

Spring Semester 2009

**PROJECT IDENTITY
OF GREAT NECK**

Classes for Jewish Adults



Phone: 516.482.6886
info@projectidentity.org
www.ProjectIdentity.org

What Is Project Identity?

PROJECT IDENTITY is an independent non-profit outreach program in Jewish education open to all adults. Founded in 1981, PROJECT IDENTITY is privately funded by individuals in Great Neck who are concerned with the perpetuation of our heritage. It has also been the recipient of grants from the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, the Fund for Jewish Education, The Eugene and Estelle Ferkauf Foundation and other foundations.

Course Fees

Thanks to the generous support of private individuals, there is only a small registration fee for each course. The fee varies depending on the length of the course. All fees are listed on the registration form. PROJECT IDENTITY is committed to providing a Jewish education to all who seek to learn. No person will be turned away for economic reasons. Please call our office at 516-482-6886 if there is a problem.

Class Locations

All classes are held at the Young Israel of Great Neck, 236 Middle Neck Road. Call our office if you need directions.

To Register

Fill out the registration form and send it with your registration fee to:

Project Identity
57 Essex Road
Great Neck, NY 11023

Checks should be made payable to: Project Identity

**Check out our website at www.ProjectIdentity.org.
To register or for more information, email info@projectidentity.org.**



Dear Friends,

Spring is always an exciting season on the Jewish calendar. It is filled with the Jewish holidays of Purim, Passover and Shavuot. All are rich with stories and symbols that abound with lessons about the struggles of our people for survival, the deeper meaning to our Jewish identity, and why it's worth fighting to retain.

PROJECT IDENTITY offers you this semester a concentration of ten different lectures and in-depth courses that will allow you to explore the many different aspects of these meaningful festivals and share some of their wealth of ideas with your families and friends.

In addition, we continue to help you probe the wisdom of Judaism through classes that study the various texts of the Bible and the application of its insights into relevant areas of Jewish Thought, Jewish Ethics and Jewish Law. As always, those of you who are looking to strengthen your skills in Hebrew Language and the Prayers have a number of ways to pursue your goals.

Please join us on a journey to the gold mines of our priceless heritage.

Yaacov Lerner

Spring Semester 2009 Schedule

SPECIAL HOLIDAY LECTURE

HAMAN, HITLER AND AHMADINEJAD: WHY THE JEWS?

Prof. Lawrence H. Schiffman

This lecture will explore the history of attempts to exterminate the Jewish people by mass murder. We will concentrate especially on the xenophobic political and economic goals of Haman, Hitler's racial anti-Semitism, and the role of anti-Zionism and radical Islam in today's attempts to "drive Israel into the sea." We will trace the constant morphing of violent anti-Jewish movements over time, stressing their roots in classical anti-Judaism, and the contributions of Christianity, Islam and Nazism.

Sunday morning Mar. 1
Breakfast - 9:30 Lecture - 10:00



HOLIDAYS

PURIM AND THE HIDDEN FACE OF G-D

Rabbi Yaacov Lerner

G-d's name is not found in Megillat Esther. This is because Purim ushered in the era of Jewish history known as "hester panim" – the hidden face of G-d.

What does it mean that G-d is hiding His face? How does it impact on us and on the world? Will He ever show His face to us again?

Sunday morning Mar. 8 Breakfast - 9:30 Lecture - 10:00

THE MEGILLA BEHIND THE MEGILLA

Rabbi Shmuel Ismach

On Purim we read the scroll of Esther, a book about Jewish fortune and misfortune, a drama with interweaving plots and subplots, replete with complex characters and life lessons. This class will provide an overview of the Megilla, and, through the classical commentaries, analyze its characters and scenes, searching for the unifying thread behind this amazing story and the messages the Megilla leaves for us today.

Tuesday evening Mar. 3 8:00-9:00

PASSOVER PEARLS TO DISTRIBUTE AT THE SEDER

Rabbi Yaacov Lerner

Few texts of Jewish ritual have as many commentaries as the Passover Haggadah. This is because the Haggadah is marvelously rich with rituals and symbols that afford tremendous insight into Jewish beliefs and values.

Come and gather pearls of wisdom gleaned from our Sages over the generations so that you may fulfill the mitzvah of Haggadah – by telling the real story to your children and your guests around the Seder table.

Sunday morning Mar. 22 Breakfast - 9:30 Lecture - 10:00

HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

Rabbi Shmuel Ismach

As we prepare for the challenging job of cleaning for Passover, this annual class will discuss the basics of Chametz, leavened bread, the nature of the command to remove it, and why it is forbidden during these days. Learn the difference between spring cleaning and Passover cleaning and finally answer: how far does one have to go? And what are we looking for anyway? It's easier than you think – come and hear why.

Sunday morning Mar. 29 Breakfast - 9:30 Lecture - 10:00

HOW TO MAKE THIS NIGHT DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHER NIGHTS – INSIGHTS INTO THE SEDER

Rabbi Shmuel Ismach

Every year it comes and every year we go through the detailed rituals of the Seder. Can we make the monotonous more meaningful? Why is this night different from all other nights? These two classes will discuss the fourteen steps of the Seder and explain, once and for all, the symbols and sequence of the Seder in a way that is sure to make your Seder this year different than any other before.

Tuesday evening Mar. 31 8:00-9:00

**FROM MAKING BRICKS TO CROSSING THE SEA:
THE JOURNEY TO FREEDOM**

Rabbi Meir Mitelman

Passover is one of the most popular Jewish festivals, and our celebration of this holiday becomes more meaningful as we increase our appreciation of its meaning for us.

In this course, we will explore the events leading up to the Exodus, as well as the interactions among G-d, Moses, the Jewish People and Pharaoh. Using classical texts, Natan Sharansky's writings about his heroic resistance while a Prisoner of Conscience in the Former Soviet Union, and a wide range of commentaries including insights of Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski, and Dr. Aviva Zornberg, we will gain a deeper understanding of the historical Exodus and how it can help us in our struggle to free ourselves from the Pharaohs in our own lives. We will also learn some deeper meanings of selected parts of the Hagaddah, enabling us to enrich our celebration of Passover.

5 Thursday evenings Feb. 26 Mar. 5, 12, 19, 26 8:00-9:15

FROM EXODUS TO SINAI: THE JOURNEY TO THE MOUNTAINTOP

Rabbi Meir Mitelman

As dazzling a miracle as the Exodus was, it was not enough. In order to fully experience freedom, the journey had to continue toward G-d's revelation at Mt. Sinai. Using classical and contemporary commentaries, we will study the Jewish people's rebellious attitude following their sudden freedom, how Moses – and G-d – responded to this challenge, and the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai. We will also discuss different interpretations of the Ten Commandments as well as such questions as, "If G-d gave the Jewish people 613 commandments, what is unique about the "Big Ten?"

5 Thursday evenings Apr. 23, 30 May 7, 14, 21 8:00-9:15

FIVE TOUGH QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PASSOVER STORY

Rabbi Yaacov Lerner

In preparation for Passover, here is your chance to delve into one of the most critical stories of the Torah in a serious way.

- Feb. 25 1. *Why did G-d decree to Avraham that his descendants would be enslaved and persecuted in a foreign land?*
- Mar. 4 2. *If this was indeed G-d's will, why were the Egyptians punished for carrying out G-d's wishes?*
- Mar. 11 3. *Why did G-d take us out of Egypt "in great haste," thus necessitating our baking and eating of matzah?*
- Mar. 18 4. *Why did G-d demand that our final hours in Egypt be spent "asking" the Egyptians for their gold and silver?*
- Mar. 25 5. *Why must the Exodus story be commemorated at the Seder every year and in our prayers every single day?*

*** You may sign up for individual lectures or the entire series.*

5 Wednesday evenings Feb. 25 Mar. 4, 11, 18, 25 8:00-9:15

FIVE TOUGH QUESTIONS SURROUNDING THE REVELATION AT SINAI

Rabbi Yaacov Lerner

- Apr. 22 1. *Why two tablets and ten commandments?*
- Apr. 29 2. *According to the Talmud, G-d forced the Jewish people to accept the Torah. Why?*
- May 6 3. *Why did G-d write down only part of Jewish law in the Torah and keep the rest as the Oral Law?*
- May 13 4. *What happened in the middle of this "performance" to literally "stop the show"?*
- May 20 5. *Why was it so important that Judaism be launched through a national revelation?*

*** You may sign up for individual lectures or the entire series.*

5 Wednesday evenings Apr. 22, 29 May 6, 13, 20 8:00-9:15

BIBLE

UNDERSTANDING THE MISHKAN – A GUIDED TOUR

Rabbi Shmuel Ismach

The Mishkan acted as the portable Temple for the Jewish people for hundreds of years and the template for the subsequent Temple's design. The Torah spends many verses listing the detailed description of the dimensions and design of the Mishkan and its parts: the Menorah, Altars, and the Ark. All this attention implies that this "Home for G-d" is much more than just an arbitrary human creation, but rather, that in its blueprint, the Temple represents a symbolic "Divine Décor" with much to teach and lessons to learn from each detail. This class will attempt to uncover those lessons and include a visual "Tour" through the Mishkan as well.

Tuesday evening Feb. 24 8:00-9:00

TIMELESS TORAH: ANCIENT TRUTHS CONFRONTING MODERN ISSUES

Rabbi Yaacov Lerner

We revere the Torah as the holiest of books because we read its words as the eternal truths of G-d. As such the Torah is our window into the infinite mind of G-d and His wisdom which speaks to all generations.

This course will analyze the major topics of Parshat Hashavuah, the weekly Torah portion, with an eye towards demonstrating how they address our problems and struggles today as well.

10 Monday mornings Feb. 23 Mar. 2, 9, 23, 30 Apr. 20, 27
May 4, 11, 18 11:00-12:15

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

Rabbi Shmuel Ismach

Perhaps the first sequel in history, the book of Joshua continues where the Torah left off, with the Jewish people bereft of their singular leader Moses and still only on the threshold of the Promised Land. Moses' greatest student, Joshua, is charged with leading the nation and entering, conquering and settling the land that was to be Israel's. Through the texts of the Navi and of the commentators, this class will delve into the events surrounding the conquest: the battles, the treaties, the betrayals and the division of territories. Most importantly, we will attempt to learn lessons for today from the successes and failures of a burgeoning nation and its leader.

6 Tuesday evenings Apr. 21, 28 May 5, 12, 19 June 2
8:00-9:00



JEWISH THOUGHT

THE TRIALS OF LIFE

Arthur Kurzweil

Why did G-d create a world with so many trials and so much suffering? How do we understand and deal with the troubles and afflictions presented by life? Through an exploration of the teachings of Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, and through his interpretation of the ways our Sages throughout Jewish history confront these eternal questions, we will attempt to integrate this wisdom into our own lives, hopefully resulting in a transformation of our basic approach to life itself. No background necessary.

5 Monday evenings Feb. 23 Mar. 2, 16, 23, 30 8:00-9:15

THE NATURE OF INSPIRATION: HOW WE LOSE IT AND HOW TO KEEP IT

Rabbi Shmuel Ismach

It happens to all of us. We get inspired to change in some way, to diet, to exercise, to organize ourselves better, and for a few days it works. But after a while, we lose that push and find ourselves where we were before, even more disappointed with our failure. This class will attempt to understand the phenomenon and, using Torah and current psychological research, will offer suggestions on how to cope with waning inspiration and keep motivated, whatever our task.

Tuesday evening Mar. 17 8:00-9:00

JEWISH ETHICS

MADOFF, (SUBPRIME) MORTGAGES, AND THE MONEY OF OTHERS

Rabbi Shmuel Ismach

In this current financial crisis that is of proportions that rival anything in recent history, one cannot ignore the attitudes and actions which brought us to this precipice. Greed and blindness towards fiscal responsibility have caused a breakdown of ethics, oversight and a disregard for due diligence. Whether discussing predatory lending or impossible investment returns, this lecture will attempt to analyze whether Judaism's ancient business ethic and financial advisement might have saved us from those who have preyed on the vulnerable and, more importantly, might have saved us from ourselves.

Sunday morning Feb. 22 Breakfast - 9:30 Lecture - 10:00

STRIVING TO BE A "MENTSCH"

Rabbi Yaacov Lerner

Sometimes a single word can capture a big and powerful idea. The Yiddish word "mentsch" is one such word. A mentsch is a human being who personifies honesty and integrity, thoughtfulness and sensitivity, caring and compassion. He or she is a model of the highest standard of ethical behavior.

Too many Jews, when defining Judaism, put the emphasis solely on rituals such as kashrut, Shabbat and prayer. How wrong this is. So much of our Torah is devoted to "laws between man and man" – the treatment of your fellow human being.

Come and learn what it takes to be a mentsch in the eyes of our G-d.

This course is dedicated to the memory of Mrs. Esse Chasin, super mentsch and beloved teacher for Project Identity

10 Monday mornings Feb. 23 Mar. 2, 9, 23, 30 Apr. 20, 27
May 4, 11, 18 10:00-10:50

SHALOM BAYIT: MAKING GOOD MARRIAGES GREAT MARRIAGES – A WORKSHOP FOR COUPLES

Rabbi Dr. Stuart Grant

One of the keys to the survival of the Jewish people is the strength of the Jewish family. That strength has at its foundation the relationship between husband and wife. So important is that relationship that G-d tells us in the Torah, “therefore a man shall leave his father and mother, cleave unto his wife and they shall be as one flesh”. Furthermore, our Rabbis tell us that G-d was even willing to distort the truth so as not to weaken in any way the marriage between Avraham and Sarah.

This course will serve as a practical workshop to enhance good marriages. In five sessions, couples will examine the Torah and Rabbinic view of Shalom Bayit, and through putting to use what is called the five love languages, will hopefully be able to greatly enhance their own relationships. It will also soon become apparent that this relational approach can easily be extended to parent-child, sibling-sibling and friend-friend relationships, truly enhancing our entire lives.

5 Tuesday evenings Feb. 24 Mar. 3, 17, 24, 31
7:45-8:45



JEWISH LAW

HALACHA AND COPYRIGHT: IS NAPSTER KOSHER?

Rabbi Shmuel Ismach

Never before has it been so easy to effortlessly copy a song, a book, or a creative work through making use of computer or reproductive technology. Although secular law has clear definitions for what is Fair Use and what is illegal, some wonder what Jewish law, codified before the invention of the printing press, says on the matter. This lecture will show that concepts of intellectual property have long been addressed by Jewish law and were and remain a controversial issue. In this age fraught with moral uncertainty, come and learn the Jewish approach to damaging downloads.

Sunday morning May 3 Breakfast - 9:30 Lecture - 10:00

UNDERSTANDING THE EIRUV

Rabbi Shmuel Ismach

The current controversy about erecting an Eiruv around Southampton Beach is just one of many battles that have pitted Orthodox Jewish communities against their secular neighbors in recent years. What might surprise some is that many of these battles are also being waged between Orthodox Jews as well in some neighborhoods. We know that an Eiruv allows one to "carry" on Shabbat. But how? And why? This class will explain the history of Eiruv, how it works, the laws of its construction, and will explain the various controversies that have led to this contentious construction

Cosponsored by the Great Neck Eiruv Association

Sunday morning May 24 Breakfast - 9:30 Lecture - 10:00

THE "GET" CRISIS AND ITS ATTEMPTED SOLUTIONS

Rabbi Shmuel Ismach

One of the hot-button topics within the Jewish world is known as the Aguna crisis, or the plight of the "chained" woman. Husbands using the Halacha as a weapon to take advantage of their wives has become a problem that the Jewish community has attempted to address in many ways, from prenuptial agreements to annulments, to legislation. This lecture will discuss the history of this problem and explain the many attempts to solve it. We will also closely analyze the current conversation and weigh the pros and cons of the various approaches.

Sunday morning June 7 Breakfast - 9:30 Lecture - 10:00

HEBREW LANGUAGE

IMPROVE YOUR ABILITY TO READ THE HAGGADAH

Mrs. Gail Zuckerman

One of the most popular and cherished of texts within Jewish life is the Haggadah. It brings Jewish families together and chronicles the tragedies and triumphs of Jewish history.

Wouldn't it be nice to read parts of the Haggadah in its original Hebrew language? If you know how to read Hebrew but need a brush up after all these years, this mini course is tailor made for you. Sign up for this tune up and come to the Seder table ready to provide your family with a lovely surprise.

5 Thursday mornings Feb. 26 Mar. 5, 12, 19, 26 10:00-11:00

LEARNING TO BETTER READ AND UNDERSTAND THE KEY PRAYERS

Mrs. Gail Zuckerman

There is no more direct way to relate to G-d than through prayer. Want to better understand what the prayers mean while at the same time improve your ability to read them in Hebrew? This course is designed for you.

You will have practice reading the prayers of Shma, Shmoneh Esrah and others.

5 Thursday mornings Apr. 23, 30 May 7, 14, 21 10:00-11:00

ADVANCED BEGINNERS HEBREW CONVERSATION

Mrs. Gail Zuckerman

If you are able to read Hebrew and to speak a little bit, we are here for you to move you forward. This class will teach you the important rules of Hebrew grammar and sentence structure focusing on past, future and the command tenses. It will also provide you with practice in conversing while providing you with a core list of indispensable words to improve your Hebrew vocabulary.

10 Thursday mornings Feb. 26 Mar. 5, 12, 19, 26 Apr. 23, 30
May 7, 14, 21 11:00-12:00

ADVANCED LEVEL HEBREW CONVERSATION

Mrs. Rina Weisberg

A high level Hebrew ulpan tailor made for those who already can speak Hebrew quite fluently but seek to perfect their skills still further. The class will help you improve your grammar through discussions of various aspects of Jewish life and Israeli society. The study of Israeli newspapers will strengthen your comprehension of Hebrew as well.

10 Monday evenings Feb. 23 Mar. 2, 16, 23, 30 Apr. 20, 27
May 4, 11, 18 7:30-8:45

*Project Identity Registration Form
Spring 2009*

I WOULD LIKE TO REGISTER FOR THE FOLLOWING COURSE(S):

- Haman, Hitler . . . - \$5
- Purim and the Hidden Face of G-d - \$5
- The Megilla Behind the Megilla - \$5
- Passover Pearls to Distribute . . . - \$5
- How Much Is Too Much? - \$5
- How To Make This Night Different . . . - \$10
- From Making Bricks to Crossing the Sea - \$25
- Five Tough Questions About Passover . . .
 - Whole series - \$25
 - Individual lectures - \$5 Lecture #s _____
- From Exodus to Sinai - \$25
- Five Tough Questions About Revelation
 - Whole series - \$25
 - Individual lectures - \$5 Lecture #s _____
- Understanding the Mishkan - \$5
- Timeless Torah - \$50
- The Book of Joshua - \$30
- The Trials of Life - \$25
- The Nature of Inspiration - \$5
- Madoff, (Subprime) Mortgages . . . - \$5
- Striving To Be A "Mentsch" - \$40
- Shalom Bayit - \$25
- Halacha and Copyright - \$5
- Understanding the Eiruv - \$5
- The "Get" Crisis . . . - \$5
- Improve Your Ability to Read the Haggadah - \$25
- Learning to Better Read . . . - \$25
- Advanced Beginners' Hebrew Conversation - \$50
- Advanced Level Hebrew Conversation - \$50

Registration cont. →

Total Registration Fee: \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone No. Home _____ Work _____

Cell _____

SEND THIS FORM WITH YOUR FEE TO:

Project Identity

57 Essex Road

Great Neck, New York 11023

Checks should be made payable to Project Identity.

ABOUT OUR FACULTY

RABBI DR. STUART GRANT is the Rosh HaYeshiva at North Shore Hebrew Academy High School. He is also a licensed Mental Health Counselor in private practice for the past twenty years.

RABBI SHMUEL ISMACH is the Assistant Rabbi at the Young Israel of Great Neck, teaches at Ezra Academy and assists in programming for PROJECT IDENTITY in addition to teaching his classes.

ARTHUR KURZWEIL is a teacher, writer, lecturer, editor, publisher and performer. His most recent books include *On the Road with Rabbi Steinsaltz*, *Kabbalah For Dummies*, and *The Torah For Dummies*.

RABBI YAACOV LERNER is the Director of PROJECT IDENTITY and the Rabbi of the Young Israel of Great Neck.

RABBI MEIR MITELMAN is the Director of Hillel at Hofstra University.

PROFESSOR LAWRENCE SCHIFFMAN is Chairman of New York University's Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies. He is the author of numerous books and articles on The Dead Sea Scrolls, Jewish law, and Rabbinic Judaism and has lectured extensively around the world.

MRS. RINA WEISBERG has a degree from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and an extensive background in teaching Hebrew.

MRS. GAIL ZUCKERMAN holds a degree in Hebrew studies and has many years of experience in teaching language skills.



Project Identity
57 Essex Road
Great Neck, New York 11023

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Time to **spring** forward
in your **knowledge** and
appreciation of your heritage