



SAVE THE DATE
"Pulpit Swap"
 Shabbat, March 10, 2018



In the spirit of friendship and mutual respect, Rabbis Levine and Soloveichik will "swap" synagogues, enjoying the warmth of their peer *kehillot* and each treating the other to a special lecture after morning services.

Rabbi Levine's lecture topic at Shearith Israel:
"A Revolutionary Tale: The Curious History of the First Hebrew Prayer for a Democratic Government"

To join our list of sponsors for the *kiddush* following this special lecture, visit shearithisrael.org/pulpit-swap.

JNF's Tu B'Shebat Festival: *Shuk Shack*
"Experience Israel in NYC"

Wednesday, January 31, 2018 | 7:00 pm
 IAC HQ, 555 West 18 Street, New York, NY
 Shearith Israel is proud to co-sponsor this enormous communal festival. To RSVP and learn more about the festival, including the VIP Cocktail Reception, and JNFfuture afterparty, visit jnf.org/shukshack.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mazal tob to Marlene & Michael Sperling on the birth of a grandson to their children, Shoshana and Will Yagoda.

We welcome the following people to the Shearith Israel family:
George Klein
Vida & Arthur Mantel

Our next public tour
 is **Wednesday,**
February 14

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

DEBAR TORAH: FROM SLAVE TO SCHOLAR: THE NEW MOON AND THE REDEMPTIVE PROCESS
 — BY ASHER FINKELSTEIN —

As the drama of the Exodus reaches its height towards the end of this week's *Parasha*, it is seemingly interrupted by a legalistic lunar interlude: "This month shall be for you the beginning of months, it shall be the first month of the year to you" (12:2). Based on Rabbinic tradition, Maimonides (Book of *Mitzvot*, Positive Command 153) codifies this verse as the command to "sanctify months and calculate months and years" according to lunar and other astronomical cycles.

What is this *mitzvah* doing at the height of the Exodus narrative? Many explain that the intention is to create a lasting reminder of the Exodus by counting the months of the year from that event. Rabbeinu Yonah, however, adds a fascinating angle which points towards larger themes about freedom and national self-image: "Also, since they were leaving back-breaking labor, he exhorted them first to learn wisdom, for knowing the month requires knowing the movement of the spheres of the stars which is a splendorous wisdom and it is the ladder to ascend to the knowledge of G-d." In other words, this command was a key component of the redemptive process—by beating their ploughshares into books and metamorphosing from slaves to scholars, the Jewish people would successfully transition from degradation and bondage into purposeful and meaningful freedom.

As Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks and others are fond of pointing out, harder than taking the Jews out of Egypt was taking Egypt out of the Jews. This does not merely refer to Jews steeped in the immoral culture of Egypt itself, but also refers to the national self-image the Egyptians foisted upon the Jews—doubtless one of degradation and servitude. Removing this slave mentality and low national self-esteem was a formidable task indeed. The above comment of Rabbeinu Yonah highlights one aspect of the Divine plan to "take the Egypt out of the Jews."

An interesting comment of Rashbam earlier in the Exodus narrative hints at another. At the burning bush, Moshe proclaims himself unfit for the task of addressing Pharaoh on the grounds that he is "heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue." Most understand that Moshe had a speech impediment. The Rashbam suggests however, that this means that Moshe spoke *Egyptian* with a heavy accent. Having been nursed in the house of his parents, and fled to Midian at a relatively young age, Moshe now found himself unable to speak proper Egyptian. How could he speak before Pharaoh? G-d of course responds that who but He has given man a mouth and chosen whom to make mute or deaf, etc.

There is a Divine logic behind the choice. If we may speculate as the contents of that logic, the following conjecture appears quite plausible: In a society in which "Hebrew" or "Jew" meant a slave, an object of disdain, someone at the bottom of the social pyramid, it was difficult for the Jews to view themselves in any other way. Isaiah Berlin identifies this very phenomenon as the root of the Jewish self-hatred of people like Marx. Often people cannot help but view themselves through the prism of the values and prejudices of the society around them. So Moshe's unfamiliarity with the Egyptian language was actually his greatest strength. He was not familiar with the language in which "Hebrew" meant "slave." He only knew the Holy Tongue, in which "Hebrew" is a mark of pride. This was the person who would be able to take the Egypt out of the Jews and transform them into a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

So as Rabbeinu Yonah and (less consciously) Rashbam both intimate, "taking the Egypt out of the Jews" was a tough task which required a diverse toolbox—lunar, linguistic, and otherwise. In this way, a holistic redemptive process was enacted, setting the stage for the glorious Jewish future ahead.

Asher Finkelstein is a student at Yeshiva University and a member of our ongoing Habruta (Paired Learning) Program.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL
The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue
Shabbat Bo
January 19-20, 2018

Hertz Pentateuch: p. 248; Haftarah: p. 263
 Kaplan Living Torah: p. 300; Haftarah: p. 1102

CANDLE LIGHTING | 4:40 pm

MINHAH & ARBIT | 4:45 pm | Main Sanctuary

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | "The Sabbath River and the British Museum" | 2017-2018 season sponsored by the Julis family.

ZEMIROT | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary

SHAHARIT (NISHMAT) | 9:00 am | Main Sanctuary

TOT SHABBAT WITH LIZ AND SHANADE | Ages 0-4 | 10:00 am
 | Fidanque Youth Room

YOUTH GROUPS WITH RACHEL | Ages 5-12 | 10:00 am | Elias Room

JUNIOR CONGREGATION WITH A TORAH READING | Ages 5-12 |
 10:30 | Little Synagogue

TALK | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | "A Passover Meal in the Palace of Saddam"

KIDDUSH | Levy Auditorium | Sponsored by Judy and Joel Schreiber, in honor of the *nahala* of Joel's father, Aaron Schreiber a"h.

SHABBAT AFTERNOON SHIUR | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | 3:35 pm |
 "The Mezuzah and the Sacrifice" | Levy Auditorium

MINHAH & ARBIT | 4:35 pm

HABDALAH | 5:26 pm

Weekday Service Times

Mornings:

Sunday: 8:00 am

Monday-Friday: 7:15 am

Evenings:

Sunday (Minhah & Arbit—note new time): 4:45 pm

Monday-Thursday (Arbit only): 6:30 pm

Please note our NEW Sunday evening service times: Beginning this Sunday, January 21st, we will be offering both *minhah* and *arbit* services at the synagogue at 4:45 PM. Please check weekly as the time for the Sunday evening service will vary according to the calendar. This will replace the *arbit* only service at 6:30, which will no longer meet on Sundays.

Central Park West at 70th Street, New York City • www.shearithisrael.org

Schedule Alerts

- ♦ Rabbi Soloveichik's Women's Class and Talmud Class will NOT meet this Tuesday, January 23.
- ♦ Toddler Program will have a make-up session on **Friday, January 26**, for those who missed last Wednesday's cancelled session.
- ♦ PTTS is **not** in session over Yeshiva Week (Sunday, January 14-Sunday, January 21). School resumes on Thursday, January 25.

SPECIAL OFFER FOR SHEARITH ISRAEL MEMBERS

50% Discount on Rabbi Soloveichik's

New Online Course:

Jewish Ideas and the American Founders Provided by The Tikvah Fund

If you've ever wanted to learn from Rabbi Soloveichik in the comfort of your own home, this is the course for you.

In eight new lectures, Rabbi Soloveichik will take you through early American Jewish history and explain the connections between Jewish ideals and the founding of America. You can:

- watch or listen to these lectures at your own pace
- watch or listen as often as you like
- gift them to others

Regular cost for this online course is \$40, but using an exclusive 50% coupon code for Shearith Israel members brings the price down to **only \$20**.

Simply go to tikvahfund.org/course/jewish-ideas-american-founders, create an account, and enroll in the course with the coupon code

"ShearithIsrael"
to start learning today.

View all our Winter Semester classes at
shearithisrael.org/judaic-education

Sign up to be notified of any schedule changes or cancellations at shearithisrael.org/join-our-email-lists.

TU B'SHEBAT AT SHEARITH ISRAEL

Junior Congregation with a Torah Reading Shabbat, January 27 | 10:30 am

If you missed your opportunity to read the Torah in Junior Congregation last week, parts of Torah reading and services for next Shabbat, January 27 are still available for participants (ages 5-12) to lead. Many of them are quite brief and excellent for beginners. Please contact Mrs. Lisa Rohde to arrange a part for your child (lirohde-csi@yahoo.com).



HAPPENING NEXT WEEK! Young Couples and Families Pre-Tu B'Shebat Luncheon NEXT Shabbat, January 27 Following Morning Services

Mark the new year for trees and celebrate the Jewish link to the fruits of the Holy Land with Rabbi and Layalza Soloveichik & Co. Join us and invite your friends for a family luncheon of Torah and fruity goodness.

Members: \$35/adult, \$15/child under 12
Non-Members: \$40/adult, \$18/child under 12

Sponsorship Opportunities:
\$180 (includes 2 adults and their children)
\$250 (includes 2 adults and their children)

For registration and sponsorship details, visit
shearithisrael.org/tu-bshebat-lunch.

Tu B'Shebat Shiur

Rabbi Meir Soloveichik
Tuesday, January 30
7:00 pm

Rabbi Soloveichik will deliver a shiur dedicated to the themes of Tu B'Shebat. Tasty Tu B'Shebat treats will be served.

For sponsorship opportunities for this public lecture, visit
shearithisrael.org/tu-bshebat-shiur.



PURIM AT SHEARITH ISRAEL

SAVE THE DATE

Herringfest: The Purim Edition

Featuring herring from the world-famous Russ & Daughters, foods from other fine purveyors, and an entertaining talk from Rabbi Soloveichik

Wednesday, February 28 | Following Megillah Reading

It's our annual Purim Dinner—with a twist! This year, after the success of last year's Herringfest, we're holding the sequel—with even more herring!—on Purim night, after *megillah* reading. Other smoked fish with delicious bagels and spreads will round out this delectable dinner.

Registration and sponsorships coming soon.

Be Part of Our Women's *Megillat Esther* Purim Morning, Thursday, March 1 Services begin at 7:15 am

Calling all women aged 12 and up to read *megillah* this year, for the 29th year of this Shearith Israel tradition. Assignments are as short as 3 verses and all audio is available at shearithisrael.org/megillat-esther. It's easy to learn and is a great way to participate this Purim! Contact Mrs. Lisa Rohde at lirohde-csi@yahoo.com for more information and to get involved.

Sponsor Our Annual Purim Breakfast Thursday, March 1 | 8:30 am

Every year we treat our congregation to a festive Purim Breakfast following the reading of the *megillah* on Purim morning. Help ensure that we have plenty of hamentashen to go around by going here to sponsor: shearithisrael.org/purim-breakfast

Send *Mishloah Manot* to a Member

Take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to send special Purim greetings and to reach out to our Shearith Israel community. This project will support the Sisterhood's many projects. Please stay tuned for more information via email about how to participate. For questions, please contact Mrs. Lisa Rohde at lirohde-csi@yahoo.com or Mrs. Carla Schein at scheinc6@gmail.com.