

SHABBAT SCHEDULE

Friday night:

4:25pm Candle Lighting

4:30pm Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat

Davening led by Chazzan Yanky Lemmer

Location: Nathaniel Richman Cohen Sanctuary.

4:30pm Magen Avraham Teen Minyan

Location: Belfer Beit Midrash

Mashiv HaRuach Kiddush and Shiur

Following Maariv, join us for a shiur given by Rabbi Robinson in the Nathaniel Richman Cohen Sanctuary, followed by a hot kugel kiddush in the Shele Danishefsky Covlin Foyer.

4:42pm: Sunset

5:13pm: Repeat Shema

Shabbat:

7:45am Hashkama Minyan; Location: Belfer Beit Midrash.

Hashkama Kiddush to follow; Shiur by Dr. Moshe Sokolow on the third floor.

9:00am Chazzan Sherwood Goffin Memorial Minyan;

Davening led by Chazzan Yanky Lemmer

Drasha before Musaf by Rabbi Robinson.

Location: Nathaniel Richman Cohen Sanctuary.

Main Kiddush to follow in the Ballroom.

9:30am Beginners Service led by Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald;

Location: 3rd Floor. Beginners Kiddush to follow.

9:40am Latest Shema

9:45am Rabbi Herschel Cohen Memorial Minyan;

Drasha before Musaf by Rabbi Gottesman;

Location: Belfer Beit Midrash.

10:00am Youth Groups; Supervised play. Location: Second floor classrooms for ages 3+ and Room LL2 for ages 0-2

12:30pm Beginners Luncheon

2:35pm Beginners Mishna Chavura with Moshe Sheinwexler;

Location: Belfer Beit Midrash.3

3:25pm Louis and Rhoda Lazar Memorial Shiur by Rabbi Gottesman in the Nathaniel Richman Cohen Sanctuary.

4:00pm Young Professional Women's Seudah Shlishit

4:10pm Mincha; Location: Nathaniel Richman Cohen Sanctuary.

Followed by Seudah Shlishit.

Hebrew only shiur with Lloyd Epstein TMZ Kollel Fellow Bezalel Racz in the Nathaniel Richman Cohen Sanctuary

4:43pm: Sunset: Latest time to daven Mincha.

5:26pm Ma'ariv/Shabbat Ends

WEEKDAY MINYAN

Shacharit:

Sunday, January 7th @ 7:10am & 8:30am

Monday, January 8th @ 7:00am & 7:50am

Tuesday & Wednesday, January 9th & 10th @ 7:10am & 7:50am

Thursday, January 11th (Rosh Chodesh Shevat) @ 7:00am & 7:40am

Friday, January 12th @ 7:10am & 7:50am

Mincha/Maariv:

Sunday - Wednesday, January 7th -10th @ 4:35pm

Thursday, January 11th @ 4:40pm

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

Hashkama:

Sponsored by generous contributions to the fund.

Main Kiddush:

Jeffrey Schwartz and Milayna Subar in commemoration of the yahrtzeits of their parents, Ellie Schwartz, Elka bat Yechezkel Tzemach v'Esther a"h, Harvey Schwartz, Chaim ben Aharon Yoel v'Rachel z"l, and Ruthe Brown Subar, Rachel bat Azriel Yaakov ha'Levi v'Mirel Leah a"h.

Beginners:

+SAFETY by Design (a safety educational company) in celebration of the birthdays of Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald and Reuven W.

Birthday cake sponsors **Miriam and Marvin Belsky** in celebration of Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald's birthday. "Here's to wonderful and inspiring chaverim and their leader, Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald."

Seudah Shlishit:

Linda and Howard Sterling in commemoration of the yahrtzeits of Howard's parents, Joseph and Rhoda Sterling z"l.

Ellen and Dr. Fred Meyer in commemoration of the yahrtzeit (Rosh Chodesh Shevat) of Fred's beloved father, Godel ben Yaakov, Dr. Gustave Meyer z"l.

Amanda Nussbaum and Daniel Laifer in honor of the Bat Mitzvah of their daughter, Juliette.

MAZAL TOV

Great-grandparents Richard & Freya Wigler on the birth of a girl to Albert & Avi Shalom.



Aliza Penn on her engagement last weekend to Josh Korn.



HAKARAT HATOV

Jeff Schwartz for writing this week's Dvar Torah.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**Nancy and Sully Bemak
Shellee Price**

ROSH CHODESH SHEVAT

The molad for Rosh Chodesh Shevat will be on **Thursday morning** at 45 minutes and 4 chalakim after 8 am. Rosh Chodesh Shevat will be on **Thursday**.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, January 7th: LSS Films & Culture Committee Presents Prayer for the French Republic at the Manhattan Theater Club: 2:00pm SOLD OUT. Stay tuned for more film and culture events.

Sunday, January 14th: Israeli Real Estate: 7:30pm: This event is designed to provide you with the necessary and important information on every aspect of Buying Israeli Real Estate. Location: Rooms 206/207. Register at www.israelevent.live/manhattan

WEEKLY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday, January 7th

- 9:15am Kosher Made Clear - Hilchot Kashrut Tzurba Style:** Led by Rabbi Gottesman this week. Location: Belfer Beit Midrash

Sponsored by Yedidya Flaquer in commemoration of the yahrtzeit of his grandmother, Hilda Ramirez Feliz a"h.

Monday, January 8th

- 7:00pm: Chug Ivrit Chadashot (News from Israel) with Gali Rabin.** Location: Room 206/207

Tuesday, January 9th

- 11:00am-12:00pm: The Marilyn & Sam Isler, "Studies in the Weekly Parsha"** led by Rabbi Shaul Robinson: Location: LL201
- 6:30pm: United Hearts for Israel:** If you have been affected by the crisis in Israel, The Jewish Board invites you to their community of healing. Register at www.tinyurl.com/UnitedHeartsIL

Wednesday, January 10th

- 6:30pm: United Hearts for Israel:** If you have been affected by the crisis in Israel, The Jewish Board invites you to their community of healing. Register at www.tinyurl.com/UnitedHeartsIL2
- *CANCELED* 7:00pm: Kabbalah and Its Influence on the Birth of Chassidut** with Lloyd Epstein TMZ Kollel Fellow Bezalel Rac. Location: Belfer Beit Midrash.

Thursday, January 11th

- 11:00am-12:00pm: Gemara Makot Class:** led by Rabbi Robinson: Location: LL201
- 11:00am-12:00pm: Women's Talk Time: led by School Psychologist Ruth Moser Riemer.** Meeting ID: 972 4054 8238 Passcode: 142533
- 7:00pm: Jacob Adler Parsha Class: Explorations in the Weekly Parsha:** Led by Rabbi Robinson. Location: Belfer Beit Midrash
- 8:15pm: The M'lachim (Kings) Study Group led by Ron Platzer:** If you are interested in joining, please contact Ronald Platzer at RPlatzer@citytech.cuny.edu.

Daf Yomi: Sunday at 7:30am, Monday and Thursday at 6:10am, and Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday at 6:20am: Location: Belfer Beit Midrash and Virtual. Details on www.lss.org/LearningOpportunities

WE STAND WITH ISRAEL

Hafrashat Challah for the Hostages: Participate in the meaningful tradition of Hafrashat Challah as a symbol of solidarity for the hostages in Gaza. Let's unite women from every corner in a shared act of connection and support. The goal is to gather 40 women for each hostage. Commit to this cause by pledging your name at www.tinyurl.com/c4Israel

Boots for Israel: Launched by Gen. Daniel Jacobs, Boots for Israel began when his unit lacked tactical boots. Young Israel of Holliswood, led by our Executive Director, intervened. A local wholesaler offered discounted boots, aiding their mission. Support them at www.yiholliswood.org/payment.php.

Contact Your Elected Officials: Contact Your Elected Officials: Protect Israel by urging Congress to stand with them against terrorism. Express gratitude and emphasize the need for destroying any remnant of Hamas. Act now at www.takeaction.aipac.org/Wyv8pgS.

YOUTH & MAGEN AVRAHAM TEEN DEPARTMENTS

Youth Groups: 10:00am: Location: Second Floor Classrooms. Supervised play.

Babies & Me (Newborn-2yrs): Shabbat, 10:00-11:30am in LL203: Enjoy parent-baby bonding (unsupervised), followed by a lively 30-minute program led by Devorah Batt at 11:00am. A dedicated nursing area is available in LL203.

Upcoming Events:

Friday Night, January 5th: 4:30pm: Teen Minyan: Join your peers for meaningful tefillah and a yummy Kiddush! Location: Belfer Beit aMidrash

Tamim Academy NYC Winter Tours: Tuesday, January 9th, Thursday, January 18th: 8:45am-9:45am: RSVP at admissions@tamimnyc.org. Currently accepting applications for the 2024/25 academic year for grades K-2. Visit www.tamimnyc.org for more information.

Sunday, January 7th: Babies & Me: 9:45am –11:15am: Enjoy quality time with your little one in this 45 minute class with a talented music teacher. Location: Pre-function Room

Friday Night, January 12th: Friday Night Oneg @ Wildes: 8:00pm: Play games, talk, and enjoy snacks with Lincoln Square teen at Teen Director Alexander Wildes' apartment ! Email youth@lss.org for the address.

Sunday, January 14th: Snow Tubing Trip WSIS: 7:00pm: Meet at West Side Institutional for a family-fun Sunday snow tubing trip!

Motzei Shabbat, January 27th: 16 Handles and Chill: 7:00pm: Meet at 16 handles (between 75th and 76th) and enjoy some Fro-Yo with friends!

***Postponed* Sunday, February 4th: The Magician's Elephant: 3:00pm—5:00pm:** Gather your loves ones, cozy up, and oin us for a heartwarming movie. Enjoy the magic on the big screen, complete with popcorn and pizza. Register at www.lss.org/form/youth-movie-night.html.

Sunday, March 17th: Purim Carnival: 12:30pm - 3:15pm: Magician, clown, bounce house, obstacle course, face painting, bubble show, interactive games, and more! Free entry for children <1. Tickets in advance: \$20, tickets at the door: \$25. Be a sponsor! Matanot Le'evyonim - \$180 + 3 entry tickets, Seudat Hamentashen - \$500 + 6 entry tickets, Mordechai - \$1,000 - 8 entry tickets. Queen Esther - \$5000 - 12 entry tickets. Register at www.lss.org/form/purim2024

For more information email youth@lss.org.



Shabbat Greeters: Donate your time as a greeter at our shul! Be part of the welcoming team on Shabbat, embodying the true spirit of LSS. Two morning shifts available (9:00-10:00am and 10:00-11:00am) with one greeter per shift. Enjoy meeting new people, putting names to faces, and making everyone feel welcome. Register at www.lss.org/form/greeter. For questions or assistance, email president@lss.org.

DVAR TORAH PARSHAT SHEMOT

What *Parashat Shemot* Teaches Us About Our Complex Tradition

Jeff Schwartz

January 6, 2024

A tradition doesn't interpret itself (a wise scholar once said). Rather, it gets interpreted by people who, informed by fundamental beliefs or revered teachers, identify certain aspects of the tradition they deem to be primary. Understanding this is important for Jews because Jewish tradition is a complex one. It has both Amalek and Isaiah, a call to wage genocidal war and a call to care for the orphan, widow and stranger. Identifying primary ideas about our tradition is relevant because even today we have to decide when and how to care for the downtrodden, and because we have to confront impulses that push us in the direction of fighting wars unjustly.

Emphasizing different aspects of Jewish tradition can lead us to different approaches to Judaism. Here's one example of what might be called aggressive Judaism: "'You may think you're being merciful' by sparing a [Gazan] child, counsels one....rabbi in a...video posted online, but actually 'you're being vicious to the ultimate victim that this child will grow up and kill.'" In contrast, here is what might be called humanistic Judaism according to Yossi Klein Halevi: "Fighting evil doesn't mean a suspension of moral ground rules....One must be careful not to become tainted by the evil you are fighting....We don't target innocents; we don't dehumanize an entire people...[Jews fight] with fierce determination, but without blind hatred for an entire people, let alone an entire religion."

Parashat Shemot points us, as I see it, in a humanistic direction. Early in the *Parasha* a new Pharaoh hatches a conspiracy theory in response to Israelite population growth and says, *Venosaf gam hu al son'einu* ("they may join our enemies," *Shemot* 1:10). Pharaoh recommends the appointment of taskmasters, *Lema'an anoto b'sivlotam* ("in order to afflict them with their burdens," 1:11). A few verses later, the Egyptian street was all in: *Vayemararu et chayeihem ba'avodah kasha* ("and they embittered their lives with hard work," 1:14). Perhaps a contemporary way to understand Pharaoh's thinking is as a dualistic way of construing the world. Back then it was Israelites vs Egyptians. But, categorizing the world in this manner leads to dehumanizing members of the out-group which can serve, unjustly, to justify brutality toward them. In Egypt Israelites were the out-group and Egyptians had no qualms

about brutalizing them because they were seen as subhuman, like slaves in the antebellum South and Jews under Nazi rule.

Assuming it was God and not Pharaoh's dualistic thinking that was driving history, why the need to make the Israelites an enslaved and oppressed minority before becoming a free people in its own land? How about this: God wanted the Israelites to learn "a moral truth that had evaded civilization for millennia....that every single human being, no matter their rank or stature, is worthy of respect and compassion and dignity and care....It is not human nature to be humane. [It is a creed] that needs to be taught and reinforced repeatedly." [Dov Lerner, *The Lehrhaus*, 10/19/2023].

Today, when we review the weekly *Parasha*, and mine our tradition to find its basic truths, it seems to me that too many are missing the idea that every human is part of humanity. For example, the Chief Rabbi of *Tzefat* (Shmuel Eliyahu) recently said, "We believed that if we stroked the snake softly and kindly enough, the snake would transform into a lamb. But when you pet a snake, it bites you. How many more Jews must die before we realize that a snake is truly a snake?" In other words, Palestinian terrorists are less than human. An Israeli commentator recently made this explicit: "The people who committed these [Oct7] atrocities are not human. They were created in a human womb...they were not created in the image of God. They are cockroaches....Every Hamas supporter deserves to die. We will exterminate them....This is not the time for the morality of the prophets."

I don't think these perspectives, that rob human beings of their humanity, are the lessons God wanted those hundreds of years of Egyptian slavery to teach us. Self-defense does not have to include dehumanization. Having finally regained sovereignty after millennia of persecution in diaspora, we should not abuse legislative processes and military might. We must not bend the justice system so it is applied preferentially to the majority and disadvantageously to the stranger. We should not dehumanize our enemies, even ones who act in horribly brutal ways.

Shemot, and the Torah in general, teach us that living a moral life is a difficult individual achievement. Culture and tradition play a big role, but if the Torah teaches anything it's that today's victim can become tomorrow's victimizer especially when under stress. For example, God tells *Avraham*, in the Covenant Between the Pieces (*Brit Bein Ha'B'tarim*, *Breishit* 15:13), that his progeny will be an enslaved and oppressed minority in a foreign land (before

DVAR TORAH PARSHAT SHEMOT

being freed, made into a powerful nation, and brought to their homeland). Immediately after this however, *Parashat Lech Lecha* tells us about Avraham's concubine: *Vateaneha Sarai vativrach mipaneha* ("and Sarai afflicted [the concubine] who ran away from her," *Bereisheet* 16:6). That is, in this event it was an Israelite (*Sarai*) who was oppressing an Egyptian (*Hagar*). Similarly, in the book of *Shemot*, shortly after the exodus from Egypt (in chapter 12) God enjoins the Israelites for the first time, "Do not oppress a stranger, for you know what it feels like to be a stranger, for you yourselves were once strangers in the land of Egypt" (*Shemot* 23:9).

I think these texts are meant to show us how slippery moral decency can be -- particularly under pressure. Sovereignty can change legitimate self-defense into selfish expressions of dominance over others. Jonathan Sacks tells us (in *Not in God's Name*, p. 184), that God wants the Israelites "to know in your very bones and sinews what it feels like to be a stranger" *davka* so when we become sovereign in our own land we will not act like the rulers of pre-exodus Egypt. David Hartman is reported to have said, back in 1979, that the central religious question of our time concerns how to rule over others. Can we expound the Torah so that it helps us find that holy sweet-spot between power-intoxication and powerlessness?

I pray that we not let ourselves become like our enemy as we fight to preserve our wonderful traditions. We must be able to hear the cries of the stranger, the 'other', even as we vigorously defend our people and our state. In the spirit of the teaching that the human image is a divine one, we should strive to see godliness in every human being (even ones who act very badly). As Avraham's descendants let us find and embrace the *Torah's* humanistic messages.

Dvar Torah writing is open to all LSS members, their children, and LSS clergy. Guidelines will be provided on request. For more info, see Bill Greenbaum in shul, email him at dvar@lss.org, or call the shul office.

The next Shabbatot available: Tetzaveh, 2/23-24; Ki Tissa, 3/1-2.

Enjoy reading the weekly Dvar Torah

-in print, in the Shelly Danishefsky Foyer, or

-on lss.org under the Echod tab, or

-in the Electronic Echod (available to print at home).

In case of a bereavement, please call our Clergy at 646-543-7485

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Please note that the deadline to submit content for the Echod, excluding sponsorships, is Wednesday at 3:00pm.