

Open Bet Midrash

Weeknights | One hour before evening services

Our Shearith Israel Bet Midrash Program has officially begun its 2019-2020 season! Each weeknight will have two *semikha* students available to help satisfy your religious curiosity. If you are interested in setting up a *habruta* on any subject of your choice, please reach out to Steven Gotlib at stjgot@gmail.com.

CHOIR SELECTIONS THIS SHABBAT

Friday Night

V'Shameru #1 (p. 166) | Samuel Naumbourg

Psalm 23 (p. 174) | Rev. H.P. Mendes

Yigdal (p. 177) | Traditional London, "Old Melody"

Shabbat Morning

Misheberakh (p. 208) | Salamone Rossi

Yehi Hasdekha (p. 215) | Leon Kramer

Ubnuho Yomar (p. 218) | Leon Hyman

Adon Olam (p. 232) | Samuel de Sola

Stitch & Fix

Presented by the Sisterhood

Bi-Monthly on Sundays & Tuesdays | 10 am-12 pm

See schedule below | Elias Room

Stitch and Fix, the revived Sewing Circle, meets on a regular basis. Drop in, select an item from our synagogue vestments that needs mending, then stitch and fix. Some items you can even take home and fix at your convenience. For questions, contact Rose Edinger at rgedinger@gmail.com.

Sunday Nov. 24 | Tuesday Nov. 26

Sunday Dec. 15 | Tuesday Dec. 17

Sunday Jan. 5 | Tuesday Jan. 7

Sunday Feb. 9 | Tuesday Feb. 11

DEBAR TORAH

—STEVEN GOTLIB, BET MIDRASH COORDINATOR—

The *Akedah* portrays a stark conflict between moral intuition and the direct, unquestionable word of God. Rav What should we readers choose to sacrifice as we finish reading the *Akedah*? Our sense of human morality, or our devotion to God?

Soren Kierkegaard argued that a human's duty is to nullify his or her will before God even when that means suspending one's ethical assumptions. Whatever God wants done must be done without question. When God tells you to jump, you can't even ask how high. When God tells you to slaughter your son, you start sharpening the knife.

Kierkegaard's view is in direct contradiction to that of Immanuel Kant. According to Kant, the only thing we know for certain is that it is utterly immoral to kill our children. No one can know with the same degree of confidence that God is communicating to them. It was therefore incumbent on Abraham to question the voice he heard commanding the *Akedah* and make no move whatsoever until proof of it being God's voice could be ascertained—and no sufficient proof would be possible.

R. Aharon Lichtenstein and R. Shimon Gershon Rosenberg (Shagar) each wrote responses from within Jewish tradition to both Kierkegaard and Kant.

According to R. Lichtenstein, a person cannot and should not suspend their own ethical judgement when faced with the word of God. They must rather work on themselves until they and God want the same thing. "One must nullify his own will and accept God's will as the driving force in his life. Ultimately, one should strive to reach the level where he can translate God's will into his own."

This approach allows for Kierkegaard's acceptance of God's command as the be-all-and-end-all, while simultaneously allowing for a degree of Kant's moral push-back. With this view, a person may search for the reason that they are faced with this apparent contradiction between God's word and their moral intuition. They can wrestle with the command that they have been given and come to their own conclusions about the reason for it. But at the end of the day, a command is still a command. Upon reaching resolution, that command must be carried out as the will of God, and as their own will as well.

Rav Shagar by contrast gives doubt a legitimate and essential role in religious decision-making. He develops his position via a *midrash* in which the Satan tells Abraham that it was really he, not God, who commanded the slaughter of Isaac. God will accuse Abraham of being a murderer the very next day if he goes through with this crazy act. Abraham's responds that he will go through with what he perceives as the will of God, even though he knows that he can't truly know he is correct. Rav Shagar argues that one can achieve true religious devotion only by experiencing and overcoming doubt. A devotion that ignores doubt entirely can be very dangerous in an age where we no longer have direct prophecy. How are we to know that the path that we are on is truly the right one and we are not misguided? Furthermore, how do we know that what we are doing is truly the word of Hashem?

Rabbi Hayyim Angel answers this question by pointing out that Judaism is about serving God, not about serving ourselves. Since God is a wholly moral being, His commands must also be moral. The *Akedah* narrative demonstrates to us that we should love God enough to do whatever it is that he demands of us, but also that God does not want us performing immoral actions in His name. Reading the *Akedah* with this in mind makes clear that neither moral intuition nor trust in God should ever be sacrificed.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL

Year of Years Celebration

CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL

The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

Shabbat Vayera

November 15-16, 2019

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

CANDLE LIGHTING | 4:27 pm

EVENING SERVICES (MINHA & ARBIT) | 4:30 pm | Main Sanctuary

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | "Shimon Bar

Yochai & The Twilight Zone" | *2019-2020 season sponsored by the Julis Family.*

ZEMIROT | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary

SHAHRI' | 9:15 am

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

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

JR. CONGREGATION | Ages 5-12 | 10:30 am | Little Synagogue

LECTURE | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | "The First Poetry Slam: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow vs. Emma Lazarus"

KIDDUSH | Levy Auditorium | *Sponsored Ivy & Marvin Schildkraut in honor of Eli Schildkraut reading the Torah on the anniversary of his Bar Mitzvah.*

SHABBAT AFTERNOON CLASS | 3:30 pm | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | "The Matza of Sodom and Gemorrah"

EVENING SERVICES (MINHA & ARBIT) | 4:10 pm

HABDALA | 5:05 pm

Weekday Service Times

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

Evenings (Arbit Only): Sunday-Thursday: 6:30 PM

REGISTER NOW!

PTTS Shabbaton & Family Beatbox Luncheon

With special guest, champion beatboxer Mark Martin

Shabbat, December 14

Our PTTS Hebrew School students are encouraged to take center stage at Junior Congregation on this special shabbat, and then warmly welcomed to join the exciting programming we have planned: **Mark Martin**, Winner of the 2016 American Beatbox Championships, the 2016 International BeatRhyme Battle, and founder of "We Speak Music," will be joining us for our family luncheon after services.

Following Jr. Congregation, Mark will host a **beatbox workshop** for the teenagers and children, and he'll also give a talk at the luncheon on the use of beatboxing as a tool for speech therapy.

To register or sponsor, go to shearithisrael.org/beatbox.

Celebrate Rabbi Marc Angel's 50th Anniversary in the Rabbinate

Shabbat, December 7

Our Rabbi Emeritus, Rabbi Marc Angel, is celebrating 50 years in the rabbinate and will mark the occasion with a seminar, "Reflections on 50 Years of Rabbinic Service." After the seminar, congregants are welcome to wish Rabbi Angel *mazal tob* at the kiddush to follow.

To join our list of sponsors for this kiddush in Rabbi Angel's honor, visit shearithisrael.org/rabbinate50.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

We are proud to recognize the involvement of our congregational leaders, trustee **David Dangoor**, and **Layaliza & Rabbi Meir Soloveichik** in the upcoming UN Watch Gala Dinner, to be held on December 5 at the Plaza Hotel, featuring Keynote Speaker Ambassador Nikki Haley. UN Watch fights anti-Israeli prejudice at the UN, and defends the true principles of human rights. To attend or support the dinner, visit unwatch.org/nygala.

Annual Thanksgiving Pack-A-Thon

Thursday, November 28 | 9:30 am

This year, together with **Chamah**, we will be packing robust packages of chicken, meat, and more that will be distributed to hundreds of struggling Jewish families.

We are delighted to once again be partnering with our local faith community partners in this inter-faith project — **The Jewish Center**, **The West End Collegiate Church**, **the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints**, and **Drisha** — and we welcome this year's new partner, the **Sephardic Academy of Manhattan**.

Come join us on your own or with your whole family on Thanksgiving Day, to give back to those in need, and **help us reach our \$18,000 goal!** which is still only a fraction of the total cost of this project.

Participation starts at **\$18** per person, but larger donations are encouraged, and once again, thanks to an anonymous grant, all donations will be **TRIPLED** (up to \$10,000), and after that, we received a 2-to-1 matching grant for an additional \$1000 — so donate today!

To volunteer at the Pack-A-Thon and/or support this event, visit shearithisrael.org/packathon2019.

Thanksgiving Parade Viewing for Youth

November 28 | 9:30 am

Our Portico provides one of the best Thanksgiving Parade views in the city. In an effort to ensure an orderly, secure, and enjoyable experience for the kids, we ask that you **pre-register**.

Please note that the parade viewing is for *children*, and adults are asked to give priority to the children. Please limit registration to 4 children and 2 adults.

Parade Viewing Registration is FREE for:

- CSI Members
- Current PTTS Students
- Current Toddler Program Students
- Pack-A-Thon donors at the \$180 level and above

For all others and guests of the above, **registration is \$18 per person in advance and \$25 at the door.**

To register your child for the parade viewing, visit shearithisrael.org/parade2019.

JEWISH EDUCATION 5780

- ⇒ **Friday Night Lights | Rabbi Soloveichik**
Friday Nights | Following Evening Services
- ⇒ **The Guide to the Duties of the Heart | Rabbi Sjimon den Hollander**
Sunday Mornings | 8:45 am
- ⇒ **The Road to Kingship | Rabbi David Silber**
Sunday Mornings | 10:00 am
- ⇒ **Tuesday Morning Women's Class | Rabbi Soloveichik**
Tuesdays | 9:00 am | *Sign up for weekly reminders at shearithisrael.org/join-our-email-lists*
- ⇒ **Bet Midrash | led by Steven Gotlib**
Monday-Thursday | One hour before evening services

Please consider sponsoring a class.
Go to: shearithisrael.org/sponsoraclass

COMING UP AT A GLANCE

- ⇒ **Mitzvot Workshop with Z. Edinger**
THIS Sunday, November 17 | 10:00 am | for elementary school aged children
- ⇒ **Thanksgiving Pack-A-Thon**
Thursday Morning, November 28 | 9:30 am | *See center panel for details*
- ⇒ **Stitch & Fix**
Sunday, November 24 & Tuesday, November 26 | 10:00 am | *See side panel for details*
- ⇒ **Rabbi Marc Angel Celebrates 50 Years in the Rabbinate**
Shabbat Morning, December 7 | *See side panel for details*
- ⇒ **Brunch & Learn with Rabbi Soloveichik**
Sunday, December 8 | 10:30 am | for elementary school aged children

Public Tours
Our next public tour is
**Wednesday, November 13, at
11:00 AM**

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