Barukh she-Heheyantu! This is the course I’ve been waiting to teach for all these ten years. Now that we are in our ten-year celebration cycle, and now that Speaking Torah is out, I have a chance to offer it.

The class will meet Thursday evenings 7:30-9:30. It will be followed by ma’ariv, so please plan to stay until about 9:50. There will be a bet midrash slot to prepare the texts on Thursdays 4:30-6. Because of the Jewish Holiday schedule, the first class will be held on Monday 9-23-2013

Please see this class in two ways. The combining of them is precisely what I want to teach. On the one hand, this is a real text course. It is about gaining skills with the materials, doing and discussing the readings, and learning lots about early Hasidism. But it is also meant to be an experience of hakhanah le-shabbat. We will do a text dealing with the week’s parashah. I will also try to add some Torah of my own related to the parashah. In the course of things I hope you will come to understand what I mean by offering early Hasidism as a model for the spiritual transformation that I think is needed in contemporary Judaism.

Some greater ba’aley neginah than I will be charged with starting us off and winding us down with a niggun every week. There will be a 2-3 minute d’var tefillah before ma’ariv each week. I’ll do the first one. After that, please sign up to offer one.

The course will be based on texts found in Speaking Torah: Spiritual Teachings from Around the Maggid’s Table, just published by Jewish Lights. We will also be reading and discussing a long essay from my translation of Hasidism for a New Era: The Religious Writings of Hillel Zeitlin, published by Paulist Press. You should acquire both of these books. Other essays listed below – some mine and some by others – will be offered in coursepacks.

READING LIST

Object of the game: The numbers below refer to weekly class meetings. Read the essay before each class. Read carefully, taking notes. Especially prepare questions or points of discussion to bring up. The last half hour of each class meeting will be
devoted to your questions about the reading. The value of that time will depend on the quality of your questions!

1. AG *Speaking Torah* “To the Reader” *(READ BEFORE FIRST CLASS)*


6. AG, “The Hasidic Homily.”


8. Gershom Scholem, “Hasidism, the Latest Phase.”


10. Martin Buber, “Hasidism and Modern Man” and “The Life of the Hasidim.”

11. G. Scholem, “Martin Buber’s Interpretation of Hasidism” and M. Buber’s reply.*


Preparation for a re-enactment of the Buber/Scholem debate, to be presented to the community during Winter Seminar.