

(continued from back panel)

**At the Southern border of Canaan with Egypt, near Gaza** — This is, after all, the shortest and most direct route from Egypt to Canaan. Nahum Sarna and others suggest that based on an alternate reading of Eusebius, *Goren haAtad* be identified with *Beth Eglayim* in the South of Israel. This is the well-known site of *Tel el Ajjul*, a major Egyptian center during the late Bronze age and extremely close to *Deir el Balah*—which was a center of Egyptian burial practices in Canaan. In 1993, Aaron Demsky posited that *Abel Mizraim* is cognate with *Nahal Mizrayim* (i.e. the stream of Egypt) and is identifiable as the southern border of Canaan also known as *Nahal Besor* (near Gaza). Demsky also suggested that “*beyond the Jordan*” doesn’t refer to the Jordan River, but rather a city called Jordan located in the Negev which is written as *y-w-r-w-d-n* in the Pharaoh Shoshenq I’s topographical list from the 10th c. BCE, and later mentioned by Josephus in the first century CE, and still later in a Christian Syriac source.

The Torah goes out of its way to tell us the original name, general location, and what the locals called the place where Jacob was eulogized. Wherever this location was actually located, Jacob’s seven day funeral was a major event—not only for the Children of Israel, but also for Egypt, and indeed for the entire region.

CHOIR SELECTIONS

Friday Evening:

*Veshameru #2* (p.166) | Samuel Naumbourg  
*Psalm 23* (p.174) | Leon Kramer

Shabbat Morning:

*Yehi Hasdekha* (p. 215) | Leon Hyman  
*Misheberakh* (p. 208) | Leon Kramer  
*Ubnucho Yomar* (p. 218) | Salomone Rossi

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Mazal tob* to Matea Frieber, upon becoming a Bat Mitzvah. Congratulations as well to her mother, **Laury**, and brother, **Reuben**.

*Mazal tob* to **Jacob Neumark** upon his marriage to Jannah Eichenbaum. Congratulations as well to his parents, **Susan & Avery Neumark**.

*Condolences* to **Roberto Salama**, upon the passing of his father, Ricardo (Ezra) Salama.

*Condolences* to **Isaac Schlessinger**, upon the passing of his father, Shlomo (Sidney) Schlessinger.

LOCATING *GOREN HAATAD*: WHERE DID JACOB’S FUNERAL TAKE PLACE?  
—Z. EDINGER, SHAMASH—

**Gen. 50:7:** *So Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went up all the officials of Pharaoh, the senior members of his court, and all of Egypt’s dignitaries, (8) together with all of Joseph’s household, his brothers, and his father’s household; ... (9) Chariots, too, and horsemen went up with him; it was a very large troop. (10) When they came to Goren ha-Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, they held there a very great and solemn lamentation; and he observed a mourning period of seven days for his father. (11) And when the Canaanite inhabitants of the land saw the mourning at Goren ha-Atad, they said, “This is a solemn mourning on the part of the Egyptians.” That is why it was named Abel-mizraim, which is beyond the Jordan.*

This description of the location of Jacob’s funeral ceremony contains several unusual, ambiguous, or problematic elements:  
*Goren haAtad* literally means the “*threshing floor of the brambles*.” Although called a “threshing floor,” this must have been a specific place of some significance for the funeral cortege to stop there to eulogize Jacob for seven days. It is not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible. “*Beyond the Jordan*” - עבר הירדן - this term normally (but not exclusively) refers to the East Bank of the Jordan river, i.e. the Transjordan. If this is the case, then Jacob’s funeral cortege took a very strange and circuitous route, not travelling along the direct route up the coast (i.e. ארץ פלשתים) but rather crossing across the Negev, up the plains of Moab into the Transjordan, stopping at *Goren HaAtad* for seven days, and then crossing the Jordan river over into Canaan in order to bury Jacob at Machpelah near Hebron. Moreover, verse 11 indicates that the location of *Goren haAtad* was in Canaan, how could it be both in Canaan and also be “*beyond the Jordan*”?

*Abel Mizraim*: Verse 11 also gives us an ancient etiology of the name of a place called *Abel Mizraim*. In doing so the Torah links this place with the mourning ceremonies for Jacob. But the word Abel (אֵבֶל) is not actually connected linguistically to the word for mourning (אָבֵל). Abel refers to a stream or meadow, and there are several place names in the Bible using this term (*Abel Bet Maacah*, 1 Sam 20:18; *Abel Shittim*, Num. 25:1; *Abel Ceramim*, Jud. 11:33; *Abel Mehola*, 1 Kings 4:12; *Abel Mayim*, 2 Chron. 16:4). Our *misorah* is careful to record the place name as *Abel* with a *qamats* and not with a *tsere*, thus retaining the meaning of stream/meadow even as the verse connects this place name with mourning.

Based on these ambiguities several different locations have been proposed for the location of Jacob’s funeral and the place called *Goren haAtad*.

**In the Transjordan** — Our verses state more than once that the location was in עבר הירדן which normally would mean the Eastern bank of the Jordan river. This is the opinion of the medieval commentary of *Sekhel Tob* (12th c. Italy). Critical bible scholars of the 20th century even go so far as to claim that Jacob was buried in Jordan! G.I. Davies has suggested that the archeological site of *Tell es-Sa’idiyeh* in Jordan, at which a large complex of Egyptian burials were found, is the likeliest site for the biblical *Abel Mizraim*.

**The Jordan Rift Valley (West Bank)** either near the Egyptian center of *Beth Shean*, or, following Eusebius (4th c. Bishop of Caesarea,) *Beth Hogla* (South of Jericho) — According to Hizkuni (12th c. France), עבר הירדן is in Canaan (i.e. the Cis-Jordan). Yehuda & Yoel Elitzur prefer this identification, and suggest that עבר הירדן could be a metathesis of ערבות הירדן and refer to the *Arabah* region (*Ever haYarden* from *Arvot haYarden*, cf. II Sam. 15:28). (continued on side panel)



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL  
The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

Shabbat Vayhee  
January 10-11, 2020

Hertz Pentateuch: p. 180; Haftarah p. 191  
Kaplan Living Torah: p. 240; Haftarah p. 1090

CANDLE LIGHTING | 4:29 pm  
EVENING SERVICES (MINHA & ARBIT) | 4:30 pm | Main Sanctuary  
FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | 2019-2020 season sponsored by the Julis family.

ZEMIROT | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary  
SHAHRIT | 9:15 am

After the final verse of the Book of Genesis is read the congregation says:

חֲזַק וְנִתְחַזַּק - חֲזָקוּ וַיֵּאמְצוּ לְבַבְכֶּם כָּל הַמַּיְחֲלִים לַה'

Be Strong and let us be Strengthened—Be strong, and let your heart take courage, All ye that hope for the LORD.

TOT SHABBAT | Ages 0-4 | 10:00 am | Fidanque Youth Room  
YOUTH GROUPS | Ages 5-12 | 10:00 am | Elias Room  
JR. CONGREGATION | Ages 5-12 | 10:30 am | Little Synagogue  
SERMON | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | “The Life and Death and Life of King David”  
KIDDUSH LUNCHEON | Levy Auditorium | Sponsored by Laury Frieber, in honor of Matea becoming a Bat Mitzvah.

SHABBAT AFTERNOON CLASS | 3:30 pm | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | “Life and Death and Life of Jacob” | Main Sanctuary  
EVENING SERVICES (MINHA & ARBIT) | 4:25 pm  
HABDALA | 5:15 pm

PARENT-CHILD LEARNING & PIZZA | LED THIS WEEK BY Z. EDINGER | 6:30 pm | Elias Room | for elementary school aged children

Weekday Service Times	
Mornings: Sunday: 8:00 AM   Monday-Friday: 7:15 AM	
Evenings: Sunday (Minha & Arbit): 4:30 PM Monday-Thursday (Arbit only): 6:30 PM	
Public Tours Our next public tour is Wednesday, February 12, at 11:00 AM	Parnas Office Hours Louis Solomon would be delighted to meet with you. Please schedule a visit at parnas@shearithisrael.org.

*A Community Dinner featuring*  
**Rabbi Meir Soloveichik in Conversation with**  
**Professor Yaacob Dweck**

Join Rabbi Soloveichik and Princeton Professor Yaacob Dweck, as they discuss Professor Dweck's new book:

**Dissident Rabbi: The Life of Jacob Sasportas.**

The book, recently released by Princeton Press, tells the story of Jacob Sasportas, the Sephardic rabbi who spent the final years of his life as the spiritual leader of the Amsterdam Jewish community. He alone challenged Sabbetai Zevi's improbable messianic claims and warned his fellow Jews that their Messiah was not the answer to their prayers.

To register or sponsor, visit [shearithisrael.org/sasportas-dinner](http://shearithisrael.org/sasportas-dinner).

**WAIT-LIST ONLY**

**Mark Twain In the Holy Land**  
Sunday, February 2 | 11:30 am & 12:30 pm  
New-York Historical Society

Join Rabbi Meir Soloveichik for a tour on the final day of the New-York Historical Society's exhibit on Twain's trip through the Mediterranean.

This event is currently sold out, but if you would like to be added to the waitlist, contact Sarah Gross at [sgross@shearithisrael.org](mailto:sgross@shearithisrael.org).

SHEARITH ISRAEL & OTHER UPPER WEST SIDE SYNAGOGUES PRESENT:

**Mental Health First Aid Training**

Sunday, February 9 | 10:00 am-6:00 pm

At Lincoln Square Synagogue, 180 Amsterdam Ave

Mental Health First Aid training provides proven practices that will help you recognize the early signs and symptoms of mental illness and substance misuse. You will learn how to listen without judgment, and respond to and help someone in distress until they can get the professional care they may need. Certificate of completion will be presented to participants.

This event is FREE, but space is limited to 60 participants, so sign up today! To register, visit [shearithisrael.org/mental-health-training](http://shearithisrael.org/mental-health-training).

**THIS SATURDAY NIGHT**

**Parent-Child Learning & Pizza**

Saturday Nights bi-weekly | One hour after Habdala

*This week's session will be led by Z. Edinger*

*For Elementary School Age Children & Their Parents or Grandparents*

This educational initiative gives parents (or grandparents) the opportunity to study Torah with their children in a fun interactive setting led by Shearith Israel's clergy and talented volunteers. Pizza and prizes help make this a fun-filled evening of inter-generational learning.

The program is free, but please register for each session you will be attending at [shearithisrael.org/pclarning](http://shearithisrael.org/pclarning) so that we can know how many to expect!

**UPCOMING SISTERHOOD PROGRAMMING**

SPACE IS LIMITED—REGISTER TODAY!

**Tambourine Workshop**

Sunday, March 1 | 10:00 am-12:00 pm

**Firm Registration Deadline: Sunday, January 26**

Women and teenage girls are invited to a multi-faceted & inspirational tambourine workshop. Connect with Miriam the Prophetess and the righteous women who left Egypt together with her. Plant seeds of courage and faith as we adorn our instruments! Rejoice with friends and neighbors as we celebrate our precious sisterhood!

**Miriam Liebermann**, MSW, author, community activist, and inspirational speaker, will conduct the workshop and then lead a song and dance.

*Artistic talent is not necessary! Stencils will be provided.*

**Charge for Admission:** \$25 for adult women, \$20 for teen girls

Register at [shearithisrael.org/tambourine](http://shearithisrael.org/tambourine).

**Stitch & Fix**

Bi-Monthly on Sundays & Tuesdays | 10am-12pm

Elias Room

Next sessions: Sunday, Feb. 9 | Tuesday, Feb. 11

Join the Sisterhood's Sewing Circle: drop in, select an item from our synagogue vestments that needs mending, then stitch and fix. For questions, contact Rose Edinger at [rgedinger@gmail.com](mailto:rgedinger@gmail.com).

**RESCHEDULED: Teen Bowling & Pizza**

Sunday, January 26 | 6:00 pm

**Bowlmor Times Square, 222 W. 44th St**

Shearith Israel teens are invited to bring their friends for a fun night of bowling and pizza at Bowlmor Lanes. Just \$20 includes bowling, shoe rental, pizza and unlimited beverages. If you are interested in this or future outings, contact **Francine Alfandary** ([falfandary@yahoo.com](mailto:falfandary@yahoo.com)).

To register, visit [shearithisrael.org/teen-bowling](http://shearithisrael.org/teen-bowling).

**RABBI SOLOVEHICK'S UPCOMING MAJOR LECTURES**

*Mark Your Calendars and Watch Your Emails*

Following Evening Services

- ♦ **Monday, February 10:** Special History Lecture
- ♦ **Tuesday, March 3:** Major Pre-Purim Shiur

**MORE JEWISH EDUCATION 5780**

- ⇒ **Friday Night Lights | Rabbi Soloveichik**  
Friday Nights | Following Evening Services
- ⇒ **Shabbat Afternoon Class | Rabbi Soloveichik**  
Shabbat Afternoons | One hour before Minha (*but never earlier than 3:30 pm*)
- ⇒ **The Guide to the Duties of the Heart | Rabbi Sjimon den Hollander**  
Sunday Mornings | 8:45 am
- ⇒ **The Idea of Kingship | Rabbi David Silber**  
Sunday Mornings | 10:00 am | *Begins February 2* | \$250 cost, but **FREE** for Shearith Israel members | Registration details at [shearithisrael.org/idea-kingship](http://shearithisrael.org/idea-kingship)
- ⇒ **Tuesday Morning Women's Class | Rabbi Soloveichik**  
Tuesdays | 9:00 am | *Sign up for weekly reminders at [shearithisrael.org/join-our-email-lists](http://shearithisrael.org/join-our-email-lists)*
- ⇒ **Bet Midrash | led by Steven Gotlib**  
Monday-Thursday | One hour before evening services