



## Shabbat Vayishlah November 27-28, 2015

Hertz Pentateuch: p. 122; Haftarah p. 137  
Kaplan Living Torah: p. 154; Haftarah p. 1078

**CANDLE LIGHTING** | 4:12 pm  
**MINHAH** | 4:15 pm  
**FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS** | following evening services | Rabbi Soloveichik gives a talk on “The Thanksgiving Wedding in Jerusalem”  
*Sponsored by the Julis Family*

**ZEMIROT** | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary  
**SHAHARIT (NISHMAT)** | 9:00 am | Following services Rabbi Soloveichik will deliver a seminar on “No Sinews is Good Sinews: Jacob, the Angel, and the Sciatic Nerve”  
**TOT SHABBAT** | Ages 0-4 | 10:00 am | Levy Auditorium  
**YOUTH GROUPS** | Ages 5-12 | 10:00 am | Elias Room  
**JR. CONGREGATION** | Ages 5-12 | 10:30 am | Little Synagogue  
**KIDDUSH** | Levy Auditorium

**TOPICS IN JEWISH PHILOSOPHY** | Rabbi Hidary | NO CLASS THIS WEEK

**SEUDAH SHELISHIT AND PIRKEI ABOT SHIUR** | Rabbi Soloveichik | NO CLASS THIS WEEK

**MINHAH/ARBIT** | 4:05 pm  
**KETER SHEM TOB** | Rabbi Hidary | Main Sanctuary NO CLASS THIS WEEK  
**HABDALAH** | 4:57 pm

PTTS will not meet this Sunday and will resume on Thursday, December 3.

Weekday Service Times  
Mornings: Sundays 8:00 AM, Mon-Thur. 7:15 AM;  
Evenings: Sunday - Thursday: 6:30 PM (Arbit only)

### Manners, Laws, and the Man of His Honor Rabbi Ira Rohde

One Hebrew term for etiquette, manners, or norms of conduct is “nimmus,” a derivative of the Greek term “nomos,” the term for a law or a rule. Perhaps the Rabbis used the Greek-derived term to indicate habits and customs of behavior which were not per se legally obligatory or divinely ordained but rather were merely “conventional.” As a foreign-derived term, it was naturally applied to the customs of the Gentiles whose laws were somewhat denigrated as being merely conventional as opposed to Divinely-ordained. This, however, doesn’t mean that etiquette doesn’t have a powerful basis in Divine Law and pre-Divine Law, as the Rabbis wrote about “derekh erez” the “way of the land,” the proper Hebrew term for manners: “Manners precede the Torah.” The German-Jewish refugee sociologist Norbert Elias in his book “The Civilizing Process” wrote about how our modern rules of etiquette, manners, and politeness developed from medieval times to lessen the threat of violence among individuals and were paralleled by rules of diplomacy and engagement within and between polities. Flattery and a hyperbolic use of deferential language were part of this. Jacob’s use of an extreme form of courtesy and etiquette is certainly one of the main themes of Parashat Vayishlah, as well as breaches of proper etiquette by Shekhem and Jacob’s sons Simon and Levi. The great courtesy and honor shown is successful at avoiding violence and warfare, and conversely the breaches of courtesy and honor lead directly to violence.

But there is another, Divine aspect to the courtesy here, as well. Just as human law has to be reflective of Divine Law, so human etiquette has to be reflective of Divine norms and rules. Without Divine morality, there can be no human morality; without Divine honor, there can be no human honor. Jacob’s courtesy and showing honor towards his brother Esau is clearly meant to be reflective of the honor and courtesy Jacob shows to God. Pacts and covenants between men must pattern themselves after the classical pact man makes with God. Jacob first entreats and prays to God for God’s protection, and Jacob’s speech to his brother Esau afterwards mirrors his prayer to God. Jacob’s “gift” to his brother Esau is called both a “minhah,” the term used for a sacrificial “offering, as well as a “blessing.” Jacob “entreats” his brother to accept the offering with goodwill, with the hope that the gift will find favor, propitiate and please his brother. Jacob prays not just for Esau’s forgiveness but that “perhaps he shall lift up my countenance,” a phrase famous from the Priestly Blessing. Jacob humbles himself before his brother as if before God. All of this uses terminology in the human realm borrowed from the realm of sacrifice to God and Divine worship. Of course, these ideals of courtesy and etiquette are taken from the political realm of the royal court. And flattering smooth-talking deference has the practical function of massaging egos. But the main point being made seems to be that in his approach to his brother Jacob is here deliberately and seriously imitating classic standards of honor and respect due to God. “No, please, if pritheer I have found grace in your eyes, do accept from me this gift, for to see your face is like seeing the countenance of God, and you have favored me. (33:10).” Peace, honor, justice, and morality among men are assured by hewing to standards of honor, courtesy, morality, and respect which are properly only due to the Divine.

The truth is, the language which Jacob uses in approaching Esau is not only flattering, but it actually conceals a bit of deception upon Jacob’s part, and we are led to believe that this is so on Esau’s part, as well. Jacob seems quite certain of Esau’s malevolent intent; that’s why he subdivides his camp. Jacob seems to feign his intention to make a proper ambassadorial visit to Esau’s home territory of Se’ir in the far South, but when Esau offers Jacob an official escort, Jacob wriggles out of the commitment: He knows that a visit could easily turn into a trap. Jacob is particularly insistent that Esau accept the gift of flocks because he hopes that this will propitiate and satisfy Esau’s desire to despoil him. Underneath all the magnanimous, excessive politeness, there is delicate, deft maneuvering going on here between the two brothers; neither side is being honest with the other about his true intentions. Jacob is even more disingenuous later in seeming to accept the bride-price for his daughter Dinah willingly from Shekhem and his father. But there is still a point to such imitating of exalted Divine norms, even it is not so sincere: Jacob the deceiver has grown into Israel the diplomat, the gentleman. The ambitious boy Jacob has learned how to struggle honorably with his foes, and the grown man Israel has learned to fight as well as negotiate peace as a man of his honor.

### Save the Date: Tu B’Shebat Seder Sunday Night, January 24

Adults and teens, join Rabbi Meir Soloveichik for an evening of toasting, eating and learning Torah. Special singing contribution by Rabbi Ira Rohde. Meanwhile, our younger members will enjoy their own holiday repast and activities led by Yona Glass and a special appearance by our in-house fruit juggler, Rabbi Soloveichik.  
Registration information to follow.

### Winter Coat Drive November 22-December 20

Warm coats for men, women and children are needed. Place in the box outside Levy Auditorium.  
*Sponsored by the Shearith Israel League  
In cooperation with New York Cares.*

### Thanksgiving Pack-a-thon

Thank you to everyone who participated in the pack-a-thon this week. Help us reach our financial goal of \$28,000 by December 15. Make a tax deductible donation to the Food Bank for New York City to benefit our project. Go to [shearithisrael.org/pack-a-thon](http://shearithisrael.org/pack-a-thon).

### Buy a Shearith Israel *Kippah*

Shearith Israel *Kippot* are available for purchase on our website at [shearithisrael.org/store](http://shearithisrael.org/store) for \$10 each.

### COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Mazal Tob* to Beth and Marc Bengualid upon the marriage of their daughter, Elana, to Jack E. Harary of Brooklyn. Elana is the granddaughter of Henri Bengualid.

*Mazal Tob* to Yonina and Eric Gomberg upon the birth of a daughter. Congratulations to proud grandmother Gail Propp.

## UPCOMING EVENTS AND INITIATIVES

### British Invasion Shabbat Dinner

Featuring Zaki Cooper and  
our resident Anglophile, Rabbi Meir Soloveichik  
Friday Night, December 4

#### Following evening services and Friday Night Lights

Drawing on first-hand experience of working at Buckingham Palace, and using objects from his time working there, Zaki Cooper will provide insights into the role of the Royal Family and shed light on this historic institution. Who knows more about the British, Zaki Cooper or Rabbi Soloveichik? Find out at our British invasion Shabbat Dinner! British Menu will be served. Register at [shearithisrael.org/british-invasion](http://shearithisrael.org/british-invasion) by November 29.

### Enroll in CSI's Text Messaging Notification Service

Many of our members and friends enjoy attending our special programs and events such as community meals, public lectures, etc. However, we know how busy you are and how easy it is to overlook an email or registration deadline; we want to help make it easier for you. We have set up a special text message service that can remind you when RSVP deadlines are approaching. We can also alert you of synagogue schedule changes, weather emergencies, security incidents or last minute class cancellations. To subscribe to our service, check our weekly emails for specific instructions. Please be assured, we will only text you for those alerts you have selected and will only use this on an as-needed basis.

### Crisis in Syria:

Current State and Future Prospects  
With Moti Kahana

Thursday, December 3 | 7:00 pm

Join Rabbi Richard Hidary and Moti Kahana as they discuss the crisis in Syria. Moti Kahana is an American-Israeli businessman and humanitarian who made international headlines by financing much needed supplies for Syrians caught in a vicious civil war. He tried to negotiate the safe return of American journalist Steven Sotloff who was being held by ISIS, he smuggled Jews out of Syria and saved a young woman, Gill Rosenberg when it was thought that she was captured by ISIS while fighting alongside the Kurds in Northern Iraq.

Visit to the Nahmias et Fils Distillery  
201 Saw Mill River Road, Yonkers, NY  
Sunday, December 6 | 1:00 pm

Attend a demonstration and tasting.

A light lunch will also be served. For transportation, meet-up and payment information, go to [sileague.org](http://sileague.org).

RSVP to [mosserig21@bigplanet.com](mailto:mosserig21@bigplanet.com).

*Sponsored by the Shearith Israel League, the American Sephardi Federation and the Beth Aharon Congregation of Riverdale.*

Hanukkah Special Guest Lecture  
"Coloring the Arch of Titus Menorah:  
Recent Discoveries in Rome"

Professor Steven Fine

Monday, December 7 | 7:00 pm

Join us for a guest lecture during Rabbi Hidary's Second Temple History class. Steven Fine is the Dean Pinkhos Churgin Professor of Jewish History at Yeshiva University and Director of the Arch of Titus Project. His "The Menorah: From the Bible to the Apocalypse" will be published by Harvard University Press in 2016.

Free and open to the public.

*Thank you to our sponsors Karen and Jack Daar and Mildred Green Shinnar.*

PTTS and CSI Youth Hanukkah Fest  
Sunday Morning, December 13

10:00 am -12:00 pm

While many Jews celebrate Hanukkah by eating potato latkes, deep fried in oil in remembrance of the miracle of the oil, here at Shearith Israel we honor the tradition of Amsterdam by eating vaffle (waffles) because God made a "miracle and wonder" (Hebrew: "nes va-fe'le") during these days.

And after all, everyone loves a good waffle!

Please join PTTS and CSI youth for Hanukkah festivities, including an olive press demonstration, art projects using sand and foil, songs and of course, delicious waffles.

## WEEKDAY JUDAIC EDUCATION

For schedule and class details go to:  
[shearithisrael.org/content/judaic-education-and-major-lectures](http://shearithisrael.org/content/judaic-education-and-major-lectures)

### Sunday

- ◇ **The Book of Kings** | Rabbi Hidary | 8:40 am NO CLASS THIS WEEK
- ◇ **Saadia Gaon's Book of Beliefs and Opinions** | Sjimon den Hollander | 9:30 am

### Monday

- ◇ **Second Temple Jewish History** | Rabbi Hidary | 7:00 pm
- ◇ **Bet Midrash** | Rabbi Hidary, Phil Getz, Dr. Josh Eisen, Rabbi Ira Rohde, Meira Wokenfeld | 8:00 pm  
*Fall semester sponsored by Josh Eisen.*

### Tuesday

- ◇ **Rambam's Mishneh Torah** | Rabbi Hidary | 7:45 am
- ◇ **Feasts and Fasts: The Festivals in Jewish Thought- A Class for Women** | Rabbi Soloveichik | 9:00 am
- ◇ **Talmud Class: Tractate Rosh Hashana and the Philosophy of Jewish Time** | Rabbi Soloveichik | 8:00

Please consider sponsoring a class. Go to:  
[shearithisrael.org/sponsoraaclass](http://shearithisrael.org/sponsoraaclass)

### Parnas Office Hours

Louis Solomon would be delighted to meet with you.  
Please schedule a visit at  
[parnas@shearithisrael.org](mailto:parnas@shearithisrael.org).

Our next public tour is:  
**Tuesday, December 8 at 11:00 am**