

### “The Perfect Match:” A Courtly Romantic Ideal

Parashat Haye Sarah begins with Sarah’s death and Abraham’s full-price purchase of a grave. In light of my continuing analysis of the stories of Abraham and his Israelite descendants as a “royalty,” this purchase takes on for me the further significance of a proper “royal tomb,” in which the succeeding heirs to the dynasty (and their officially-recognized queens) are to be buried. The most notable and clear-cut instance of this was the tomb of the Davidic dynasty’s kings. It’s clear that this grave of Abraham and the other patriarchs is a pre-figuring of that concept of a dynastic tomb and who got buried there signified those who were considered the proper successors in the dynastic line. I note that what is being purchased is not a small crypt but rather what is described as a “cave;” that is, it seems to be quite a spacious area which has room for many burials. I note also that the location of such a “royal tomb” in Hebron, the first seat of a Judean royalty and where David was originally crowned king, also can be seen as presaging the Davidic dynasty’s “royal tomb” tradition. The complex etiquette of the negotiation for Abraham to pay full price and have the purchase verified also must be looked at in terms of the recognition of Abraham as founder of a Royal Family and of the Cave as a recognized royal tomb.

The tale of taking a wife for Isaac has always struck me as having classic, idyllic (and ideal) “fairy-tale-like” qualities. Also, the taking of a wife for Isaac soon after Sarah died and the emphasis upon Rebecca “taking the place” of Sarah can be understood as the grooming of a first-in-line-to-be-queen royal princess. Rebecca’s “testing” by Eliezer shows her willingness to go out of her way to help people, which is a “feminine” form of showing a spirit of self-sacrifice, somewhat akin to the royal self-sacrifice Isaac is called upon to show. Royal families are also likely to stress “breeding,” and inbred and intermarried royal families are usual. Thus, Abraham’s insistence upon taking a wife for Isaac from among his relatives, and even more the listing of Rebecca’s lineage at the end of last week’s Parasha, before we are told the narrative of Eliezer’s choosing her, as if the choice was fated, seems intended to sound like royal dynastic narrative. The placing of rings and other jewelry upon Rebecca also sounds like the crowning of a future queen. And future queens would have been crowned as very young virgin girls.

What insights from this Parasha, then, do I take from this “royal family” perspective? Well, for one thing, it reinforces my impression that the story of Eliezer, Rebecca, and Isaac is meant to be a “courtly love” story, a tale of romance, putting forth a type of classic ideal. In this case, we are not told that much about Isaac himself other than he came to love Rebecca, brought her into his tent and he was consoled thereby for the loss of his mother. I often remind my readers that our notions of romance, relationships, and love are taken from such idyllic tales of kings, queens, princesses and “courtly love.” They are “ideal” constructs, and should not necessarily be understood as practically realizable. As is clearly evidenced in the next Parashah where Rebecca and Isaac favor different sons as their heir, even the ideal marriage often has much distance between the spouses and discord brewing below the surface. But nonetheless, the characters fulfill ideal roles, and we are called upon to emulate this royal “courtly” ideal and to try to match its form, at least outwardly. Rebecca’s energetic and generous drawing of the water both for beasts and men, as well as her swoon upon first laying eyes upon her husband certainly fulfill courtly romance criteria. This particular “courtly love” story could be entitled “The Perfect Match.” Nonetheless, much remains unsaid in the story, and Isaac’s part, for example, is particularly silent and quiet. I learn from this that our ideas of love and family should be thought of as “courtly ideals” worth imitating, while at the same time we should not fully expect to realize them. As ideal forms to follow in outline, courtly and royal models enrich and uplift us. But we should bear in mind that they are romantic ideals, and not expect to realize them fully in real life.



### Shabbat Haye Sarah

November 18-19, 2022 | 25 Marheshvan 5783

#### SHABBAT SCHEDULE

Hertz: p. 80 | Haftarah: p. 90  
Kaplan: p. 100 | Haftarah: p. 1066

**Candle Lighting** | 4:18 pm

**Friday Evening Services** | 4:15 pm | Main Sanctuary

**Friday Night Lights** | following services | *2022-2023 Season of Friday Night Lights is sponsored by the Julis-Rabinowitz family*

**Zemirot** | 8:15 am / **Shahrit** | 9:00 am | Main Sanctuary

**Youth Program** | 10:00 am | Fidanque Youth Room

**Kiddush** | following services

**Shabbat Afternoon Class** | 3:30 pm

**Evening Services** | 4:10 pm | Main Sanctuary

**Habdala** | 5:03 pm

**Parent-Child Learning** | 6:30 pm | Rev. Z. Edinger | Elias Room

*Rosh Hodesh Kislev begins on Wednesday night.*

#### Weekday Service Times

##### Mornings:

Sunday: 8:05 am | Monday-Wednesday & Friday: 7:05 am  
Thursday (Thanksgiving): 7:45 am

##### Evenings:

Sunday-Thursday: **4:25 pm (note earlier time)**

*The earlier time means a harder time making a minyan. If you can help out and attend minyan, morning or evening, please contact Z. Edinger.*

## COMING UP

### Chatham Square Cemetery Cleanup Day

Sunday, December 4 | 10:00 am | *Sponsored by the Hebra Hased vaAmet*

Help us remove weeds and other dead plant material, trim bushes and branches, clear the walkway, add gravel and other minor work to clean up this historic cemetery. Come in your work clothes; we supply the rest.

*RSVP at [shearithisrael.org/events/cemetery-cleanup5783](https://shearithisrael.org/events/cemetery-cleanup5783).*

### Sunday Matinee with Sisterhood is back!

Next Film Discussion: Sunday, December 11

*Films provided in advance to registrants*

*Discussion on Zoom with filmmaker & actor Emanuel Cohn on Dec. 11*

Join us for the next two films in this series in December and January, each to be viewed at your leisure. Then we will come together on Zoom to discuss the featured film with our host, **Emanuel Cohn**, a prominent Israeli film lecturer, actor, and screenwriter. The discussion will include peeks behind the scenes and in-depth conversation as we explore the relationship between history, culture, and identity in each film.

*Registration and details at [shearithisrael.org/events/sisterhood-film-fest](https://shearithisrael.org/events/sisterhood-film-fest).*

Each film: \$10.00 | Full Series: \$18.00

*A link will be sent to you to watch the film, a week before the appointed date, together with a second link to join the Sunday discussion on Zoom.*

## COMMUNITY SHABBAT DINNER

### Rabbi Soloveichik in conversation with Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem, Fleur Hassan-Nahoum

Friday, December 2 | Following Evening Services & Friday Night Lights

Rabbi Soloveichik will engage the Deputy Mayor about her own fascinating family history, her political career, the recent elections, the diverse groups that make up the population of Jerusalem, and the future of the sacred city and the State of Israel.

#### PRICING

Member Adult - \$74

Non-member Adult - \$77

Child - \$35

*Sponsorship opportunities available*

## THANKSGIVING AT SHEARITH ISRAEL

### 8th Annual Thanksgiving Pack-A-Thon

Thursday, November 24 | 9:00 am | Paved Paradise

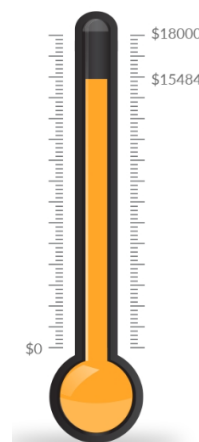
*Sign up and donate at [shearithisrael.org/packathon2022](https://shearithisrael.org/packathon2022)*

The tradition continues!

Following Rabbi Soloveichik's special Thanksgiving address, registered volunteers will pack food to be distributed to hungry New Yorkers. In between parade viewing, our youngest volunteers will have their own craft activity in support of the Pack-A-Thon.

**Again this year, thanks to an anonymous donor, all contributions (up to \$10,000) will be matched. Together, we can exceed our goal of \$18,000!**

Thank you to our local faith community partners: **The Jewish Center, Church of Latter-day Saints, and West End Collegiate Church.**



### Calling All Captains!

We need several organized, can-do volunteers to serve as Captains at this logistically ambitious event! For inquiries or to volunteer, please contact SM Rosenberg at [rosenberg@shearithisrael.org](mailto:rosenberg@shearithisrael.org).

### Thanksgiving Parade Viewing for Youth

Thursday, November 24 | 9:00 am

Our Portico provides one of the best Thanksgiving Parade views in the city. But it's not that big. In order to avoid crowding, parade viewing is for children. In an effort to ensure an orderly, secure, and enjoyable experience for our kids, we ask that you **pre-register** at [shearithisrael.org/parade2022](https://shearithisrael.org/parade2022).

#### Registration:

Shearith Israel Member children/caregivers | Free

Non-Member children/caregivers | \$25 in advance (\$36 at the door subject to availability)

*Additionally, **Pack-A-Thon donors** at the \$180 level and above can register up to 2 children/caregivers for free, and donors at \$360 and above can register up to 4.*

## COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

We welcome new members, **Caroline & David Adelman**, to our growing Shearith Israel family.

We mourn the loss of our member, **Manny Gross**.  
Condolences to his wife, **Evelyn**.