

WEEKLY JEWISH EDUCATION

View all our Fall classes at shearithisrael.org/judaic-education
Sign up to be notified of any schedule changes or cancellations at
shearithisrael.org/join-our-email-lists

Our Fall Semester of Jewish Education is now in full swing—
come learn with us any day of the week:

Saadiyah Gaon's Book of Beliefs and Opinions

Sjimon Den Hollander

Sundays | 8:45 am

Habruta (Paired) Learning

Rabbi Yanetz & Co.

Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays | 5:15 - 7:15 pm

Minyan, Class, and Breakfast

Tuesdays | 7:45 am

Feasts and Fasts:

The Festivals in Jewish Thought

A Class for Women

Rabbi Meir Soloveichik

Tuesdays | 9 AM

Talmud Class: Masekhet Yoma and the Meaning of the

Mikdash — *Will not take place this week because of Rabbi*

Soloveichik's major Balfour Lecture on Thursday, November 9

Rabbi Meir Soloveichik

Tuesdays | 7 PM

An Overview of James (Joshua) Seixas' Hebrew Grammar

Hazzan Rabbi Ira Rohde

Thursdays | 7:15 pm

Friday Night Lights:

The Making and Meaning of Shabbat

Rabbi Meir Soloveichik

Fridays | Following Kabbalat Shabbat

The Misunderstood Masterpiece:

A New Approach to Pirkei Abot

Rabbi Meir Soloveichik

Saturdays | One hour before Minhah

To sponsor a class or series of classes, visit

shearithisrael.org/sponsoraclass

Our next public tour is
This Wednesday,
November 8

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

DEBAR TORAH: UNION OF OPPOSITES

— BY HAZZAN RABBI IRA ROHDE —

“...For *שלמות* [perfection or wholeness of character] is not perceptible in man except when he possesses two opposite *מדות* [characters], such as the trait of mercy and cruelty. For when a man behaves according to one trait, one need not necessarily say that he is Righteous, but rather there is to say that such is his nature. But when he possesses two opposite characters such as mercy [as well as] cruelty, then it is proven that he is a Righteous Person...And this is why it says here at the *עקדה* [Binding of Isaac] ‘for now I know that you fear God.’ For before this he was very merciful, inviting guests and doing kindnesses. But the character of cruelty and compelling himself to fulfill the command of the Creator, Blessed be He, was not yet evident in him, and it would have been possible to claim that Abraham was not Completely Righteous, Heaven forbid. But at the *עקדה* [Binding], when he demonstrated the trait of cruelty, that he wanted with all the desire of his soul to fulfill the command of the Creator and slaughter his one and only son upon whom all his living depended—if so, now his completeness [of character] was consummate and it was apparent that he was Completely Righteous” (Kol Eliyahu, Commentary on the Torah by the Vilna Gaon, Parashat Vayera).

This comment on the Binding of Isaac by the Vilna Gaon was pointed out to me by my late teacher, Dr. Walter Wurzburger, z”l. It strikes a rather Kierkegaardian, perhaps even fundamentalistic, chord. Prof. Yeshayahu Leibowitz strikes a similar tone, saying “This love was the virtue of Abraham, and because of this it was said of him, ‘and he believed in God.’ It is what he proved in the *Akedah* by accepting the yoke of the service of God, even though no ‘advantage,’ in the sense of the satisfaction of a need, or any imaginable reward could accrue from it...The duties of faith take precedence over all human needs, interests, and values, even those of the divine promises embodied in visions of the future (the abrogation of the Covenant of the Pieces!)” That the command of God must be followed at times fideistically, brushing aside all other concerns, moral or otherwise, in submission to the will of God, is the interpretation of the *Akedah* given by several schools of commentary.

But I noticed that that isn’t all the Vilna Gaon is saying here. The Gaon is not saying that Abraham is just demonstrating his submission to the inscrutable will of God. More is going on here than Abraham’s overcoming himself and the love of his son in submission to God’s will. Rather, the Gaon is saying that the *Akedah* is there to demonstrate, actualize or develop a particular type of perfection of Abraham’s character. Real perfection of character and virtue requires the ability to manage and use all the extremes of character. And it is not a matter of simply following the “Golden Mean” between all of the extreme traits, only going to extremes to fight a natural tendency and restore balance. No. What is called for in the development of the human personality is nothing short of a “Union of Opposites.” We all have many and diverse roles to play, which call for the development and taking on of opposite dispositions. We must at the same time develop the capacity to be strong as well as yielding, both courageous and fearful, kind as well as, when need be, cruel. We have to be, often at the same time, encouraging and enthusiastic as well as prudent and critical. Our integrity must be organic: not the fixed defining of a mean between two extremes, but rather embracing opposing dispositions in a dynamic dialectic. We are in need of God’s objective perspective, expressed in Torah, to guide us in the proper circumstances and proportions in which to cultivate and express each trait. Only in this way can we aspire to the complete “wholeness”/ *שלמות* of righteous character exemplified by our forefather Abraham.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL

The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

Shabbat Vayera

November 3-4, 2017

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

CANDLE LIGHTING | 5:31 pm

MINHAH & ARBIT | 5:30 pm | Main Sanctuary

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS WILL RETURN NEXT WEEK.

ZEMIROT | 8:15 am

SHAHARIT (NISHMAT) | 9:00 am

TOT SHABBAT WITH LIZ AND SHANADE | Ages 0-4 | 10:00 am |
Levy Auditorium

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

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

KIDDUSH | Levy Auditorium | *Sponsored by Ronen Korin, in memory of
his mother, Tzipporah Korin.*

SEUDA SHELISHIT & SHABBAT AFTERNOON SHIUR WILL RETURN
NEXT WEEK.

MINHAH & ARBIT | 5:25 pm

HABDALAH | 6:18 pm

Best wishes for an enjoyable and instructive trip to the
participants who are joining Rabbi Soloveichik on this weekend's
shabbaton to Charleston. We also thank them for their extra generosity;
their donations help us provide the many classes and programs we often
offer to the public at no charge throughout the year.

Remember to turn your clocks back one hour on Saturday night.

Weekday Service Times

Mornings: Sunday: 8:00 am

Monday - Friday: 7:15 am

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

Central Park West at 70th Street, New York City • www.shearithisrael.org

THANKSGIVING AT SHEARITH ISRAEL

Morning Services with our Special Thanksgiving Hallel |
Main Sanctuary | 7:45 am

Rabbi Soloveichik's Address | Main Sanctuary
Children's Hessed Craft Activity (during the Rabbi's
Address) | starting 8:30 am

Hot Cocoa & Refreshments | Elias Room | 9:00-11:00 am
Parade Viewing for Youth | Portico

Hunger Alleviation Pack-a-thon (registration required)
9:30– 11:30 am | Levy Auditorium

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SPONSOR OUR
THANKSGIVING FESTIVITIES?
Visit shearithisrael.org/thanksgiving.

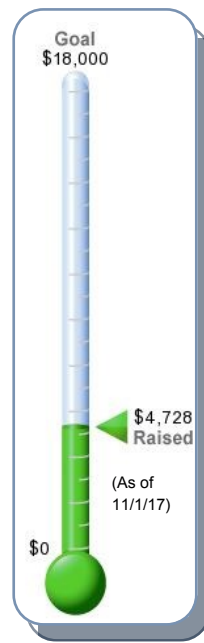
THIRD ANNUAL THANKSGIVING PACK-A-THON

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

Building on the success of the past two
Pack-a-thons, this year we have expanded
our circle of UWS faith community
partners to include our founding partner,
the West End Collegiate Church,
The Jewish Center,
and, this year, the
Church of Latter-day Saints.

We are also delighted to announce that,
like last year, every dollar you donate to
this initiative will be TRIPLED through
the generosity of an anonymous
matching grant.

Help us reach our goal of \$18,000 and
register to participate or donate at
shearithisrael.org/pack-a-thon-2017.



REGISTER NOW: Young Couples and Families Luncheon
Shabbat, November 25 | Following Morning Services
Young couples and families are invited to a Thanksgiving
Weekend Shabbat Lunch with Rabbi and Layalza Soloveichik
& Co. Join us for a family-friendly afternoon of Torah and
good company. For registration and sponsorship details, visit
shearithisrael.org/thanksgiving-luncheon

Are You Ready for the NYC Marathon? This Sunday, November 5

Be aware of heightened security and street closures that will
affect access to the synagogue on Marathon Sunday. Min-
yan, Sunday Classes, and PTTs are running as usual; plan your
commutes accordingly. The B/C subway exit at W. 70th St. may
be closed off and we advise you to avoid Central Park West and
access our street via Columbus Avenue.

Best of luck to Samuel Neumark, who will be running in
the Marathon! If you know of other members who are running,
let us know by Sunday—we'd like to congratulate them too. Send
names to srosenberg@shearithisrael.org.

FROM THE DISTRIBUTOR THAT BROUGHT YOU
"THE WOMEN'S BALCONY"

The Film Critics are Calling a "Must-See" and "A Masterpiece"

"1945"

Now playing at Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, with a special
screening to be held at Shearith Israel, on an upcoming
date to be announced.

On a summer day in 1945, an Orthodox man and his grown son
arrive in a small village in Hungary while the villagers prepare for
the wedding of the town clerk's son. The townspeople—
suspicious, remorseful, fearful, and cunning—expect the worst
and behave accordingly.

A superb ensemble cast, lustrous black and white cinematog-
raphy, and historically detailed art direction contribute to this
eloquent drama.

Shearith Israel Toddler Program

We've barely felt a nip in the air, but now is the time to
think about Spring enrollment. To learn more and apply,
go to shearithisrael.org/toddlerprogram.

A Major History Lecture Marking the
100th Anniversary of the Balfour Declaration
THIS Thursday, November 9 | 7:00 pm

"Jew vs. Jew: The Battle Over the Balfour Declaration"

Rabbi Meir Soloveichik

Co-Sponsored by the Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought

To join our list of sponsors, visit
shearithisrael.org/balfour



Hebra Hased Va'Amet Screening of
No. 17 is Anonymous
Sunday, November 19 | 4:00 pm

Join the Hebra for this special screening
of this Israeli documentary, set in the
aftermath of a suicide bombing that killed 17 on a bus, in
which all but one of the victims were identified. The
filmmakers document the search to identify the man no one
had reported missing.

*The film runs 75 minutes, and is in Hebrew with English
subtitles.*

The screening will be followed by a discussion led by
psychiatrist and Shearith Israel member, Dr. Rebecca
Chaplan (Nathan). Childcare will be available and light
refreshments will be served. This event is FREE thanks to
the Hebra's sponsorship, though registration is encouraged
(and required for childcare). Donations to the Hebra are
welcome.

Visit shearithisrael.org/Anonymous17 to sign up.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Condolences to Ruth Kobrin, on the passing of her brother,
Stephen L. Freedman.*