



The Learning Circle
Adult education classes at the LJS



The Liberal Jewish Synagogue

The Learning Circle

Classes in Jewish Studies and Hebrew

Summer Term

2022/5782

"And do not say, when I have leisure, I will study.

Perhaps you will never have leisure"

Avot 2.4

Welcome to The Liberal Jewish Synagogue's Learning Circle Lifelong Learning for Members, Friends and Visitors

The Learning Circle is the Liberal Jewish Synagogue's adult education programme. The synagogue offers a range of courses, from Hebrew for beginners to the study of biblical and prayer book texts, aimed at strengthening reading skills and comprehension of the language, discussion groups on traditional and modern texts and issues as well as a focus on interfaith dialogue. Exploring Judaism is open to Members, Friends and visitors who wish to learn about Judaism from scratch and is recommended for all those who are converting to Judaism.

Some of our classes are conducted in a hybrid way, so that those who cannot travel to the LJS can still participate. Some classes will remain solely on Zoom for a while, and these are identified as such within the brochure. We anticipate that other classes may become hybrid, i.e., in-person and on Zoom at some point. We will keep you informed as the situation changes.

Wherever you are in the country, please do get in touch and join one or more of our classes.

*The LJS Learning Circle Team
April 2022*

CONTENTS

A GUIDE TO THE YEAR	4
WELCOME TO THE ISRAEL ABRAHAMS LIBRARY	5
CHAVRUTA HEBREW STUDY SESSIONS	6
REGULAR DAYTIME COURSES – Tuesday Texts	7
EXPLORING JUDAISM	8
CONTINUING OUR JEWISH JOURNEY	9
CLASSICAL HEBREW CLASSES ON WEEKDAY EVENINGS	10
SHORT COURSES WEEKDAY EVENINGS	15
SHABBAT MORNING CLASSES	16
REGISTRATION & PAYMENT DETAILS	18

Cover photo: Dani Karavan: "Monument to the Negev Brigade, Beersheva" 1968. Beersheva, Israel

Below: Dani Karavan: "Bike Hills at the Garden of Remembrance" 1999. Duisberg, Germany



A GUIDE TO THE YEAR

For online classes, once you register for a course, the Zoom link will be emailed to you the day before the start of the course.

Weekly timetable	Daytime	Evening
Monday		
Tuesday	Tuesday Texts	Hebrew Classes Exploring Judaism SHORT COURSE: Judaism and Islam: A Shared History Continuing our Jewish Journey
Wednesday		Absolute Beginners Hebrew
Thursday		
Shabbat	The True Image of Female Biblical Characters GCSE Syllabus in Classical Hebrew Learning with Texts	

THE ISRAEL ABRAHAMS LIBRARY

Honorary Librarian Sally van Noorden

The Israel Abrahams Library has over 6,000 books of Jewish interest, covering prayer books, bible commentaries, history, biography, philosophy, studies on Judaism and comparative religion, art, sociology, and literature. There is also a collection of DVDs, including Israeli films.

The library regularly buys new books, and LJS members support it with generous donations.

The Heritage Committee is responsible for the library's strategic development and a small working group oversees its activities.

We are pleased to announce the re-opening of the library on Shabbat mornings. Please come, browse, and borrow books. To do this safely, wear a mask, keep your distance, and use a hand sanitiser.

There will be a limit of 4 people in the library at any one time. We look forward to welcoming you.



Dani Karavan: "Square of Culture" (Habima Square), 2005-2013. Tel-Aviv, Israel

CHAVRUTA STUDY

Chavruta – Learning with Study Companions

Join in this exciting study opportunity!

Traditionally Jews study in small groups, a method known as Chavruta ('Companionship'). Through this method, two or three people endeavour to understand the meaning of each passage and discuss how to apply it to their own lives. Such a study process often leads to the formation of a long-standing and meaningful friendship between the study companions.

The aim of Chavruta is to provide a platform for establishing meaningful relationships through learning among LJS Members and Friends of all ages from 18 to 120. Chavruta Lead, Rabbi Igor Zinkov, will split all participants into small groups and introduce them to each other. Once a month participants will receive a selection of texts that might include Jewish traditional texts, passages from classic, modern or academic literature, or poetry. The handout will also have some questions to discuss with your study companions.

You will meet your Chavruta group at a mutually convenient time for an hour-long meeting virtually or in person, read and discuss the texts, and answer the questions. Your conversation should not be limited to the study sheet and questions provided. Feel free to discuss any other texts and topics of interest to you.

After the first two sessions you will have a feedback session to ensure that you have a comfortable and meaningful experience. After two sessions each participant will decide whether to continue studying in the same group or to join other study companions.

To join this exciting programme, please contact Rabbi Igor at i.zinkov@ljs.org

DAYTIME COURSES

TUESDAY TEXTS

11.15am – 12.30pm

Pesach Term

Tuesday 26 April – Tuesday 19 July 2022

This friendly group is led by our Rabbis and Dr Dov Softi. We study biblical and rabbinic texts, modern poetry, and short stories, and enjoy sessions on Jewish art and music. The class is based around discussion on a variety of different topics, the starting point being a text, painting, or piece of music. New students are always welcome.

Register for this class [HERE](#). Zoom links will be emailed on the morning before the class.

Cost: Free for LJS Members, £10.00 per week for non-Members.

Just to thank the Rabbis and Dov who have taken so much time and trouble and show endless patience. All very much appreciated. I learned a lot... particularly appreciated learning about e.g., the Sephardi Jewish issues which Dov introduced us to and tend to be hidden from history. This is a very friendly and generous group where there is always an opportunity to be heard - nobody monopolises the class.



Dani Karavan: "Mifgash" 2004-2005. Villa Lemm, Berlin, Germany

COURSES ON TUESDAY EVENINGS

EXPLORING JUDAISM

Tuesday evenings 8.10 – 9.30pm on Zoom

Exploring Judaism is a three-term course, for anyone who wishes to know more about Judaism, Jewish history, and the Jewish people. It is also an essential programme of instruction for people choosing Judaism by conversion. Class members are encouraged to read materials which will be put online during the year. As well as offering knowledge of Judaism, the course encourages practical experiences of Liberal Judaism and space for reflection within the group.

Register for this class with Rabbi Igor Zinkov, i.zinkov@ljs.org

Cost: Exploring Judaism classes are free to LIS Members and registered proselytes; £10.00 per week to non-Members.

SHAVUOT TERM 26 April – 19 July 2022

26 April	Life Cycle: Early Life Rituals
3 May	Life Cycle: Education and Coming of Age
10 May	Life Cycle: Marriage and Mixed Faith Blessings
17 May	Life Cycle: End of Life, Funeral and Mourning
24 May	Messiah and Messianic Age
31 May	Half-term – no class
4 June (Saturday)	Exploring Shavuot and All-Night Study <i>Additional session for Shavuot.</i>
7 June	Israel – People and Land
14 June	Conversion
21 June	Presentations from students

28 June	17 Tammuz, 3 Weeks, Tisha B'Av
5 July	Jewish Ethics
12 July	Ask the Rabbi
19 July	Siyyum, Feedback and End of Year Celebration

"The Exploring Judaism classes at the LJS are so informative and engaging and taking part in them really helps you to feel like part of the community."

"Exploring Judaism gave me a fascinating insight into Judaism. I particularly appreciated the open and respectful atmosphere and sharing of different thoughts and ideas and appreciation that everyone had different reasons for attending the course."

CONTINUING OUR JEWISH JOURNEY

Potentially leading to an Adult Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Tutor: Rabbi Alexandra Wright

This class is for students with some prior knowledge of Judaism, including those who have graduated from Rabbi Igor's Exploring Judaism course. It will help you learn how to access Jewish texts from the Bible to the Talmud, from medieval codes of law to contemporary commentators. We will engage with texts in meaningful and profound ways, holding together contradictory interpretations.

This course may, if you wish, lead to an adult Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

For more information and to register, please email Rabbi Alexandra Wright a.wright@ljs.org

Cost: Free for LJS Members; £10.00 per session for non-Members

CLASSICAL HEBREW CLASSES ON TUESDAY EVENINGS

אבגדר הוזה
טיכך למסנן
סעפה צן ק
רשת

Hebrew is essential to understand fully the ideas and teachings of Judaism. The LJS successfully teaches Hebrew reading, comprehension, and grammar. New beginners' reading courses start every September on Tuesday evenings and Shabbat mornings. There are other courses which will help you to improve your Hebrew reading, enable you to navigate your way around the Siddur, or embark on the GCSE Biblical Hebrew syllabus.

“Hebrew is the key to our Jewish identity; it conveys more truthfully than any other language the elevated nature of our values and it leads us on a journey, not only for our survival, but for the great changes and transformations that we need to accomplish if we are to contribute the distinct fruits of our heritage to the rest of the world.”

Register for these classes [HERE](#).

All Hebrew classes are currently online, via Zoom.
Zoom links will be emailed on the morning of the class.

Cost: Free for LJS Members; £10.00 per class for non-Members.

If you would like advice, including which level of Hebrew is suitable, please contact Debi Penhey: education@ljs.org. You are welcome to try out a class and change if necessary.

Shavuot Term

Tuesday 26 April – Tuesday 12 July 2022

HALF TERM: 31 May

Tutors: Susannah Alexander, Dr Sally Gold, Dr Dov Softi and
Rabbi Alexandra Wright

CLASSICAL HEBREW CLASSES ON TUESDAY EVENINGS

Tuesday evenings 5.45 – 6.45pm on Zoom

Reading Joshua

Tutor: Dr Dov Softi

This course aims to increase students' understanding of Biblical Hebrew. The class reads key chapters in the Book of Joshua and discusses the interactions of the text and how it fits into the Biblical Hebrew canon. We study the grammatical structure of sentences as well as extend our Hebrew vocabulary. The course is suitable for those who can read Hebrew and wish to practise reading as well as discuss the meaning of the text.

"Dov is an excellent teacher, who teaches with patience and humour."



Dani Karavan: "Passages - Homage to Walter Benjamin" 1990-1994. Portbou, Spain

CLASSICAL HEBREW CLASSES ON TUESDAY EVENINGS

Tuesday evenings 7.00 – 8.00pm on Zoom

Classical Hebrew for Not Quite Beginners

Tutor: Susannah Alexander

This is a fun and supportive class which began as Absolute Beginners in September and has now moved on to grammar, liturgy, and the Bible. New students who would like practice in reading and understanding key prayers are also welcome. The course will continue until July 2022.

Understanding Hebrew Grammar

Tutor: Dr Dov Softi

The aim of this class is to enable students to understand the Hebrew prayers and songs used in services. Those joining the class will need basic reading skills, and we spend some time each week increasing reading fluency. We look at the basics of Hebrew grammar using the textbook *Prayerbook Hebrew the Easy Way* (available for purchase from the LJS, £34.00) and build up your vocabulary as we go. The class also read key Torah portions to reinforce the basic grammar and to understand the geography of the Torah.

Gaining Confidence in Hebrew

Tutor: Dr Sally Gold

If you can read a little Hebrew, no matter how long ago or how recently you learnt, this highly supportive, informal class will help you to gain confidence. Our reading of *Bereishit* (Genesis) is guided and at your own pace, with questions about the language and texts encouraged. As you gain skills and understanding, you will be on the path towards greater enjoyment and participation in synagogue services, using the Siddur, Bible reading and Jewish life cycle, for all of which Hebrew is the key.

Cost: Free for LJS Members; £10.00 per session for non-Members.

CLASSICAL HEBREW CLASSES ON TUESDAY EVENINGS

Tuesday evenings 7.00 – 8.00pm on Zoom

Narrative and Counter-Narrative: The Story of Joseph

Tutor: Rabbi Alexandra Wright

From the very beginning of the story of Joseph, we are aware of an undertow to the plot. Jacob is 'settled' in the land of Canaan, but his 'settled' status is about to be overturned by the loss of his favourite child. His brothers plan to kill him, but then sell him to traffickers, telling their father he has been 'torn to pieces' by a wild animal. Joseph is taken to Egypt, escaping the toxic jealousy of his brothers. But is this where he can flourish, or is there a poignant awareness of his own losses as he experiences years of imprisonment and then a sudden rise to power? The text is studied in Hebrew, and we welcome readers with diverse levels of knowledge of grammar and vocabulary.

Cost: Free for LJS Members; £10.00 per session for non-Members.

Register [HERE](#)

"Rabbi Alex created such a warm, welcoming, patient and stimulating environment. Her explanations of grammar were so clear, and she was outstandingly patient in recapping and reminding us of previous material. However, it was her encouragement of discussion, her illumination of the text, the way in which she opened up ideas and debates, made us conscious of nuances and undertones and made links to other texts and commentaries which were, to me, the most wonderful and remarkable aspects of a phenomenal class."

"An outstanding class which has given me new insights into well-loved Bible texts. Fascinating discussions and a warm and supportive atmosphere."

"This class welcomes both those who know the bible and Hebrew well and those who have set out more recently on the journey to discover both."

CLASSICAL HEBREW ON WEDNESDAY EVENINGS

Wednesday evenings 7.00-8.00 on Zoom

Classical Hebrew for Absolute Beginners

Tutor: Susannah Alexander

This is a fun and supportive class which began in January and has now moved on to grammar, liturgy, and the Bible. New students who would like practice in reading and understanding key prayers are also welcome. If you know absolutely nothing about reading Hebrew but want to learn, this class will be starting afresh in September. Using Jonathan Romain's *Signs and Wonders* (available for purchase from the LJS, £12.00), this class will enable you to unlock the mystery of the Hebrew letters and start reading. Absolutely no previous knowledge is required, only regular attendance of this friendly and supportive class.

Cost: Free for LJS Members; £10.00 per session for non-Members.

Register [HERE](#)

Shavuot Term

Tuesday 27 April – Wednesday 13 July 2022

HALF TERM: 1 June

Tutor: Susannah Alexander

SHORT COURSES ON WEEKDAY EVENINGS

Exploring interfaith relations

Tuesday evenings 8.10 – 9.30pm - Hybrid

Judaism and Islam: A Shared History

with LJS Scholar in Residence, Rabbi Dr Michael Hilton and our guest Muslim lecturer, Dr Harith Ramli.

10 May: *Why we love Jerusalem*

We consider Jewish and Muslim traditions and teachings about the holy city.

14 June: *The Jewish Orientalists*

The little-known story of the leading Western scholars of, and enthusiasts for Islam, who came from Jewish backgrounds.

Register for above sessions online [HERE](#).

Enquiries to Debi Penhey at education@ljs.org

This is a hybrid course, so you may attend in person at the Synagogue, or on Zoom. Please select which you prefer when you register.

Zoom links will be emailed the day before the session; in person bookings will receive confirmation the day before the session.



Dr Harith Ramli



Rabbi Dr Michael Hilton

Cost: Free for LJS Members; £10.00 per session for non-Members.

SHABBAT MORNING CLASSES

Shavuot Term

23 April – 9 July

HALF TERM: 28 May & 4 June

Shabbat 9.45 – 10.45am in person

GCSE Syllabus in Classical Hebrew

Tutor: Dr Dov Softi

The course aims to develop knowledge and understanding of ancient literature, values, and society through the study of original texts. Students follow the syllabus of the GCSE in Classical Hebrew, read and understand unseen passages of Biblical Hebrew, translate text from unseen passages into English, and understand the grammatical structures of Biblical Hebrew. This course is suitable for those who can read Hebrew and have some basic Hebrew vocabulary.

Shabbat 9.30 – 10.30am on Zoom

The True Image of Female Biblical Characters

Tutor: Nitza Spiro

These classes enable students to become familiar with key Biblical texts and prayers which are the bedrock of Jewish identity. Texts will be read in Hebrew but discussed in English. Students will have come across them both in synagogue and through their representation in art, music, and literature. We approach the texts from historical, sociological, ethical, and ideological perspectives.

Register for these classes [HERE](#).

Cost: Free for LJS Members; £10.00 per session for non-Members.

SHABBAT MORNING CLASSES

Shabbat 9.45 – 10.45am - hybrid

Learning with Texts – Hybrid (on Zoom & in-person)

Facilitator: Michael Romain

In the Shavuot term the class is looking at *Pirke Avot*, the Ethics of the Fathers, which is a compilation of the ethical teachings and maxims from Rabbinic Jewish tradition. All are welcome. If you have any questions, please contact Michael Romain: romain@netgates.co.uk



Dani Karavan: "Axe Majeur" Val d'Oise Cergy, Esplanade de Paris, France

APPLICATIONS FOR THE LJS LEARNING CIRCLE COURSES

If you would like to sign up for a course, please click [HERE](#) for the registration form. For more details, contact Debi at education@ljs.org

LOCATION AND TIMES OF CLASSES

Some classes are online only, and others hybrid – that is, a mixture of Zoom and in-person. Currently, most classes are online, unless specifically stated. However, please check in advance by looking at the LJS website or the weekly email Shalom LJS.

Note that all Shabbat morning classes will finish before the start of the Shabbat morning services at 11.00am

ZOOM

Zoom links will be emailed to registered participants either the day before, or the morning of, the class or session.

Please make sure you know how to use Zoom before logging in to a course.

BOOK PRICES

Signs & Wonders - £15.00 including p&p

Prayerbook Hebrew - £38.00 including p&p

Siddur - £25.00 if collected, or £30.00 including p&p

PAYMENTS

Courses are free for Members of The Liberal Jewish Synagogue.

Please note that payments must be made before beginning a course; you may pay weekly or termly.

Payments for books must be paid in full before they can be posted.

PAYMENT DETAILS

Via our website: www.ljs.org/donate (card or PayPal)

Via bank transfer: LJS CAF Bank account number: 00025950, sort code: 40-52-40. Please supply the reference of your last name and reason for payment (eg S&W book).