



March 22-23, 2024

יג אדר ב' תשפ"ד

Candle Lighting 6:58 PM

Shabbat Zachor

שבת זכור

Parashat Vayikra ויקרא Leviticus 1:1-5:26

Stone – p 544 Hertz – p 410 Etz Hayim – p 585

Special Maftir – Deuteronomy 25:17-19

Stone – p 1066 Hertz – p 856 Etz Hayim – p 1135

Haftarah – I Samuel 15:2-34

Stone – p 1214 Hertz – p 995 Etz Hayim – p 1281

Join us after services for **Kiddush**,
sponsored by the Congregation

Shabbat ends 7:58 PM

Purim Services & Megillah Reading

Motzei Shabbat, 3/23: 8:00 PM

Sunday, 3/24: 8:30 AM

TRADITIONAL CONGREGATION

Rabbi Seth D Gordon – Rabbi.Gordon@yahoo.com

Marian S. Gordon, Executive Director – traditionalcong@gmail.com

IN-PERSON SERVICES

Sunday - 8:30 AM

Tuesday - 6:30 PM

Thursday - 7:00 AM

Shabbat - 9:30 AM

Board of Directors:

OPEN President

Ellis Frohman, Financial Vice President

Mark Weinstein, Ritual Vice President

Marty Levy/Mindy Strauss, Education Co-Vice Presidents

Chris Brown, Membership Vice President

Steven Puro, Administration Vice President

Steve Roufa/Justin Zeid, Building & Grounds Co-Vice Presidents

Ron Green, Fundraising Vice President

Barbara Levin, Treasurer

Mimi Levy, Secretary

Past Presidents:

Kenneth H. Bohm

Phil Brick

Boaz Roth

Members at Large: (terms end in July of year indicated)

Maureen Brodsky (2024)

Stanley Estrin (2026)

Bill Gold (2025)

Gary Golden (2026)

Stan Greenberg (2024)

Jack Heller (2024)

Sid Levin (2025)

Ari Levy (2024)

Carol Max (2025)

Florence Schachter (2026)

Lori Tesser (2026)

We welcome new members!

*If you or someone you know would like to receive membership information,
please contact Chris Brown, Membership VP, at 636-288-5356*

On This Week's Torah Portion - Vayikra

Sacrifices, the subject of this week's parsha, were central to the religious life of biblical Israel. We see this not only by the sheer space devoted to them in the Torah, but also by the fact that they occupy its central book, Vayikra.

We have not had the sacrificial service since the destruction of the second Temple almost 2000 years ago. What is deeply relevant today, however, is the critique of sacrifices we find among the Prophets of the first Temple. That critique was sharp and deep and formed many of their most powerful addresses. One of the earliest was delivered by the Prophet Samuel: "Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obedience to the Lord's command? Surely, obedience is better than sacrifice, compliance than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. 15:22).

Amos said in the name of God: "If you offer Me burnt offerings—or your meal offerings— I will not accept them; I will pay no heed to your gifts of fatlings ... But let justice well up like water, righteousness like a never-ending stream" (Amos 5:21-24). Likewise Hosea: "For I desire goodness, not sacrifice; obedience to God, rather than burnt offerings" (Hosea 6:6).

We find a similar critique in several Psalms. "Were I hungry, I would not tell you, for Mine is the world and all it holds. Do I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?" (Ps. 50:8-15). "Lord, open my lips, and let my mouth declare Your praise. You do not want me to bring sacrifices; You do not desire burnt offerings. True sacrifice to God is a contrite spirit; God, You will not despise a contrite and crushed heart" (Ps. 51:17-19).

Jeremiah seems to suggest that the sacrificial order was not God's initial intention: "For when I freed your fathers from the land of Egypt, I did not speak with them or command them concerning burnt offerings or sacrifice. But this is what I commanded them: Do My bidding, that I may be your God and you may be My people; walk only in the way that I enjoin upon you, that it may go well with you" (Jer. 7:22-23).

Strongest of all is the passage at the beginning of the book of Isaiah that we read on Shabbat Chazon (before Tisha b'Av): "What need have I of all your sacrifices?" says the Lord. "I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. When you come to appear before Me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of My courts? Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to Me" (Is. 1:11-13).

This entire line of thought, sounded by many voices and sustained across centuries, is extraordinary. The people were being criticised not for disobeying God's law but for obeying it. Sacrifices were commanded. Their offering was a sacred act performed in a holy place. What then aroused the Prophets' anger and rebuke?

It was not that they were opposed to sacrifice as such. Jeremiah foresaw the day when "people shall come from the towns of Judah and from the environs of Jerusalem ... bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices, meal offerings and frankincense, and bringing offerings of thanksgiving to the House of the Lord" (Jer. 17:26).

Likewise Isaiah: "I will bring them to My sacred mount and let them rejoice in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices shall be welcome on My altar, for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples" (Is. 56:7).

They were not criticising the institution of sacrifices. They were criticising something as real now as it was in their time. What distressed them to the core of their being was the idea that you could serve God and at the same time act disdainfully, cruelly, unjustly, insensitively or callously toward other people. "So long as I am in God's good graces, that is all that matters." That is the thought that made the Prophets incandescent with indignation. If you think that, they seem to say, then you haven't understood either God or Torah.

The first thing the Torah tells us about humanity is that we are each in the image and likeness of God Himself. Therefore if you wrong a human being, you are abusing the only creation in the universe on which God has set His image. A sin against any person is a sin against God.

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On This Week's Torah Portion - Vayikra

In the first mission statement of the Jewish people, God said about Avraham, "For I have chosen him that he may instruct his children and his posterity to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is just and right" (Gen. 18:19). The way of the Lord is to act justly and righteously toward your fellow human beings. In context, this meant that God was inviting Avraham to pray on behalf of the people of Sodom, even though he knew that they were wicked and sinners.

It is specifically in the book of sacrifices, Vayikra, that we find the twin commands to love your neighbour as yourself, and love the stranger (Lev. 19:18, 33-34). The sacrifices that express our love and awe of God should lead to love of the neighbour and the stranger. There should be a seamless transition from commands between us and God to commands between us and our fellow humans.

Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah and Jeremiah all witnessed societies in which people were punctilious in bringing their offerings to the Temple, but in which there was bribery, corruption, perversion of justice, abuse of power and the exploitation of the powerless by the powerful. The Prophets saw in this a profound and dangerous contradiction. The very act of bringing a sacrifice was fraught with ambiguity. Jews were not the only people in ancient times to have temples, priests and sacrifices. Almost everyone did. It was precisely here that the religion of ancient Israel came closest, outwardly, to the practices of their pagan neighbours. But the sacrificial systems of other cultures were based on totally different beliefs. In many religions sacrifices were seen as a way of placating or appeasing the gods. The Aztecs believed that sacrificial offerings fed the gods who sustained the universe. Walter Burkert speculated that the ancient Greeks experienced guilt when they killed animals for food, so they offered sacrifices as a way of appeasing their consciences.

All these ideas are alien to Judaism. God cannot be bribed or appeased. Nor can we bring Him anything that is not His. God sustains the universe: the universe does not sustain Him. And wrongs righted by sacrifice do not excuse other wrongs. So intention and mindset were essential in the sacrificial system. The thought that "If I bring a sacrifice to God, He will overlook my other faults" – in effect, the idea that I can bribe the Judge of all the earth – turns a sacred act into a pagan one, and produces precisely the opposite result than the one intended by the Torah. It turns religious worship from a way to the right and the good, into a way of easing the conscience of those who practice the wrong and the bad.

To serve God is to serve humanity. That was the point made memorably by Micah: "He has told you, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: To do justice, to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:6-8). Jeremiah said of King Josiah: "He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to know Me? says the Lord" (Jer. 22:16). Knowing God, said Jeremiah, means caring for those in need.

Maimonides said essentially the same at the end of *The Guide for the Perplexed* (III, 54). He quotes Jeremiah: "Only in this should one glory: that they have the understanding to know Me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," says the Lord" (Jer. 9:23). To know God is to know what it is to act with kindness, justice and righteousness.

The danger of the sacrificial system, said the Prophets, is that it can lead people to think that there are two domains, the Temple and the world, serving God and caring for one's fellow humans, and they are disconnected. Judaism rejects the concept of two disconnected domains. Halachically they are distinct, but psychologically, ethically and spiritually they are part of a single indivisible system.

I believe that to love God is to love our fellow humans. To honour God is to honour our fellow humans. We may not ask God to listen to us if we are unwilling to listen to others. We may not ask God to forgive us if we are unwilling to forgive others. To know God is to seek to imitate Him, which means, said Jeremiah and Maimonides, to exercise kindness, justice and righteousness on earth.

Shabbat shalom,
Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l

VOLUNTEER



DRIVERS
NEEDED!

TO DELIVER MISHLOACH MANOT

SUNDAY, MARCH 24

IF YOU CAN HELP DELIVER, PLEASE CONTACT

NIKKI: NIKKIGGOLDSTEIN@GMAIL.COM

OR MIMI: MIMIKLEVY@GMAIL.COM

DRIVERS MAY PICK UP GIFT BOXES ON THESE
DAYS/TIMES (FOR DELIVERY ON SUNDAY, 3/24):

- ☒ Tuesday evening, March 19 from 6:30-7:30pm
- ☒ Thursday morning, March 21 from 7-8am
- ☒ Following Megillah reading on Saturday evening, March 23
- ☒ Sunday morning, March 24 (PURIM) from 9-10am
- ☒ Or give Nikki a call 314.807.2055 and we can set up a time convenient for you.

They are to be delivered any time on Sunday, March 24th.



*If you will be out of town on March 24,
please let Marian know and we will hold
your gift in the office for you:
traditionalcong@gmail.com*



We Sure Could Use More Items for Mother's Day...


Help us make Mother's Day special for women in shelters
(and their children, so they will be able to give a gift to their mother).

Please donate items for the
Florence Gaponoff Mother's Day Gift Bag Project
(see page 8 for what is needed)
or help with a monetary donation so items can be purchased
(checks payable to Traditional Congregation)

Thank you!!



Bags of items donated to date; we need many more items to fill gift bags for the many women's shelters that we help with this project.



We are collecting
for the 2024
Florence Gaponoff Mother's Day
Gift Bag Project!

These items are needed for
women in shelters:

***Monetary donations so
needed items can be purchased**

***Travel-size** shampoo,
conditioner, body lotions,
soap/body wash, deodorant,
toothpaste, toothbrush, dental
floss, etc.

***Travel brush/comb**

***Women's necklaces and
bracelets in GOOD wearable
condition (NO earrings or
broken/tarnished items)**

To donate \$\$, send a check to
Traditional Congregation or
go to:

[https://www.traditional-
congregation.org/donate](https://www.traditional-congregation.org/donate)

To donate travel-size items, bring
them to Traditional and place in
the wicker bin near the office.

Thank you!



The Taboo Against “Next Year in Jerusalem” in the American Haggadah

Professor Jonathan D. Sarna

Sunday, March 31

11:00 AM to 12:00 PM Eastern

Via Zoom

Professor Sarna is University Professor and Joseph H. & Belle R. Braun Professor of American Jewish History at Brandeis University and Chief Historian at the Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History

Register at utj.org/events/next-year-in-jerusalem



The Union for
Traditional Judaism



The aftermath of Oct 7th

Program at Nusach Hari B'nai Zion Synagogue,
650 N Price Rd

The program will take place in the Sanctuary, main entrance , upper level (South side).
Overflow parking in the Logos School lot. (*off Bonhomme, steps required*).

Sunday March 31 at 3:30 PM

כ"א באדר ב' תשפ"ד

Please Arrive at 3:15 PM

Registration required—*register at shavingisrael.org*

Security Provided

PROGRAM:

- Opening remarks: Dr. Laura Goldmeier, President of Shaving Israel
- Shaving Israel in Israel after October 7th: an eyewitness report by Meira Ganel
- **FEATURED SPEAKER** Chris Hexter: My grandson Yair Hexter z"l gave his life defending Israel
- Closing remarks: Rabbi Ze'ev Smason, Midwest Regional Vice-President Coalition for Jewish Values, Rabbi Emeritus of Nusach Hari B'nai Zion

REGISTRATION REQUIRED.

Register on the Shaving Israel website

Come for the program, stay for the pizza!
Pizza night to NHBZ all you can eat pizza,
pasta, and salad available for purchase

Shaving Israel
P. O. Box 6991
Chesterfield, MO 63006-6991



Israeli casualties of
October 7th, 2023

How you can help during
this difficult time

Donate



Donate on our website!

Visit our website to **register:**

<https://shavingisrael.org>



GENETICS AND HEREDITARY CANCER: LET'S LEARN TOGETHER

THURSDAY, APRIL 4, 2024
LIGHT REFRESHMENTS 5:30PM
PROGRAM AND Q&A 6:00 – 7:30PM

LOCATION:
ST. LOUIS JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER
MIROWITZ PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
2 MILLSTONE CAMPUS DR. 63146



We are inviting you, your friends and family to learn together with the Hamsa Wellness Community, the Cancer Support Community of Greater St. Louis, and St. Louis Ovarian Cancer Awareness about hereditary cancers and genetic counseling. On Thursday, April 4 at 6pm at the J's Staenberg Family Complex, join genetic counselor Susan Jones, MS, CGC, and oncologist Dr. Shannon Grabosch, to better understand hereditary cancer risks and the impact on treatment and medical management.

Do you know...

- Where to learn about your hereditary risk of cancer?
- What questions to ask to help you understand your risk of developing a hereditary cancer?
- Who should consider counseling from a genetics counselor?

We have answers for these questions and many more at Genetics and Hereditary Cancer: Let's Learn Together!

For more information or to register visit our [event website](#).

See you there!

Debbi Braunstein
The Hamsa Wellness Community, Director
St. Louis Jewish Community Center
314-442-3266 (O) 314-304-3633 (M)

PRAYER

Eternal God, in whose service we are enlisted and
in whose name we have gathered,
lift our thoughts that we may renew our minds;
and lead us beside tranquil waters so that we may restore our souls.

*We thank You, O God, for our hallowed memories
and for our abiding hopes.*

Help us to show that we are Your children by giving
ourselves faithfully to Your tasks.

Help us to convert our convictions into conduct and commitments.

Help us to narrow the gap between our principles and our practices,
between our aspirations and our actions.

*Keep us from blaming others for our own faults;
help us to heal the wounds we have thoughtlessly inflicted.*

Help us to face our defeats with courage and
to carry our successes with humility.

*Help us from the pride that blinds the mind
and from the anger that locks the heart.*

Make us loyal to our convictions in the face of falsehood;
but help us to speak the truth in love.

*On this Shabbat draw us closer to Your teachings;
closer to each other, and closer to You.*

Unknown

THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE.

We call things we don't understand complex, but that means we haven't found a good way of thinking about them yet.

Tsutomu Shimomura