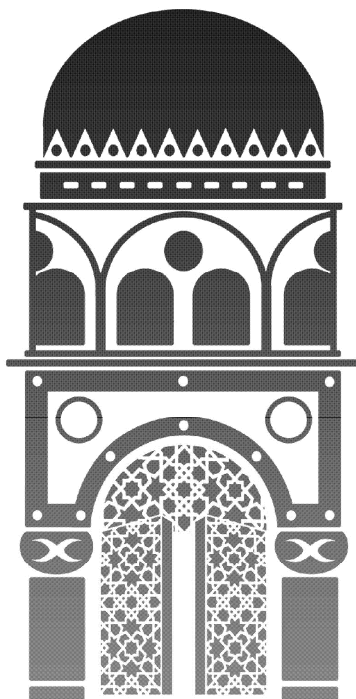


# WEST LONDON SYNAGOGUE

ק"ק שער ציון

WELCOMES YOU



שַׁבַּת שְׁלוֹם

SHABBAT SHALOM

26-27 October 2018

18 Cheshvan 5779

# SHABBAT SHALOM AND WELCOME TO WEST LONDON SYNAGOGUE

## FRIDAY

**6.00pm:**

### **Erev Shabbat Service**

Led by Rabbi Helen and Rabbi Sybil

Sermon by: Rabbi Sybil

**Wardens:** Rita Yusupoff, Oliver Walton and Steven Rowe

**Beadles:** Julia and Julian Markson

## SATURDAY

**10.30am:** **Coffee Morning**

**11.00am:** **Shabbat Morning Service**

Led by Rabbi Helen and Rabbi Sybil

Sermon by: Rabbi Helen

Torah Read by: Vincent Isaacs (Adult Bar Mitzvah)

**Wardens:** Rita Yusupoff, Oliver Walton and David Chapman.

**Beadles:** Julia and Julian Markson

**Torah:** Genesis 18: 1-13

**Haftarah:** II Kings 4:17-37

*Please join us for Shabbat kiddush after the service.*

### **Doctor or fully trained first aider?**

If you are a doctor or trained first aider please make yourself known to the wardens and beadle.

## PARASHAT VA'YEIRA

*Parashat Va'yeira* begins with the visit of three men to Abraham. He welcomes them with generous hospitality, and they promise that Sarah will soon bear a son. When the men depart for the city of Sodom, God appears to Abraham and tells him that the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are about to be destroyed because of the sinful behaviour of their residents. Abraham protests, asking God not to destroy innocent people along with the guilty ones. God promises that, if there are as few as even ten innocent people in the cities, they will not be destroyed. Afterwards, two men-angels arrive in Sodom and are offered hospitality by Lot. He protects them from the Sodomites, who threaten to harm them. The men-angels warn Lot to leave Sodom. He escapes the next morning as fire rains down upon the cities, but his wife looks back and is turned into a pillar of salt. Abraham travels to the Negev, where Abimelech, king of Gerar, sees Sarah and wants her for a wife. Fearing the king, Abraham claims that Sarah is his "sister". The king takes her as a wife, but God appears to him and reveals Sarah's real identity. Abimelech returns her to Abraham along with a great bounty. As the visitors to Abraham had predicted, Sarah bears a son whom they name Isaac. After a few years, Sarah persuades Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away, claiming that only Isaac should inherit Abraham's wealth and position. Abraham agrees when God tells him that "I will make a nation of him (Ishmael)". Several years later, God tests Abraham's faith by ordering him to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Moriah. Isaac is saved at the last moment when God praises Abraham's loyalty and tells him to sacrifice a ram in Isaac's place.

## COMMUNITY NEWS

We wish a warm mazal tov and good wishes to:

- Vincent Isaacs on his adult Bar Mitzvah.
- Felix Pagnard-Verron and his family on his baby blessing.

וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהֵי יְיָ בְּאֵלֶינִי מִמֶּרָא וְהוּא יֹשֵׁב פֶּתַח־הָאֵהָל כְּחֹם הַיּוֹם:  
 בַּיּוֹשָׁא עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה שְׁלֹשָׁה אַנְשִׁים נֹצְבִים עָלָיו וַיֵּרָא וַיֵּרָץ  
 לִקְרַאתָם מִפֶּתַח הָאֵהָל וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אֲרָצָה: ג וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי אִם־נָא  
 מִצָּאתִי חַן בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֶל־נָא תַעֲבֹר מֵעַל עַבְדְּךָ: ד וַיִּכְחֹנָא מֵעַט־מִיָּם  
 וַרְחֲצוּ רַגְלֵיכֶם וְהִשְׁעֲנוּ תַּחַת הָעַץ: ה וַאֲקַחְהָ פֶתַח־לְחֹם וְסַעַדְוּ לְבַבְכֶם  
 אַחֲרַי תַעֲבֹרוּ כִי־עַל־כֵּן עֲבַרְתֶּם עַל־עַבְדְּכֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ כֵּן תַעֲשֶׂה כַּאֲשֶׁר  
 דִּבַּרְתָּ: ו וַיִּמְהַר אַבְרָהָם הָאֵהָלָה אֶל־שָׂרָה וַיֹּאמֶר מַה־רִי שְׁלֹשׁ סָאִים  
 קָמַח טֹלֶת לוּשֵׁי וְעֵשִׂי עֲגוֹת: ז וְאֶל־הַבְּקָר רֶץ אַבְרָהָם וַיִּקַּח בֶּן־בְּקָר  
 רֶדָּ וְטוֹב וַיִּתֵּן אֶל־הַנְּעֵר וַיִּמְהַר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתוֹ: ח וַיִּקַּח חֲמֵאָה וְחִלָּב  
 וּבֶן־הַבְּקָר אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּתֵּן לִפְנֵיהֶם וְהוּא עֹמֵד עֲלֵיהֶם תַּחַת הָעַץ  
 וַיֹּאכְלוּ: ט וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֱלֹהֵי אֵיחָה שָׂרָה אֲשַׁתְּךָ וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה בָאֵהָל:  
 י וַיֹּאמֶר שׂוֹב אָשׁוּב אֵלֶיךָ כְּעֵת חַיָּה וְהִנֵּה־בֶן לְשָׂרָה אֲשַׁתְּךָ וְשָׂרָה  
 שֹׂמְעֵת פֶּתַח הָאֵהָל וְהוּא אַחֲרָיו: יא וְאַבְרָהָם וְשָׂרָה זָקְנִים בָּאִים  
 בְּיָמִים חֲדָל לַהֲיוֹת לְשָׂרָה אַרְחַ כְּנָשִׁים: יב וַתִּצְחַק שָׂרָה בְּקִרְבָּהּ  
 לֵאמֹר אַחֲרַי בְּלֹתִי הִיִּתְהַלְכִי עַדְנָה וְאֲדֹנָי זָקֵן: יג וַיֹּאמֶר יְיָ  
 אֶל־אַבְרָהָם לְמָה זֶה צִחֻקָּה שָׂרָה לֵאמֹר הֲאֵף אֲמַנָּם אֲלֶיךָ וְאַנִּי

זָקְנֵתִי

## GENESIS 18:1-13

1 Adonai appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre as he was sitting at the entrance of the tent at about the hottest time of the day. 2 Looking up, he saw: lo—three men standing opposite him! Seeing them, he ran from the entrance of the tent to meet them, and bowing down to the ground, 3 he said, “My lords, if I have found favour in your sight, please do not pass your servant by. 4 Let a little water be brought; then wash your feet and recline under a tree, 5 and let me bring a bit of bread that you may refresh yourselves; then go on—seeing that you have come your servant’s way.” They replied, “Do as you have said.” 6 Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, “Quick, three *seahs* of choice flour! Knead and make cakes!” 7 Then Abraham ran to the herd, took a calf, tender and choice, and gave it to a servant-boy, who hastened to prepare it. 8 He took curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared and set these before them; and he waited on them under the tree as they ate. 9 They said to him, “Where is your wife Sarah?” And he replied, “There, in the tent.” 10 Then one said, “I will return to you next year, and your wife Sarah shall have a son!” Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent, which was behind him. 11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years; Sarah had stopped having the periods of women. 12 And Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “Now that I am withered, am I to have enjoyment—with my husband so old?” 13 Then Adonai said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, saying, ‘Shall I in truth bear a child, old as I am?’

## II KINGS 4:17-37

The Shunnamite woman conceived and bore a son at the same season the following year, as Elisha had assured her. 18 The child grew up. One day, he went out to his father among the reapers. 19 Suddenly he cried to his father, "Oh, my head, my head!" He said to a servant, "Carry him to his mother." 20 He picked him up and brought him to his mother. And the child sat on her lap until noon; and he died. 21 She took him up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and left him and closed the door. 22 Then she called to her husband: "Please, send me one of the servants and one of the she-asses, so I can hurry to the man of God and back." 23 But he said, "Why are you going to him today? It is neither new moon nor sabbath." She answered, "It's all right." 24 She had the ass saddled, and said to her servant, "Urge [the beast] on; see that I don't slow down unless I tell you." 25 She went on until she came to the man of God on Mount Carmel. When the man of God saw her from afar, he said to his servant Gehazi, "There is that Shunammite woman. 26 Go, hurry toward her and ask her, 'How are you? How is your husband? How is the child?'" "We are well," she replied. 27 But when she came up to the man of God on the mountain, she clasped his feet. Gehazi stepped forward to push her away; but the man of God said, "Let her alone, for she is in bitter distress; and The Eternal One has hidden it from me and has not told me." 28 Then she said, "Did I ask my lord for a son? Didn't I say: 'Don't mislead me?'" 29 He said to Gehazi, "Tie up your skirts, take my staff in your hand, and go. If you meet anyone, do not greet him; and if anyone greets you, do not answer him. And place my staff on the face of the boy." 30 But the boy's mother said, "As The Eternal One lives and as you live, I will not leave you!" So he arose and followed her. 31 Gehazi had gone on before them and had placed the staff on the boy's face; but there was no sound or response. He turned back to meet him and told him, "The boy has not awakened." 32 Elisha came into the house, and there was the boy, laid out dead on his couch. 33 He went in, shut the door behind the two of them, and prayed to The Eternal One. 34 Then he mounted [the bed] and placed himself over the child. He put his mouth on its mouth, his eyes on its eyes, and his hands on its hands, as he bent over it. And the body of the child became warm. 35 He stepped down, walked once up and down the room, then mounted and bent over him. Thereupon, the boy sneezed seven times, and the boy opened his eyes. 36 [Elisha] called Gehazi and said, "Call the Shunammite woman," and he called her. When she came to him, he said, "Pick up your son." 37 She came and fell at his feet and bowed low to the ground; then she picked up her son and left.

Who counts?

The story of Abraham is the story of God choosing one person to undertake a mission of change in the world. After the failed stories of creation, in which the world seems destined to unfold into injustice, Abraham is chosen by God to go forth. That's why Abraham has to say, "Shall the judge of all the earth not deal justly?" when faced with the prospect of the destruction of Sodom and Gemorrah. What if there were fifty righteous in the city, or forty-five, or thirty, or ten. Who counts?

This question of who counts is also tied up with the binding of Isaac also in our Torah portion this week. "Take your son, your only son, the one whom you love, Isaac" – the covenant with God stands on a precipice with this act. The long awaited descendent of Sarah and Abraham is to be sacrificed. How important is this one life?

Last week I taught a complicated text from the Talmud, as part of the Lyons Learning Project, in which we read that if a tyrannical regime comes and asks you to hand over one unnamed individual or they will kill you all, you should not hand anyone over. But if they name an individual, you should hand them over and avoid total destruction. David Daube, professor of ancient law, sees in this case the rabbinic accommodation to Roman tyranny in the interests of communal preservation. My question to the group of Jewish activists was how we would respond to this tyrannical demand? The group's response to me was how you can make yourself count to stop tyranny before you reach that point.

It's not just that every person counts. It's that we have a responsibility to stand up and be counted.

Our tradition is rich and challenging and Jewish life and the world was encountered through our texts. When we read them we discover questions of earth shattering importance that we can too comfortably ignore – like why we count and how to be held to account.

Why not join the Lyons Learning Project course on Images of God with Professor Andrew Benjamin on Monday nights in November to be part of this Jewish conversation.

<https://www.lyonslearning.org.uk/course/imagesofgod/>

# SAVE THE DATE

## **Saturday 27 October**

### **1.00pm: The Library Hour**

*Guest speaker: Debbie Sonin, speaking on the evolution of Jewish food*

The Bob Shafritz Library opens its doors to all, immediately after the Kiddush following the Shabbat morning service. You can browse the shelves, talk to the Librarian, and borrow and return books. For further information please email Debbie Sonin at [dsonin22@gmail.com](mailto:dsonin22@gmail.com)

## **Sunday 28 October**

### **10.30am: Lyons Learning Project Women of Westminster Walking Tour**

Join Blue Badge Guide and author Rachel Kolsky and discover some fascinating women who battled, debated, campaigned and fought.

Cost £15 (students on 'Sister Suffragette' can attend as part of their course fee, other places are limited). Full details of start and finish location to be provided on booking (begins near Parliament).

Contact [admin@lyonslearning.org.uk](mailto:admin@lyonslearning.org.uk) for more information or to book.

## **Monday 29 October**

### **6.30pm: CBT Cafe**

#### **This month: 'Maintaining relationship when you don't feel up to it'**

The CBT Café is a partnership between WLS and Sophie and Emma, who founded their company, 'Unravelling Minds', in order to help lessen the stigma surrounding mental health.

The Café is a place for those with lived experience of mental health, whether in their own lives or family or friends or those whom they work with professionally to come and share experiences and meet new people and help dissolve the stigma too often associated with mental health issues. It is a non-therapeutic environment for people to meet each other.

So drop in, unwind and learn, and what better way to do this than over a cup of tea and a piece of cake. After all, mental health is for everyone, just like cake! RSVP appreciated but not essential. Cake donations welcomed! For more details or to RSVP, contact Tirza on 020 7535 0278 or [tirza.waisel@wls.org.uk](mailto:tirza.waisel@wls.org.uk)

## **Monday 5 November**

### **7.00pm: Eretz: Insight Israel**

7pm wine and nibbles, 7.30pm talk begins

In view of the Nation State Bill passed by the Knesset in July, we have invited back our friends Ron Gerlitz and Rawnak Natour from SIKKUY (a Jewish / Arab organisation in Israel, dedicated to a shared society) to give us an insight and to answer your questions in a safe supportive environment. The new Law has thrown areas of Israeli society into confusion, forcing us to rethink how a shared society, and equality for Arab citizens, will be achieved. Join us for an informal, informative evening. Additional guest speakers to be confirmed.

Register in advance with Kathryn on 020 7535 0259.