

DEBAR TORAH *by* RABBI ROHDE

***Hesed*: Kindness Bestowed with Graciousness, Favor, & Dignity**

And he said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray Thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham... And let it come to pass, that the girl to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let her be she that Thou hast appointed for Thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that Thou hast shown kindness to my master (Gen. 24:12 & 14)

And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, Who has not abandoned His kindness and faithfulness to my master; for I myself the Lord has led upon the way to the home of my master's brethren (24:27)

Why is Abraham's purchase of the Cave of Machpelah so formal? What makes Abraham so certain that in sending off Eliezer, Eliezer will be successful in finding Isaac a fitting wife? What makes Eliezer ask specifically for God's "hesed" or "kindness," when seeking a wife for Isaac, seek the same Divine "kindness" when devising his "the girl who waters the camels" test, and blesses God who has "not abandoned His kindness" when speaking to Laban of Rebecca's having watered the camels?

Perhaps the answer to the second question, an answer which could be based nicely with traditional lore, is that Abraham, in the merit of having performed this "final and most faithful kindness" of buying and burying Sarah in a final resting-place, was therefore afterwards certain that God would surely in return be most faithful to His promise that Isaac's lineage would produce a suitable and noble heir, and this was what made Abraham so certain that Eliezer would find a proper wife of suitable lineage and noble demeanor for Isaac. The term "חסד" used here for "kindness" is also associated with the term "חן," the term for "grace," and perhaps we should substitute the term "graciousness" in place of "kindness" as a translation. And of course, "graciousness" is a kindness which must be bestowed with true "grace." This "graciousness" carried out with the utmost "grace" truly characterizes Abraham and is evidenced in all his doings. Abraham's formalized address to the king of Sodom and Melchizedek, to Pharaoh and Abimelech, and again here to the Children of Heth, and even Eliezer's way of speaking to Laban, are all representative of Abraham's graciousness and grace, all of which are hallmarks of Abraham's true nobility. That is one reason the grave purchase is so formalized.

The other reason is that Abraham's graciousness and noble grace extends to his noble wife (whose name is indicative of her nobility), and his need to treat her with the proper degree of graciousness and respect requires formal acquisition of a proper and final grave and noble tomb. Not to leave human remains exposed and to provide them with an undisturbed resting-place is one of the basic requirements for human dignity, for not profaning the "Image of God" which Man represents. It is not without reason that one of the largest Jewish funeral homes calls itself "Dignity Memorial" (Although I equally will give a plug for Plaza). But above them, I must single out for special commendation to our own Shearith Israel "Hebra Hased VaAmet" (which I pronounce Hased Vā-āmet), our synagogue's Burial Society, literally "The Society of Kindness and Faithfulness," for its level of gracious kindness to those who experience the loss of a loved one. It is said that arranging for funeral rites for someone is the truest of kindnesses, since the deceased can never reciprocate the favor. But it is also the most gracious of kindnesses, for it treats one who is returning to the dust a last measure of human dignity, paying a last human respect. That is why the work of our Hebra, funding funerals for the needy, arranging for Mourner's meals and other mourner's needs in the week of mourning, etc., is so important to support: Our Hebra, with its traditional Spanish & Portuguese formalism which echoes the formalism of Abraham and the formalism of Eliezer, graciously extends kindness, grace, noble and dignified support at a time when people most need it and human dignity feels most in jeopardy. In the merit of that graciousness, may we see the noble, dignified and gracious courting of our succeeding generations.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

Shabbat Haye Sarah

November 14-15, 2025 | 24 Marheshvan, 5786

SCHEDULE

Kaplan: Parasha: 100 | Haftarah: 1066

Hertz: Parasha: 80 | Haftarah: 90

Candle Lighting | 4:21 pm

Evening Services | 4:30 pm | Main Sanctuary

Friday Night Lights | Following Services | Rabbi Soloveichik | *5786 Season sponsored by the Julis-Romo-Rabinowitz family*

Zemirot | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary

Shahrit | 9:00 am | Main Sanctuary

Tot Shabbat | 10:00 am | Fidanque Youth Room

Jr. Congregation | 10:30 am | Little Synagogue

Rabbi Soloveichik's Special Semiquincentennial Lecture | following services

Kiddush | following the lecture | *Sponsored by the Hebra Hased Va'Amet*

Shabbat Afternoon Class | 3:30 pm | Rabbi Soloveichik | *Sponsored by Tikvah*

Teen Shiur | 3:30 pm | Baruch-Lev Kelman

Evening Services | 4:15 pm

Habdala | 5:06 pm

Rosh Hodesh Kislev begins Thursday night.

Weekday Service Times

Mornings:

Sunday: 8:05 am

Monday-Friday: 7:05 am

Evenings:

Sunday: **4:30 pm**

Monday-Thursday (**Arbit Only**): **6:30 pm**

IN CELEBRATION OF THE US SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL

And 250 Years of Jewish Life in the United States



Rabbi Soloveichik's Major Lecture Series

THIS Shabbat, November 15

After Morning Services

"Washington's Artillery on

Shearith Israel's Land:

The Battle for New York, 1776"

These lectures highlight Shearith Israel's historic personalities central to the founding and formation of our American democracy.

Stay up to date at shearithisrael.org/us-250.

Thanksgiving at Shearith Israel

Thursday Morning, November 27

Register at shearithisrael.org/thanksgiving2025

- 7:30 am | Special Thanksgiving Hallel & Rabbi's Address in the Main Sanctuary
- 8:30 am | Children's Parade Viewing on the Portico
- 9:00 am | Pack-A-Thon on Paved Paradise

Thanksgiving Pack-A-Thon

We are proud to once again join with our community faith partners, **The Jewish Center, West End Church**, and the **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints**, to celebrate Thanksgiving in the true spirit of the day – by giving to others.

Help us feed thousands of struggling families!

Again this year, all contributions (up to \$10,000) will be matched.

Help us reach this year's goal of \$30,000!

Children's Parade Viewing

Our Portico provides one of the best Thanksgiving Parade views in the city. But it's not that big. In order to avoid crowding on the Portico, **parade viewing is for children.**

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

We welcome the Tikvah Shabbaton participants who are joining us for Morning Services this Shabbat.

COMING UP

Register at shearithisrael.org

THIS SUNDAY

Presented by the Shearith Israel League

The Jewish Legacy of Broadway:

The Immigrants and Yiddish Theatre to *Fiddler on the Roof*

Sunday, November 16 | 3:00 pm | At Shearith Israel | \$5 per person

Walk-ins welcome!

Award-winning stage and film director **Stephen Nachamie** will explore and celebrate the theatrical legacy of the Jewish immigrants in NYC, the Yiddish Theatre, and *Fiddler on the Roof* – the work of Joseph Stein, Jerry Bock, and Sheldon Harnick.

NEW TUESDAY SERIES

A Snubbed Enlightenment:

Jewish Acculturation & Revolution in Eastern Europe

Led by Baruch-Lev Kelman

Tuesdays through December | 7:00 pm (after 6:30 pm Evening Services)

The *Haskala* promised a route to emancipation, acceptance, and prosperity—a vision derailed by the entrenched anti-semitism of Eastern Europe. Out of this “snub,” *maskilim* turned inward, resolving to seek out avenues of renewal. Some turned to Zion, others to Socialism, some to the idol of history. A powder keg is lit, and the Tsar ducks for cover. Who will rue the day, and who will endure it all?

Sunday Matinee Virtual Film Festival with Sisterhood

Film Discussions on Select Sundays

Sunday December 7 | 4:00 pm | *Ushpizin* (2004)

Sunday, January 11 | 4:00 pm | *Norman* (2006)

Sunday, February 8 | 4:00 pm | *The Testament* (2017)

PARASHA RIDDLE FOR CSI YOUTH

Kids: to win a prize at kiddush, find our Youth Directors, Dalya & Jake, and tell them the answer to this riddle:

*I have a hump or maybe two,
I'm built for desert journeys, it's true.
I can shut my nostrils to keep out the sand,
And walk for miles across the land.
What am I?*