



**PARK SLOPE JEWISH CENTER**

October 26- November 3, 2018 | 17-25 Cheshvan 5779  
Parashat Vayera

Friday, October 26   17 Cheshvan				Parashat Vayera Saturday, October 27   18 Cheshvan		
Candle Lighting   5:42PM Kabbalat Shabbat Kulanu   6:30PM Shaarei Mitzvah 7 Friday Night Dinner with Rabbi Carter 6:30PM				<b>Simcha Shabbat</b> Havurat Shabbat   9:30AM Shacharit   10:00AM Jr. Congregation   11:00AM Tot Shabbat/Mini-Minyan   11:15AM Advanced Talmud   1:30PM		
Sunday October 28 19 Cheshvan	Monday October 29 20 Cheshvan	Tuesday October 30 21 Cheshvan	Wednesday October 31 22 Cheshvan	Thursday November 1 23 Cheshvan	Friday November 2 24 Cheshvan	Saturday November 3 25 Cheshvan
Hebrew School 9:30AM  Kadima Ample Hills Trip 12:30PM  Davening Workshop with Avodah 2:00PM  Kitah Zayin Dinner 6:00PM  Intro to Judaism 7:00PM		Hebrew School 4:00PM  Board Meeting 7:15PM  Shir Chadash Choir 7:30PM	Morning Minyan 7:15AM  Hebrew School 4:00PM	Biblical Hebrew 7:30PM	PAI Walking Group 9:30AM  It's Friday Music Class 10:00AM  Candle Lighting 5:33PM  Lev Tahor with <b>Liz Wollman</b> 6:30PM	<i>Parashat Chayei Sarah</i>  Havurat Shabbat 9:30AM  Shacharit   10:00AM  <b>Phoebe Franklin Bat Mitzvah</b>  Jr. Congregation 11:00AM  Tot Shabbat/Mini Minyan 11:15AM  Learn about Shmira 1:15PM
<b>Park Slope Jewish Center</b> 1320 Eighth Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11215 (718) 768-1453 Office hours: M-Th 9AM-5PM, F 9AM-2PM www.psjc.org   email: office@psjc.org				Rabbi Carie Carter, Rabbi (rabbicarie@psjc.org) Ellen Brickman, President (president@psjc.org) Elana Ayalon, Director of Administration (office@psjc.org) Aileen Heiman, Director of Youth Education (aileen.heiman@psjc.org) For questions about Accessibility (inclusion@psjc.org)		

**Todah Rabbah**

To **Ruth Kaufman** for hosting the Shabbat Shmooze last Shabbat.

**Yahrzeits observed 18-24 Cheshvan:**

**Andrew Mark**, father of Marjorie Rothenberg; **Anne Ruth King**, great-aunt of Judith Moskowitz; **Bernard Goldstein**, father of Ezra Goldstein; **Bessie Tursky**, grandmother of Marc Korashan; **Brian Barrett**, father of Rebecca Stein; **Eleanor Grosser**, cousin of Karen Louise Heau; **Elizabeth Quigley**, mother of Lawrence Quigley; **Honora Gershman**, aunt of Pamela Kaplan; **Irving Wolkoff**, father of Steve Wolkoff; **Libby Birnbaum**, mother of David Birnbaum; **Mack Geller**, observed by the PSJC community; **Melissa Levine**, observed by the PSJC community; **Pesye Greenblatt**, observed by the PSJC community; **Sarah Schwartz Rabinowitz**, mother of Richard Rabinowitz. *May their memories be for a blessing.*

**Kol Nidre Appeal 5779**

Our annual Kol Nidre Appeal is an important part of our Shul's major fundraising effort during the course of the year. It is only with your continued support that we are able to maintain a high level of quality programming and services to meet the wide-ranging needs of our congregants.

Make your gift today: <https://www.psjc.org/form/KN2018>



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Saturday, October 27

**Simcha Shabbat** | 10:00AM

Join us as we will acknowledge our members who are celebrating their October birthdays & anniversaries.

**Advanced Talmud** | 1:30PM

This class is an on-going self-study group appropriate for people who are proficient in Hebrew and have some prior experience in Gemara study. New students are welcome! Email [aronrhalf@gmail.com](mailto:aronrhalf@gmail.com).

Sunday, October 28

**PSJC Davening Workshop** | 2:00PM - 4:00PM

Have you always wanted to lead a part of the service? Come to Avodah's Davening Workshop and work one-on-one with an experienced davener who can help get you up to Speed. There will be snacks to boost your energy, and a chance to sign up to lead services after you've boosted your skills. Let us know what you want to learn, from Shacharit to Musaf, the Torah Service to Hallel, and we'll find you a buddy to work with.

**Postcards For Democracy** | 2:00PM - 4:00PM

Join members of PSJC's Rodfei Tzedek as we join members of neighboring congregations from various faiths and nearby communities to write postcards encouraging our congregation members to vote. The more we can show politicians that we are a community that votes consistently and in large numbers, the more attention our priorities will get. Let's come together to promote democracy and develop relationships and strength. Event sponsored by Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism.

<https://www.psjc.org/event/postcards-for-democracy-.html>

Friday, November 2 | 9:30AM

**PAI Walking Group**

Join us every Friday at the entrance to Prospect Park at 15th Street and Prospect Park West. Please register so we can let you know if a walk must be canceled: <https://www.psjc.org/event/positive-aging-initiative-walking-group.html>

**It's Friday Music Class** | 10:00AM

Come sing and play with Abe every week for a fun-filled music class that combines your favorite Shabbat and children's songs, with a story, movement and more. Taught by a professional music instructor, our open-space, informal class allows children ages 0 - 3 and their grownups to explore music and Shabbat! Each class ends with a snack and open-play so that caregivers can connect with each other. We look forward to having you join us! \$15/drop-in class\* or \$120 for a 10-class series (paid in advance) RSVP: [https://www.psjc.org/sing\\_play\\_connect](https://www.psjc.org/sing_play_connect)

**Connecting the Dots: The Immigrant Experience on Broadway, at Lev Tahor**

What does *Hamilton* have to do with *Annie Get Your Gun*? Join Lev Tahor, PSJC's monthly community-led, all-sung Kabbalat Shabbat service in November to find out! We'll learn how immigrants, from George M. Cohan to Lin-Manuel Miranda, shaped Broadway and the American musical theatre, with CUNY professor and ethnomusicologist Elizabeth L. Wollman, whose work explores American pop music, mass media, musical theatre, sexuality/gender and the cultural history of New York City. RSVP here: <https://tinyurl.com/LevTahor-Nov2-2018> for the vegetarian/dairy pot luck dinner.

**Save the Date!** On December 7, Lev Tahor welcomes City Council Member Brad Lander.

**Learn about Shmira with PSJC Hevra Kadisha**

Saturday, November 3 | 1:15PM - 2:15PM

Have you ever wondered if joining the Park Slope Jewish Center Hevra Kadisha is for you? Interested in learning more? Please join us for a workshop on Shmira (guarding the bodies of the deceased from the time of death until the funeral): Why do we do Shmira? How do we do Shmira? How does it feel to do Shmira? Experienced hevra kadisha members will be on hand to answer any questions you might have about this holy activity. Please join us even if you are just curious to learn more. There is no obligation to sign up, though we would love to have you.

**Have announcements?** Email by Monday 5:00PM ([office@psjc.org](mailto:office@psjc.org))

**G'mach, Hevra Kadisha welcome new members** If you are able to cook, deliver meals, visit, attend shiva minyanim, do shmira or tahara for those who have died, and support our members in good and bad times - please contact G'mach and Hevra Kadisha to add your name to the distribution list: [gmach@psjc.org](mailto:gmach@psjc.org) or [hevrakadisha@psjc.org](mailto:hevrakadisha@psjc.org)



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### MLK Day of Service 2019: 10th Year Anniversary Celebration/Transition

Every January for the past decade, volunteers of all ages have converged at PSJC to prepare thousands of shelf-stable meals; assemble snack and toiletry packages for families fleeing domestic violence; construct hundreds of PB&J sandwiches for donation to CHIPS; gather and sort children's books and all-ages clothing donations; knit and crochet baby blankets and chemo caps; cook dozens of fresh-made meals for PSJC's freezer; create beautiful crafts for elders; and write letters on behalf of immigrants and Dreamers. With over 1200 participants in a decade, MLK Day has become a PSJC institution. ***But no institution can thrive without new ideas and creativity.*** The core team that created the Day of Service actively seeks new hands (and hearts, and brains) in this new decade of service. The work is not overwhelming - it's all set up, year to year – and the satisfaction is tremendous. Plus, it's a lot of fun. We can share the nuts-and-bolts of how to produce the Day of Service - and can partner/coach interested volunteers. If you, your family, and your friends have enjoyed being part of MLK Day of Service, please consider stepping up to help us plan for the future. For details and information, contact Helen Zelon (hzelon@gmail.com).

#### PSJC Knitters

Monday, November 5 | 7:30PM

For more information contact marjorie.rothenberg@gmail.com.

Thursday, November 8

#### Café Ivrit | 7:00PM-9:00PM

Are you "moderately fluent" in Hebrew? Do you want to practice your Hebrew in a casual, supportive environment? Do you want a nice kos café with friends at the end of the evening? Join our Shaliach, Noam, for Café Ivrit. For more information email: naomW@jafi.org. Future dates: November 8 and December 13.

#### Tahara Training at Shomrei HaChomos | 7:30PM

Are you curious about how the Hevra Kadisha (holy society) performs tahara (preparing a body for burial)? Are you thinking of joining the Hevra? Are you currently a member who would like a refresher on the practice? Or do you just want to learn a bit more about this sacred ritual? Please join us for a teaching and learning session on the ritual, look together through the tahara manual, and conduct a brief overview of aspects of the practice at the Shomrei HaChomos memorial chapel (4218 Fort Hamilton Avenue). RSVP to hevra.kaddisha@psjc.org.

Friday, November 9

#### Kabbalat Shabbat with Judy Ribnick | 6:30PM

#### Reflections on the 80th Anniversary of Kristallnacht with our Shaliach, Noam Willner | 7:30PM

1938 marked a turning point in Nazi policy against Jews. Today, 80 years since Kristallnacht (The Night of Broken Glass), Noam Willner will reflect on the events that led to Kristallnacht and the development of "The Final Solution". Noam worked for many years as senior educator at Yad Vashem and led many educational trips to Poland prior to coming to Brooklyn as our Community Shaliach. RSVP for the Vegetarian Potluck Shabbat Dinner here: [www.tinyurl.com/Kristallnacht11-09](http://www.tinyurl.com/Kristallnacht11-09)

Saturday, November 10

#### Parashat Hashavua with Cornelia Dalton, Rabbinic Intern | 9:30AM

#### Why Pray? Why Prayer? | 1:15PM

An exploration of the intimate ways we create and communicate with God and with ourselves, from Tanakh up to the present day. Learning with Rabbinic Intern, Cornelia Dalton

**All congregants and visitors** (of all genders) are requested to wear a head covering in the Sanctuary. Cell phones and photography are not permitted in the synagogue during Shabbat. Please also refrain from applause during services. **PSJC runs on community participation.** If you are interested in: **leading Kabbalat Shabbat/Maariv Services**, email [freddie.brooks@psjc.org](mailto:freddie.brooks@psjc.org); **leading Shabbat Morning Services**, email Elizabeth Schnur at [davening@psjc.org](mailto:davening@psjc.org); **chanting Haftarah**, email Alan Palmer at [haftarah@psjc.org](mailto:haftarah@psjc.org), reading Torah, email Rabbi Sue Oren at [leyning@psjc.org](mailto:leyning@psjc.org). **To request an Aliyah or other honor**, email Rabbi Carter a week in advance ([rabbicarie@psjc.org](mailto:rabbicarie@psjc.org)), or notify the usher if you arrive before the Torah Service begins; we honor requests whenever possible. **To usher services**, email Ira Drucker at [ira.drucker@psjc.org](mailto:ira.drucker@psjc.org).

## Parashat Vayera

Triennial: Genesis 21:1-22:24 | Etz Hayim p.112; Hertz p.71

Haftarah: 2 Kings 4:1-37 | Etz Hayim p.123; Hertz p.76

### D'var Torah: The Cult of Continuity

Was there something special about Avraham which caused God to pluck him from obscurity and enter into an eternal covenant with him? Our tradition offers many different responses to this question and one is buried in this week's parashah:

*"For I know him (Ki Y'dativ), that he will command (Y'Tsaveh) his children and his household after him, that they shall keep the way of God..."* (Genesis 18:19)

According to one reading of this verse, Avraham is special (or God chooses Avraham) because God knows ("Y'dativ") that Avraham will be capable of creating an on-going, self-sustaining community that will preserve God's message. There could have been other people who were morally worthy of entering into a covenant with God but only Avraham was able to "*command his children and his household after him*". All previous uses of the verb "to command" in the Torah refer to God commanding humans. Here for the first time, we have a human making commands; a fact that the Babylonian Talmud (Sanhedrin 56b) picks up on when, based on this verse, it acknowledges Avraham as the archetypal human commander (*m'tsaveh*). To put it crudely, Avraham was "Mr. Continuity". We live in a world where, for better and for worse, the Avrahamic traditions dominate much of the planet. It does seem as if there was, at least mythologically, something special about Avraham's capacity to create self-perpetuating religious traditions. Avrahamic traditions really are astonishingly good at self-replicating. But continuity is not enough. Conor Cruise O'Brien who represented Ireland at the UN in 1956 and who, since representatives sat in the alphabetical order of their nations, sat between the representatives of Iraq and Israel, was led to ponder whether religious traditions are really just another unpleasant facet of nationalism. The Avrahamic traditions may be good at self-replicating, but so are flu viruses! God may have known from the outset that Avraham could be relied upon to perpetuate God's message, but it is only at the end of the parashah, after the story of the binding of Isaac and Avraham's willingness to sacrifice his beloved son, that God comes to know that this desire and ability to perpetuate is not merely an expression of self-interest:

*"...for now I know (Ki Atah Yadati) that you fear God..."* (Genesis 22:12)

Only with the binding of Isaac are we reassured that Avraham's capacity for continuity is outweighed by his commitment to God. Stirred by our nervousness about our incapacity to transmit our beliefs and practices, liberal Jews often eye our illiberal Jewish cousins with a holy envy for their apparent capacity to "*command their children and their household after them*". It does seem to be true that various aspects of religious fundamentalism seem to contribute to high levels of cultural transmission. A fundamentalist belief in the pristine source of your own canon; a tendency towards social isolationism and exclusion of outsiders; a declared belief in one's elevated status in the eyes of God; a focus on particularist rather than universalist religious motifs; a heightened sense and practice of altruism tuned almost exclusively to insiders, a serene sense that one is transmitting an unbroken authentic chain of tradition – all of these do seem to contribute to high levels of cultural continuity. But continuity is not God. If our yearning to perpetuate Judaism is motivated by the desire for self-replication and we are thus tempted to use the tools of the fundamentalist, then we should take a long hard look in the mirror. Jewish continuity may be a good thing for the world but only if it is motivated by deep desires other than the cultural "evil inclination". If a liberal Muslim were to follow the same track; eschewing the values of peaceful integration, intellectual integrity and moral courage and, based on a fear of assimilation, began to espouse rabidly particularist and fundamentalist ideas in order to ensure that her kids stayed within their fold, we would beg her to reconsider for the sake of Peace, for the sake of Truth, for God's sake.

God knows at the start of the parashah that Avraham is capable of guaranteeing continuity. Only at the end of the parashah does God know that Avraham does not worship continuity and that he will not sacrifice his deepest values on her altar. By being prepared to sacrifice his son he is articulating, in the deepest way possible, that continuity is not God. Avrahamic religions all have an Achilles' heel connected to cultural narcissism and we must all be constantly vigilant that we do not turn to the dark side.

This weekly commentary on the Torah portion is by **Rabbi Joel Levy**, *Conservative Yeshiva Faculty & Rosh Yeshiva* "Torah Sparks" series produced by the Conservative Yeshiva in Jerusalem. A Haftarah commentary by Rabbi Mordechai Silverstein found at <http://www.conservativeyeshiva.org/torahsparks>.