

Creating to Be Re-Generating

And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy—for He ceased on it from all his labor which He had created to do. Such are the generations of heaven and earth when they were created. When the LORD God made earth and heaven (Gen. 2:3-4)

The very strange word “to do” added at the end of the description of God’s resting after all He created “to do” rather defies explanation. The reader gets the sense that the additional word kind of “finalizes” the creation story. It’s as if we are being told that by the start of the seventh day God had completed creating “all that He had planned to do,” and was therefore justified in resting. That’s the sense I get from the usage here. The difference between “creating” and “making” or “doing” is rather slight, although “creating” is much more “out of the ordinary,” as Cassuto notes. The two words in the preceding passages are used rather interchangeably. But the addition of the word here I do think gives the sense that God can rest from his unusual supernatural “creative” activities because all He planned to do has been done.

Yet wait a minute: Then the story continues with a retelling of much of the Creation story again in quite a different format as the “generations” or “history” of the Heavens and the Earth, as well as the “generation” of Man and Woman! Indeed, there is a kind of linking of the end of verse 3 with verse 4 by means of these very same verbs: “These are the generations of the Heavens and the Earth ‘when they were created, the day when made’ the LORD God Earth and Heaven.” And indeed, some Bible editions group Verse 3 with Verse 4, and our chapter headings clearly start Chapter 2 with the Sabbath rest section, clearly associating it with the “genealogy” which follows, unlike our Jewish division of aliyot. Indeed, Ibn Ezra gives an interpretation that does link the two verses: He seems to comment that God created a World which “does” on its own, which He created but is then self-perpetuating. In other words, God finished creating all He needed for the World to continue “to do” on its own, to re-generate on its own. Hence what follows is then told from the standpoint of the “generations” of the World afterwards: “A ‘history’ of how the World, and especially Man, came to be regenerating itself. Yes, there is some ‘creation’ here, but it is geared to explaining how the World would be able to be perpetuated and regenerated. That’s why the story of Man and his relationship as Steward of Creation and Woman as Man’s Partner are told next.

I don’t think Ibn Ezra literally thought that “to do” meant “to generate.” I remember being taught in Hebrew school that the verb indicates that Man is meant to be a “partner” with God in creation. I’ve always thought that interpretation goes a little too far. But at the end of the Six Days of Creation story God does seem to have laid out a plan of what He wanted done and completed the task. It’s a good lesson for us all: Lay out a task and complete it! We might found a business or a company, or even a family! But laying out the plans as to how the company can continue to operate after its basic founding, getting it to be self-sustaining and self-regenerating, well – that’s another story, and needs to be planned for and told from another angle! This week we had two circumcisions of babies whose grandparents and earlier generations were members of our congregational community, and my hat is off to them! To create and realize a plan is one thing; to create in order that the “making” continues, to nurture and enable self-sustaining regeneration – that is truly a Divine Doing.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL
The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

Shabbat Bereshit

October 17-18, 2025 | 26 Tishre, 5786

SCHEDULE

Candle Lighting | 5:54 pm

Evening Services, including Tenu Shebaha | 6:00 pm | Main Sanctuary
5786 SEASON PREMIERE: Friday Night Lights | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | Following services | *5786 Season sponsored by the Julis-Romo-Rabinowitz family*

Zemirot | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary

Shahrit, including Torah Service with Hatanim Honors | 9:00 am | Main Sanctuary

Tot Shabbat | 10:00 am | Fidanque Youth Room

Jr. Congregation | 10:30 am | Little Synagogue

Hatanim Luncheon | following services | for registered guests

Shabbat Afternoon Class | 5:05 pm | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik

Teen Shiur | 5:05 pm | Baruch-Lev Kelman

Evening Services | 5:50 pm

Habdala | 6:42 pm

Rosh Hodesh Marheshvan begins on Tuesday night.

Weekday Service Times

Mornings:

Sunday: 8:05 am

Monday-Friday: 7:05 am

Evenings:

Sunday-Thursday (Minha & Arbit): **5:55 pm**

IN CELEBRATION OF THE USA'S SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL

And 250 Years of Jewish Life in the United States

Rabbi Soloveichik's Major Lecture Series

First Installment: NEXT Shabbat Morning, October 25, Shabbat Noah

Following Morning Services

A Special Weekend in Newport: November 7-9, 2025

America at 250 and the Future of the Jewish People:

Reflections on a Weekend on which we Commemorate Kristallnacht,

Mark Veterans Day, and Ponder the Future

Touro Synagogue, 72 Touro Street, Newport, RI

Experience four powerful talks by Rabbi Meir Soloveichik, one uplifting concert by Magevet, and an abundance of unity and togetherness. *Register at shearithisrael.org.*

GET OUT THE VOTE

A message from Shearith Israel's "Get Out the Vote" Captain, Naftali Friedman:

The NYC Jewish community must act now to ensure that our Mayor, City Council

Members, and other city officials prioritize our safety and well-being.

- **Not registered?:** Don't Wait – Register Now! Final voter registration deadline: October 25.
- **Registered voters:** Don't take a chance on something getting in the way of your showing up to vote; consider voting early by mail. The deadline to request a mail-in ballot is also October 25. Learn more at <https://jewishvotersunite.org/regny/>
- **Parents:** Encourage your college/gap year students are registered and mail in their ballot.

We need 100% participation. Our votes & activism could decide the future of NYC!

THIS SHABBAT

5786 Season Premiere of Friday Night Lights

Rabbi Meir Soloveichik

Friday Night, October 17 | Following Friday Evening Services

5786 Season sponsored by the Julis-Romo-Rabinowitz family

If you'd like to sponsor an upcoming session of Friday Night Lights, visit shearithisrael.org.

5786 Hatanim Celebration

You can still contribute at shearithisrael.org

Even if you are not attending the luncheon, we hope you will still honor our Hatanim and support our new electric chairlift. Your contribution is vital and greatly appreciated.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mazal tob to **Rabbi Marc Angel**, upon the birth of a great-granddaughter, Aviva Hodaya, born to Max & Rena Nussbaum.

Mazal tob to **Rachel Neumark Herlands & Jonathan Herlands**, upon their grandson, Leo Foer, son of Dinah and Josh Foer, becoming a bar mitzvah, celebrated in Brookline, MA.

CSI Synagogue Experience Survey

Members - If you have not received the survey, please contact Barbara Reiss at breiss@shearithisrael.org. The survey will remain open through October 25.

We are aiming for 100% member participation.

COMING UP

Register at shearithisrael.org

CSI Youth & The Sisterhood present

Bringing the Zoo (and Ark) to You!

Sunday, October 26 | 3-4:30 pm | Register at shearithisrael.org

Hear Parashat Noah on Shabbat and immerse yourself with the animals (yes, real live animals!) on Sunday afternoon! The NJ Snake Man will be bringing plenty of reptiles and birds that we'll get to know up close.

Preparing With Wisdom, Planning With Love, Strength For The Journey

A Practical & Important Healthcare Workshop for Everyone

Sponsored by the Sisterhood and the Hebra | Presented by Ematai

Sunday, November 9 | 4:00 pm

The Sisterhood and the Hebra Hased Va'Amet are partnering with Ematai (ematai.org) for this workshop on the importance of completing a health care proxy and how to navigate meaningful conversations about aging and end-of-life care with our loved ones. This interactive workshop will run for 50-60 minutes and engage participants in discussion.