

JEWISH EDUCATION AT SHEARITH ISRAEL IN 5779

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

WEEKLY CLASSES:

Saadiyah 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 through December 23
10:00 -11:30 am
(Tuition is \$275, but FREE for Shearith Israel members)
See shearithisrael.org/silber 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: TRIBAL LITERATURE AND THE FOUNDING OF NATIONS
— RABBI IRA ROHDE, HAZZAN —

The saga told of Abraham and his family relations and connections convey many implicit messages, of mixed types of character, to the reader. The story of Sodom, and of Lot and his descendants in particular, is complex, with many implications, both for the good and the bad, implied. On the one hand, Lot and his descendants are a tribal people who are not only close relatives of Abraham, a nephew for whom Abraham took special responsibility after Lot's father died. Later on in the Bible, despite conflict, Moab especially, as well as Ammon, continue to be thought of as closely-related peoples. And history has borne out the closeness of these relations: Ancient Moabite inscriptions are written in a language which is basically a form of Israelite Hebrew. Now, Lot seems to be criticized for originally having chosen to settle in the rich southern deep-valley plain around the wicked city of Sodom and for dwelling in the city of Sodom. But at the same time, Lot and his family are much preferred to the men of Sodom, Gomorrah, and the other cities of the vicinity. One ambiguity is whether Lot was saved due to his own merit or whether that was purely God's favor due to Abraham's merit, but the text does seem to be saying that Lot had some considerable merit of his own, and contrasts him with Sodom. Of course, Lot originally came to that vicinity to provide room for his flocks; Lot is not a native city-dweller, but rather from a tribal pastoral background. This makes him unlike the original "Canaanite" people of the Sodom region, who seem not organized by tribe, but rather as "Cities of the Valley Plain," each city with its own king and cultivated fields. Lot's attempt to give hospitality and protect his visitors seems portrayed genuinely, and, at the same time, mockingly. The treatment of Lot's daughters in the story goes even further in the confusingly "mixed" implications for the history of Israel with Ammon and Moab. Lot's daughters clearly claim a strong sense of tribal loyalty, unlike Sodom. Tribalists are known for the hospitality and protection they offer to guests from the outside, unlike city dwellers, for whom rights are only due to their fellow citizens. And yet that claimed loyalty of the daughters to their father is, at the same time, being mocked, perhaps in the offer to exchange them for the visitors, and surely in the story of the birth and naming of Moab and Ammon.

Another group of tribal pastoralists, prominent in our *Parasha* and those following, again considered as direct relatives of Abraham, are the children of Hagar and the other wives of Abraham, and here again, there are mixed positive and negative messages. Overall, even though tribal groups often don't get along, there is a general respect for the tribal organization of Abraham's relatives, over and against the kings of city-states, whether of Sodom, the cities of the Canaanites, or in the story told here of the "King of Gerar," a city-state of the Philistines. At the end of our *Parasha*, yet another related tribal people with pastoralist origins on Israel's northeast border is referred to: the children of Abraham's brother Nahor, who seem to be seen as the ancestors of the Syrians/ Arameans. And again the reader is given mixed messages: Rebecca will be Isaac's wife, and Laban's daughters Jacobs wives. Laban is our relative, and the daughters of Aram are preferred to those of the Canaanites. Laban "helps" both Eliezer as well as Jacob, and Jacob even makes a pact with Laban. Yet Laban's trustworthiness is deeply suspect.

Although there were, doubtless, stories told among tribal groups, our Torah is perhaps the first **written** version of such stories to have appeared. All written literature prior to the Torah seems to have been geared to the needs of city-states and empires. The Torah itself seems to bear this out, naming the great cities built by Nimrod and others, not the tribes or peoples they organized, by and large. Where there were "peoples" involved, it meant that they were empires subjugated by the great cities. Interestingly, it is first among the Israelites and their neighbors, who describe themselves as organizing tribally, as peoples held together by blood-ties, do the first truly national bodies of literature emerge. And Israel's Bible, perhaps the first expanded body of national literature to have ever existed, cemented Israel's existence as perhaps the first true nation.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL
The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue
Shabbat Vayera
October 26-27, 2018

Hertz Pentateuch: p. 63; Haftarah p. 76
Kaplan Living Torah: p. 78; Haftarah p. 1060

CANDLE LIGHTING | 5:42 pm
EVENING SERVICES | 5:45 pm
FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS | Rabbi Soloveichik | "Shabbat and the Trans-Siberian Railway" | *Sponsored this week by the Bengio Misrahi Family in memory of their grandparents, Henri Misrahi and Rachel and Amram Bengio. 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 | "The British Are Coming! Rosh Hashanah 1776"
This Lecture is part of Rabbi Soloveichik's Year of Years Lecture Series
KIDDUSH | Levy Auditorium

SHABBAT AFTERNOON CLASS | Rabbi Soloveichik | 4:35 pm | "The Akeidah and Us" | Levy Auditorium
EVENING SERVICES | 5:35 pm
HABDALA | 6:29 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.

EARN YOUR THANKSGIVING BY GIVING BACK

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**.

On Thanksgiving morning, after Rabbi Soloveichik's special Thanksgiving address, registered volunteers will pack meals to be distributed to hungry New Yorkers.

Last year, we raised over \$18,000 to fight hunger. Help us top that this year—we're off to a great start!



To sign up or support this event, visit shearithisrael.org/packathon2018.

Would You Like To Co-Sponsor Our Thanksgiving Festivities?
Visit shearithisrael.org/thanksgiving.

Don't let us go dry.
Be a scotch or arak sponsor. To sponsor or contribute go to shearithisrael.org/scotch-and-arak-sponsorships

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Condolences to **Dr. Eli Bryk** on the passing of his father, Dr. David Bryk.

When available, *shiba* details can be found at: shearithisrael.org/announcements

DEADLINE: THIS MONDAY, OCTOBER 29

Shabbaton & Luncheon for CSI & PTTS Young Couples and Families
Shabbat Morning, November 3
Jr. Congregation with a Torah Reading begins at 10:30 am
Luncheon begins after Morning Services

CSI and PTTS families will form meaningful bonds at our inaugural PTTS Shabbaton. Our Hebrew School students are 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.

CSI Teens — PTTS Needs You!

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.

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.
Only \$5 for members/\$8 for non-members in advance, \$10 for all at the door.

THE ONLY STOP ON SCOTT SHAY'S 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*.

4 Mitzvot Workshops with Z. Edinger
Exclusively for PTTS & Shearith Israel Elementary School Age Members
First Session: THIS Sunday | 10:00 am
Sunday, December 23 | Sunday, March 3 | Sunday, April 14

Our Shamash, Zachary Edinger, is launching a very special series of Mitzvot Workshops, to be held on select Sundays throughout the school year. The first session will be **THIS Sunday, October 28**.

These workshops are a wonderful opportunity for our elementary school age youth - both boys and girls - to learn to sing the melodies of selected prayers from the Shabbat and holiday services as well as learn about the parts of the Torah service, and get trained in the hands-on parts of the service.

PTTS students are expected to be in attendance, and CSI youth are heartily welcome and are asked to register in advance so we know how many of you to expect.

To register, visit shearithisrael.org/mitzvot-workshop.