

Wildman Steve Brill Central Park Succot Outing
Hol HaMoed Succot
Wednesday, September 30 | 4:00pm
What better way to celebrate Succot than to admire the beauty and tastes of nature! Children and adults are welcome to join as we embark on another edible tour of Central Park followed by pizza dinner. Register at shearithisrael.org/wildman.

Succah Greens Composting
Due Friday, October 16
After Succot, rather than throwing out your lulabim, take advantage of this special eco-friendly opportunity and leave your lulabim with us! The NYC Dept of Sanitation (DSNY) will collect our Succot organics for composting. Leave your lulabim with Z. Edinger before Friday, October 16 and we'll do the rest.

Hatanim Luncheon
Saturday, October 10
Join us in honoring our Hatanim and their families with a luncheon following Morning Services:
Seth Haberman, Hatan Torah
Ari Sherizen, Hatan Bereshit
To register, go to shearithisrael.org/hatanim2015

Shearith Israel Annual Gala
Wednesday, October 21
The theme of this year's gala will be "A Celebration of Our Hebrew School: The Polonies Talmud Torah School (PTTS)." Join us in honoring our longtime synagogue members and PTTS family, Lloyd Zuckerberg and Charlotte Triefus. We also pay special tribute to Rabbi Shalom Morris who just recently completed his tenure at Shearith Israel and PTTS to assume the pulpit at the Bevis Marks Synagogue in London. Go to shearithisrael.org/gala to register.

Register now for PTTS Hebrew School
Polonies Talmud Torah School, provides children and teens, ages 3-16, with a substantive Jewish education in a positive and engaging environment. Register at shearithisrael.org/hebrewschool

Dots and Doubts
Z. Edinger, Shamash

Parashat Nitsabim begins with all of the Israelites gathering to enter into a covenant with God before entering into the Land of Israel. If the covenant is not kept and the Israelites worship other deities, then God will bring curses upon the people and drive them from the land. The last verse of the chapter (29:28) reads:

הַסֵּתֶרֶת לִי אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהַגִּלְתָּ לָנוּ וְלִבְנֵינוּ עַד-עוֹלָם לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-כָּל-דִּבְרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת:
The secret things belong unto the LORD our God; but the things that are revealed are for us and our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

The plain meaning of the verse in context appears to be that God will punish those individuals who break the covenant secretly – but sins committed in public must be dealt with by the people (i.e. in the courts.) One of the striking things in this verse are the 11 *puncta extraordinaria* [extra dots] over the words “to us and our children” לָנוּ וְלִבְנֵינוּ. These markings are an ancient scribal notation indicating a doubt or error in the text. Frequently these dots were used to indicate that certain letters should be deleted.

Deleting the words “for us and our children” in our text would very drastically change the meaning to “Hidden acts concern the Lord our G-d, as well as Public ones...(therefore) the entire Torah must be observed forever.” Rashi (based on the Talmud) gives the plain meaning of the verse above (that the People are responsible for bringing public sinners to justice) but then adds that the dotted words are there to teach us that responsibility for adjudicating public transgressions of the Torah was only meant for a future time after the Jews had settled in Israel.

A very different homiletical explanation for the dots was given in *Bemidbar Rabah* (III,13.) According to this Midrash the dots indicate that if we properly perform the precepts that God has revealed, then He will reveal to us those things that are hidden and secret. Interestingly, this interpretation is very similar to that of the Dead Sea Sect as indicated in the *Damascus Covenant*.

A different explanation of our verse is brought by Nahmanides, one which is appropriate for the days leading up to Rosh Hashanah. According to Nahmanides, the *hidden things* refer to those transgressions that we are unaware of having done (or those done by accident.) The word “*Nistarot*” being used as it is in Psalm 19: שְׂגִיאוֹת מִי-יָבִין; מִסְתָּרוֹת נֶאֱסָרִי: *Who can discern his errors? Cleanse me [Lord] from hidden faults.* Only God can understand why we err. But we must take responsibility for those actions and transgressions which we knowingly make, and we must bear the consequences of our transgressions.

One late Midrash (*Abot de Rabbi Nathan*) explains that Ezra placed the dots above words because of some doubt and that it would take Elijah to sort out the correct text. *Ezra said: If Elijah should happen to come to me and ask, “Why did you write these words?” I shall answer him, “I have already put dots over them.” And if he should say to me, “You have written this well,” I shall remove the dots.*

It seems that the true meaning of the dotted letters and the verse itself has become one of those “secret things” for which we hope to receive a divine explanation.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL
The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

Shabbat Nitsabim

September 11-12, 2015

CANDLE LIGHTING | 6:54 pm
MINHAH | 6:45 pm

ZEMIROT | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary
SHAHARIT (NISHMAT) | 9:00 am | Rabbi Soloveichik delivers a lecture entitled “Super Bowl vs. Pruzbol”
TOT SHABBAT | Ages 0-4 | 10:00 am | Levy Auditorium
JR. CONGREGATION Ages 5-12 | 10:30 am | Little Synagogue
KIDDUSH | Elias Room | *Sponsored by The Haberman Family in honor of Akiva’s reading the haftarah on the anniversary on his bar mitzvah*

TOPICS IN JEWISH PHILOSOPHY | Rabbi Hidary | 5:45 pm |
For high school students | Held at the Hidarys’ home, 1 W 85th St Apartment 6A

SEUDAH SHELISHIT & AFTERNOON SHIUR
Rabbi Soloveichik gives a class on “The Top 5 Misconceptions About Rosh Hashana” | 5:45 pm

MINHAH/ARBIT | 6:45 pm
KETER SHEM TOB | Rabbi Hidary | Main Sanctuary
HABDALAH | 7:46 pm

This week is the consecration Shabbat for the 19th Street Synagogue (1860). We commemorate the consecration of our synagogues with a semi-festive service. The Ark is open during much of the service and the Torah scrolls are dressed in festive colors. The beautiful poem *Todot El* (p. 342) is sung before Nishmat, and special blessings and memorial prayers are recited before the reading of the Torah.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND INITIATIVES

Pruzbol

According to Jewish Law debts stemming from loans are cancelled at the conclusion of the shmita year, the Jewish calendar year in which we now find ourselves and is about to come to a close. However, by mishnaic ordinance one can transfer those debts to a bet din (Jewish court) through a mechanism known as pruzbol and thereby continue in the year to come to collect what is owed. Rabbi Soloveichik will discuss the pruzbol in his Shabbat morning lecture; a pruzbol form will be handed out in synagogue and should be handed in or emailed to msoloveichik@shearithisrael.org or rhidary@shearithisrael.org before the start of Rosh Hashana.

High Holiday Tickets and Offerings

By now you should have received your High Holiday email confirmation and/or hard copy tickets. Each congregant with a reserved seat should bring a print-out or a ticket. Please go online to make your Kippur and Succot offerings and to purchase your lulabim and etrogim at shearithisrael.org/highholidays5776

Rosh Hashana Youth Programming

On both days starting at 9:30am in the Elias Room, the great Liz Rios will oversee childcare for our youngest members. Our clergy will make special appearances infusing the time with meaningful holiday experiences including a shofar demonstration.

Children ages 5 and up are encouraged to participate in our special High Holidays Jr. Congregation led by Isaac Haberman and Mrs. Lisa Rohde along with our Shearith Israel Teen Leaders. Jr. Congregation will start at 10:45am sharp in the Main Sanctuary for shofar blowing. Following shofar, on the first day the kids will proceed to the Little Synagogue where they will conduct their own shaharit service and enjoy other interactive activities. On the second day, the kids will proceed to Levy for a Shaharit service, special shehehianus and a very special presentation by Rabbi Soloveichik of his exotic shofar collection!

We would love for your child to lead a part in Jr. Congregation. To sign up or learn more, contact lrohde-csi@yahoo.com.

Sephardic Community Selihot Service
Motzei Shabbat, September 13 | 12:30 am
Held at the Edmond J. Safra Synagogue
11 East 63rd (Between 5th Ave and Madison)

Join Sephardic communities in NYC for a communal Selihot. Go to www.ejsny.org/events-and-programs/154 to see the list of participating synagogues.

Shabbat Teshubah Derasha
Delivered by Rabbi Meir Soloveichik
"Rembrandt and the Rabbis:
Blessing Our Children on the Eve of Atonement"
Shabbat Morning | September 19 |
Following Morning Services

Go to shearithisrael.org/shabbat_teshubah_derasha2015 to sponsor the derasha and kiddush luncheon.
Sponsor, \$360, Co-sponsor, \$250, Supporter, \$180

City Harvest Kosher Food Drive

This Fall we are launching a Hesed initiative focused on alleviating hunger in New York City. We will be developing programs culminating in a special activity at the synagogue around Thanksgiving. For the month of September, the Shearith Israel League's Social Action Committee is sponsoring a City Harvest Kosher Food Drive. A food collection bin will be placed outside of Levy Auditorium near the water fountain. We encourage you to donate generously. Please go to shearithisrael.org/food-drive for important kashrut rules and other specifications.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

*We welcome the following individuals to the
Shearith Israel Family:*

Nicholas Garo
Maurine McCabe

Condolences to Judy Grumet, on the passing of her father,
Dr. Jacob L. Brener

Meals in the Succah

Shearith Israel members and their guests are welcome to enjoy self-catered meals in a Shearith Israel community succah. Registration and a cover charge of \$12 per seat (including children) are required for each meal. We supply beverages, table cloths and disposables and you bring the food (strictly kosher, of course). Space is highly limited. We will accommodate members and immediate family on a first-come-first-serve basis. Non-member guests will be accommodated closer to the date depending on availability. Due to our new building construction, we do not have a courtyard succah this year. However, in addition to our beautiful Elias Room succah we are working toward building a second succah outdoors.

To register contact mcaputo@shearithisrael.org ASAP. Please let her know if you prefer the Elias or outdoor succah (if available). If we are oversubscribed, we will create a wait list and hope to accommodate as many people as possible.

Sisterhood Succah Decorating

Thursday, September 24 | 5:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Friday, September 25 | 8:00 am - 12:00 pm
Sunday, September 27 | 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Teens and adults, women and men, are invited to help decorate in preparation for the Succot Festival. To participate, contact lrohde-csi@yahoo.com or sign up at shearithisrael.org/sisterhood-succah-decorating-5776. Financial contributions to the Sisterhood's Succah Fund are also welcomed to help defray the costs of decorating and maintaining the Succah. To make a contribution to the Sisterhood Succah Fund, please either send a donation to The Sisterhood Succah Fund at the synagogue office, make a gift online or contact ryasky@shearithisrael.org.

Parnas Office Hours

Louis Solomon would be delighted to meet with you.
Please schedule a visit at
parnas@shearithisrael.org.

Our next public tour is:
Tuesday, October 13 at 11:00 am