This course is intended to serve a quadruple purpose (if not higher!):
1) To introduce you to early Hasidism and its ways of understanding Torah
2) To improve your skill in reading Hasidic, and hence other, sources in rabbinic Hebrew
3) To continue familiarizing you with ספר שמות and its place in Jewish religious teaching and self-understanding.
4) To help you reflect on and develop your own religious life, based on the example of Hasidism's re-reading of the ספר שמות sources in personal devotional ways.

These four goals will hopefully be taught in ways that complement and reinforce one another. That will not always be entirely obvious; sometimes they will compete with one another for class and assigned reading space. But we will do our best. In order to facilitate this, the class will be carefully structured, as follows:

Tuesdays 11:30-12:15. Discussion of assigned secondary readings. These will begin with the history of Hasidism, then move into literary and theological aspects of its teachings. We will make best use of our time if you come into class with questions prepared as you do the reading.

Tuesdays 12:15-1:00. Reading/discussion of the Hasidic sources. Please be prepared to be called upon to read and explain the texts.

Thursdays 11:30-12:00. Reading/discussion of the Hasidic sources. Ditto.

Thursdays 12:00-1:00. Open hour, varied. See below.

For our purpose, Sefer Shemot will be divided into three major thematic sections: פרשת דברים, the Exodus; פרשת תורה, the Revelation; and פרשת פארק, the Tabernacle. We will devote four weeks to each. Following the fourth Thursday of each section there will be a review-summary and a test, partially in-class oral (during the fourth “open hour”), partially take-home written.

Journal Keeping. An important part of this course will be personal journaling. That means writing a journal of your own reflections on the texts (the Shemot verses as well as the Hasidic readings) and what they say to you personally: as an individual, as an educator, as a future rabbi/Jewish community leader. You are expected to write a journal entry AT LEAST twice a week, following each class. (Do them on Tuesday and Thursday afternoon or evening, while the material is still fresh. Do not delay or get backed up; that defeats the purpose.) More than two per week are most welcome. Each of you should choose a "journal hevruta," someone with whom you mutually share and discuss your journals. The two of you should schedule weekly discussions of your mutual journal entries. One volunteer will co-ordinate the group journal project, so that once monthly (in the third "open hour" of each course third) we will have readings (anonymity...
protected, if you wish) from journals and discussions of the entries. This is meant to help us share collectively in the personal growth aspect of this course.

**Open hours.** As you will see, the first two “open hours” of each of the three course sections indeed do remain “open.” The very first of these (2/4) will be given over to an introductory lecture. For the second (2/11) there will be some reading/discussion of Neo-Hasidism. Three volunteers needed for a panel of responses to this reading. The other three hours (3/3, 3/31, 4/14) are yours to prepare, in groups. These are devoted to presentations of Shemot passages with other sorts of commentary. This may range widely.

Here are a few suggested topics:

- Critical Perspectives on the Exodus Account.
- The Mishkan in the Zohar (using the Matt translation).
- The Exodus in the African-American Church.
- The Figure of Moses in Modern Jewish Poetry.
- Contemporary Modern Orthodoxy Struggles with Sinai.
- Moses Re-Imagined (Ahad Ha-‘Am; Buber; Freud; Sholem Asch, etc.)
- The Exodus (or Sinai) in the History of Art

These presentations will serve instead of a course paper. I’m asking for a volunteer to coordinate these three sessions, helping you to form those groups and develop your presentations. There are three such slots; everyone should be in at least one group. Coordinator will set the dates.

Since many Hasidic readings focus on the opening verse of a פְּרָשָׁה and they often assume an awareness of וְרֶוְינוֹ, you will be expected to learn פְּרָשָׁה רְשָׁיָא to some key verses, often on the opening verse(s) of each פְּרָשָׁה. You will also be expected to know by heart the order of פְּרָשָׁה פַּסְמָה פְּרָשָׁתָה and to commit some key verses to memory.

The first test of the semester will be in the open hour of February 25. I'll let you know beforehand what will be covered.

**BOOKS NEEDED**

*Speaking Torah* (available through Jewish Lights or Amazon)  
*The Language of Truth: Teachings from the Sefat Emet* (Available by special order from Jewish Publication Society. I suggest you do a group order.)

Both are available from seforimcenter.com. There are several editions in print, including good two-volume annotated editions of each (ME by Oesterreicher and KL by Rand)

would be a good additional purchase.

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**SECONDARY READINGS:**

2/4 – *Speaking Torah* Introduction 3-28; 50-74.  
2/11 – “A Neo-Hasidic Life”  
3/1 – “Around the Maggid’s Table”
3/8 – “Teachings of the Hasidic Masters”
3/15 – “The Hasidic Homily”
3/29 – “Discovery and Retreat”
4/5 and 4/7 NO CLASS
4/12 – The Zaddik as Axis Mundi in Later Judaism” and “Typologies of Leadership in Early Hasidism”
4/19 – Martin Buber, “My Way to Hasidism” and “The Life of the Hasidim”
5/3 – Hillel Zeitlin – “Yavneh” Documents
5/17 – Zalman Shalomi-Schachter – “Toward an Order on Bnai Or” and “Credo of a Modern Hasid”


- TEXTS TO PREPARE

REDEMPTION FROM EGYPT
2/4 – Me’or ‘Eynayim – Speaking Torah (ST) I:417
2/9 – Me’or ‘Eynayim – ST I:412
2/11 – Orah le-Hayyim – ST I:403
2/16 – Sefat Emet – Language of Truth (LT) 81
2/18 – Sefat Emet – LT 99
2/23 – Sefat Emet – LT 84
2/25 – Me’or ‘Eynayim, p. shemot, va-yakom melekh hadash (p. 137)

TORAH AND REVELATION
3/3 – Me’or ‘Eynayim – ST I:480
3/8 - Kedushat Levi - ST I:395
3/10 – Yom Iyyun, no class
3/15 – Tif’eret Uziel – ST I:396
3/17 – Or ha-Me’ir - ST I:426
3/22 – Sefat Emet – LT 3 and 38
3/24 – PURIM!! No class.
3/29 – Sefat Emet – LT 105 and 106 (#3)
4/5, 4/7 – AG away; no class

MISHKAN
4/14 – Or ha-Me’ir – ST I:384
4/19 – Kedushat Levi; Pri Hayyim, ST v. 2, 268-266 (PESAH)
4/21 – Sefat Emet 393-397; PESAH 4, 5, and 7.
5/3 - Kedushat Levi – ST I:382
5/5 - Or Torah – ST I:379
5/10 – Yom Iyun – No Class
5/12 - Me’or ‘Eynayim ST I:360 and Torey Zahav 335
5/17 – Sefat Emet – LT 140
5/19 – Me’or ‘Eynayim, p. terumah, ve-hineh ma’aseh ha-mishkan, p. 213.