



# Learning Sessions

## Staying with Shadow



led by Evan Parks

The psychoanalyst Carl Jung wrote that “Everyone carries a shadow, and the less it is embodied in the individual’s conscious life, the blacker and denser it is.” Our ‘shadow’ could represent a past we are haunted by; actions, qualities, or histories we are not at peace with. In Jung’s formulation, the less we are able to ‘consciously’ engage with this shadow, the more of a threat it becomes.

In this session we will look at shadow imagery in works by Paul Celan, Ursula Le Guin, and Donna Haraway, and consider what it means to stay in relationship with elusive or disconcerting parts of ourselves. For these authors, ‘shadow’ can be a guide rather than a menace, an invitation to dwell with unresolvable complexity. What does it mean to engage ‘shadow’ as a teacher rather than an enemy? And how can poetry, storytelling, and philosophy model a practice for communing with our individual and collective shadows?

## Conceptualizing the Binding of Isaac on the Cusp of Adulthood



led by Miriam Udel

This *shabbat* we read *Parshat Vayera*. We will look at the Biblical text of the *akedah* (binding of Isaac), as well as *midrash*, medieval commentary, and Modern Hebrew poems that use the imagery of the *akedah* to discuss the contemporary burden of defending the State of Israel. We will discuss what kind of relationship we have with this imagery, especially as emerging adults living in diasporic communities.



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**led by Becky Voorwinde**

## **How old are you now?**

When we were little we got excited with each birthday because getting older always meant more freedom and more opportunities. How does age and life-stage impact our self-perceptions and expectations of ourselves and by others? What does it really mean to grow up? Together we will engage in a learning session that is part text study and part workshop in the hopes that we can find a way to honor our maturity while maintaining the wonder and joy that is so easy to access in childhood.



**led by Paz Bendek**

## **The Refugee Experience**

Displacement and exile are formative experiences in Jewish existence. From Jacob's descent into Egypt, through the Babylonian exile, the expulsion from Spain, and the Holocaust—displacement has accompanied Jewish history throughout the ages. It is deeply rooted in Jewish mentality and thought, shaping emotional sensitivities and perspectives of Jews across different times and places.

In today's reality in the Middle East, refugees are visible all around us. Jews and non-Jews, in Israel and Gaza, many are distant from their homes and unable to return. This raises questions about home, belonging, distance, hopes and disappointments.

This is not necessarily an invitation to engage in a painful political discourse, but rather an invitation to delve together into the experience of the refugee, through the rich corpus of Jewish thought, literature and art. From Psalm 137, through Verdi's "Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves", the paintings of Felix Nussbaum, and the writings of Stefan Zweig — we will attempt to reflect upon the pain and questions evoked by the refugee experience. You are warmly invited!