonor, seeking to benefit himself by having his wife commit adultery with others? It would have been more behooving had he chosen death, rather than do such a disgraceful thing.

Nahmanides on verse 10, says quite explicitly that Abraham erred.

ודע כי אברהם אבינו חטא גדול בשגגה שהביא אשתו הצדקת כמכשול עון מפני פחדו פן ייהרגוהו, והיה לו לבטוח בשם שציל אותו ואת אשתו ואת כל אשר לו, כי יש באלוקים כח לעזור ולהציל.

Know that our patriarch Abraham unwittingly sinned greatly, for he put his righteous wife in the position of being a stumbling block leading to wrongdoing because of his fear that he would be killed. He ought to have trusted the Lord to save him and his wife and all that belonged to him, for G-d has the power to help and deliver.

Many have disagreed with Nahmanides and tried to explain Abraham's behavior more favorably.

Already in the Second Temple Period, the Genesis Apocryphon (one of the first of the Dead Sea Scrolls to be found) in re-imagining the story has Abraham and Sarah develop their deceptive plan together as a result of a prophetic dream. Abraham didn't lie for the sake of personal gain, but rather because God revealed to him how to avoid harm.

Radak simply says that when in danger people must resort to whatever means are available to save themselves.

ראוי לכל צדיק שלא יסמוך במקום סכנה על הנס וישמור עצמו בכל תחבולה אשר יוכל For Radak, there is no moral ambiguity here, Abraham was forced to use this deception in order to live. The lesson of the story – arguing directly with Nahmanides - is that man cannot rely on miracles to save us—we must do what we can for ourselves.

Abraham's explanation of the story posits that things did not go as Abraham had originally planned. He theorizes that Abraham thought that telling the Egyptians that Sarah was his sister would begin a lengthy period of bargaining by potential suitors. Each making offers to Abraham for Sarah's hand in marriage. While this negotiating was taking place, Abraham would be able to acquire needed provisions and return to Israel with Sarah without incident. What Abraham did not expect, however, was for Pharaoh himself to take Sarah without any negotiation. Only then, once Sarah had been taken to the house of Pharaoh did God step in to save them. Seen through the explanation of Abraham and others, Abraham's deception was a clever plan which simply didn't work out.

Genesis is replete with stories that challenge us to think about their meaning and moral implications. Sometimes, we wish the Torah simply told us the moral or lesson to be learned. But precisely because these lessons are ambiguous and open to interpretation permits us to ponder them over and over again, always seeking new meaning. And, just like our forefathers, we too will face complicated moral dilemmas in life that we must navigate as best we can.



• 5414 • 5779 •

CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL

Year of Years Celebration

CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL

The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

Shabbat Lekh-Lekha

October 19-20, 2018

Hertz Pentateuch: p. 45; Haftarah p. 60
Kaplan Living Torah: p. 52; Haftarah p. 1058

CANDLE LIGHTING | 5:52 pm

EVENING SERVICES | 5:45 pm

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS: 5779 PREMIERE | Rabbi Soloveichik |
“Shabbat and the Messianic Menu” | *Sponsored this week by Carol & Alan Schechter. 2018-2019 season sponsored by the Julis family.*

MORNING SERVICES | Main Sanctuary | 8:15 am

TOT SHABBAT | Ages 0-4 | 10:00 am | Fidanque Youth Room

YOUTH GROUPS | Ages 5-12 | 10:00 am | Elias Room

JUNIOR CONGREGATION | 10:30 am | Little Synagogue

LECTURE | Rabbi Soloveichik | “John Adams in Jerusalem: Shearith Israel's History & the Jewish State”

KIDDUSH LUNCHEON | Levy Auditorium | *Sponsored by Rabbi Sjimon den Hollander, in honor of his recent semikha, 20-year giyur anniversary, and 19-year wedding anniversary.*

SHABBAT AFTERNOON CLASS | Rabbi Soloveichik | 4:45 pm | “What's in a Name? Shakespeare vs. Judaism” | Levy Auditorium

EVENING SERVICES | 5:45 pm

HABDALA | 6:39 pm

Weekday Service Times

Mornings: Sunday: 8:00 am | Monday-Friday: 7:15 am

Evenings: Sunday-Thursday: 5:45 pm (note new time)

Public Tours

Our next public tour is
Wednesday, November 14, at 11:00 AM

Parnas Office Hours

Louis Solomon would be delighted to meet with you. Please schedule a visit at parnas@shearithisrael.org.

Film Screening: *When the Smoke Clears*

Saturday Night, November 10 | 6:30 pm

Join us the night before Veterans Day to see this compelling and relevant documentary from Jerusalem U,

When the Smoke Clears:

A Story of Brotherhood, Resilience, and Hope.

It tells the true stories of young Israeli soldiers, Gil, Ofer, and Elad, whose injuries leave them fighting for the strength to live. Making breakthroughs and finding meaning by reaching out to those in need, they discover that what didn't kill them really did make them stronger.

For tickets, visit shearithisrael.org/smoke.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Fourth Annual Thanksgiving Pack-A-Thon

Thursday, November 23, 9:30 am | Levy Auditorium

Building on the success of the past three Pack-A-Thons, this year we will be expanding our circle of local faith community partners to include Drisha, along with our continuing partners: the West End Collegiate Church, the Jewish Center, and the Church of Latter-day Saints. Last year, together we raised over \$18,000 to fight hunger.

On Thanksgiving morning, after Rabbi Soloveichik's special Thanksgiving address, registered volunteers will pack meals to be distributed to hungry New Yorkers. If you'd like to volunteer, donate, or join the event committee, please visit shearithisrael.org/packathon2018.

Sisterhood 5779 Inaugural Meeting

THIS Wednesday, October 24 | 6:15-7:45 pm

Come and bring ideas for activities and projects. For details, contact Carla Schein, President, at Scheinc6@gmail.com or Mrs. Lisa Rohde, Secretary, lrohde-csi@yahoo.com.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mazal Tob to Ari Schottenstein and his wife, Jana, on the birth of a baby girl, Ella.

Mazal Tob to Dr. Leora Mogilner & Dr. Richard Linhart on the marriage of their daughter, Tobey Linhart, to Yonah Goldschmidt.

PTTS Shabbaton & Young Couples and Families Luncheon

Shabbat Morning, November 3

Jr. Congregation with a Torah Reading begins at 10:30 am

Luncheon begins after Morning Services

Young families will form meaningful bonds at our inaugural PTTS Shabbaton. Our Hebrew School students will be preparing in class for this big day when they are invited to take center stage in our Junior Congregation on Shabbat morning, with a Young Couples and Families Luncheon to follow.

To register or sponsor the luncheon, go to shearithisrael.org/ptts-csi-luncheon.

Special Opportunity for CSI Teens

We are looking for a few experienced Junior Congregation participants to mentor some of our PTTS students to help them prepare for this special event. Contact Yona Glass at yglass@shearithisrael.org if you would like to help a PTTS student master their part. This is a rewarding and fun chance to support our PTTS students, and can also be used to fulfill community service hours.

Entering the Land: The Book of Joshua

Rabbi David Silber | Eleven Sundays | 10 am-11:30 am
(Tuition is \$275, but FREE for Shearith Israel members)

Study the book of Joshua from a literary perspective, exploring core biblical questions: what does it mean to be a disciple, and how can a student turn into a teacher? Can anyone replace Moses? Does Joshua fulfill the Torah's commands about conquest of the land? What can this teach us about war and the possibility of peace?

Rabbi David Silber received ordination from Yeshiva University's Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, and is the Founder and Dean of Drisha Institute for Jewish Education.

Free member registration at shearithisrael.org/silber.

THE ONLY STOP ON SCOTT SHAY'S NATIONAL TOUR WHERE YOU CAN HEAR HIM WITH RABBI SOLOVEICHIK

A Shabbat Dinner Featuring

Shearith Israel Member and Author, Scott Shay

in Conversation with

Rabbi Meir Soloveichik

Friday Evening, November 9 | Following Evening Services

Religion can be both inspiring and distressing. And many critiques of it are simultaneously compelling and dubious. In his new book, *In Good Faith: Questioning Religion and Atheism*, Scott Shay examines atheist arguments with a refreshing modern eye in this comprehensive look at our most fundamental questions about faith and reason.

To register, visit shearithisrael.org/scott-shay.

Scott A. Shay has had a successful business career spanning Wall Street, private equity, venture capital, and banking. Throughout his life, he has also been a student of religion and how religion ought to apply to the world outside of the synagogue, church, or mosque, also authoring the best-selling title, *Getting Our Groove Back: How to Energize American Jewry*.

*Note: Books can be ordered from Amazon.com or other vendors—if you have them shipped directly to the Synagogue to arrive **before Thursday, November 8**, Scott will inscribe the book to you prior to Shabbat and give it to you at the dinner.*

Youth Team Meet-and-Greet for CSI Parents

with our new Youth Leadership Team,

Nat Bernstein & Daniela Bernstein

THIS Monday, October 22 | 7:00 pm

Hosted by Zoya Raynes & Naftali Friedman

Address will be provided upon RSVP.

Shearith Israel parents, get to know our new youth groups leaders, Nat and Daniela, at this meet-and-greet hosted by Zoya Raynes and Naftali Friedman. We are confident that our youth will benefit from these two energetic, creative, and inspiring role models. Light dairy dessert will be served.

RSVP at shearithisrael.org/meet-and-greet.