

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: THIS SUNDAY, JANUARY 26

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

Women and teenage girls are invited to a multi-faceted and inspirational tambourine workshop. Connect with Miriam the Prophetess and the righteous women who left Egypt together with her!
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 adults, \$20 for teens

Register at shearithisrael.org/tambourine.

CSI Youth Trip to the Jewish Museum:
Objects Tell Stories

NEXT Sunday, February 2 | Grades K-8

Meeting at the Jewish Museum at 9:45 am, 1109 5th Ave
Admission is FREE for PTTS Students, \$10 for non-PTTS children
Join with PTTS and CSI Youth at the Jewish Museum. Students will examine works of art and cultural artifacts in the Jewish Museum's collection as primary sources to learn more about their historical and artistic contexts and the stories they reveal.

To register, visit shearithisrael.org/youth-museum-trip.

CHOIR SELECTIONS

Friday Evening:

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

Shabbat Morning:

Yehi Hasdekha (p. 215) | Julius Mombach
Tehilat (p. 216) | Leon Hyman
Ubnuho Yomar (p. 218) | Leon Kramer
Adon Olam (p. 232) | Samuel de Sola

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mazal tob to Aaron Nathan upon his marriage to Dr. Meredith Case. Congratulations as well to his parents, David Nathan & Rebecca Chaplan.

DEBAR TORAH

—AARON SCHWARTZ-MESSING, BET MIDRASH PROGRAM—

When Moshe and Aharon request that Pharaoh allow the Jews to leave Egypt, Pharaoh demands that they provide a sign to prove that they were indeed sent by Hashem. Aharon performs the sign, casting his staff to the ground, which miraculously transforms into a snake. *“Then Pharaoh, for his part, summoned the wise men and the sorcerers; and the Egyptian magicians, in turn, did the same with their spells; each cast down his rod, and they turned into serpents. But Aharon’s rod swallowed their rods. Yet Pharaoh’s heart stiffened and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said”* (Shemoth 7:11-13, translation from Sefaria.org).

It is debated among Jewish philosophers whether magic or sorcery truly exists. The Rambam takes the position that sorcery does not exist (see Guide for the Perplexed, 3:37), and the miracles performed by Pharaoh’s sorcerers were simply sleight of hand. The sorcerers therefore assumed that Aharon was also performing sleight of hand. However, *“Aharon’s rod swallowed their rods.”* This miracle was one that they did not duplicate, presumably because they could not. This was clearly a miracle, and proof of Hashem’s omnipotence. If this is the case, why did the magicians not acknowledge Hashem during the duration of the next two plagues? Only during the plague of lice does the Torah state: *“The magicians did the like with their spells to produce lice, but they could not. The vermin remained upon man and beast; and the magicians said to Pharaoh, ‘This is the finger of God!’”* (Shemoth 8:14-15). Did they not clearly see that this was *“the finger of God”* when Aharon’s staff swallowed theirs?

I would like to suggest that the magicians knew early on that Aharon was performing a miracle while their acts were merely charades. However, they did not want to acknowledge that Hashem is the true God. To do so would fly in the face of their lifestyle and values. They were in denial; deciding to ignore what was in front of their faces, and coming up with any contrived explanation to hide the uncomfortable reality. This continues until the miracles became so great and so supernatural that they can no longer be ignored.

On the surface this explanation may seem far-fetched: surely no one would be so irrational! But in reality many of us do this all the time. Intellectual honesty is not an easy trait to master, especially when our pride or comfort is at stake. People hate to admit that they are wrong, and will often continue to argue simply because they cannot handle acknowledging that they made a mistake and that the other party is correct. People hate to acknowledge their failings and shortcomings, and it is very enticing to mold a value system around those behaviors which are most comfortable for us rather than to engage in a penetrating introspection as to whether our behavior and lifestyle conforms only to that which is right and good. *“Rabbi Hanina said: The seal of the Holy One, Blessed be He, is truth”* (Shabbat 55a). Only through uncompromising truth and honesty can we become people who “walk in His ways” (Debarim 28:9) and are a light unto the nations.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL
The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

Shabbat Vaera
January 24-25, 2020

Hertz Pentateuch: p. 232; Haftarah p. 244
Kaplan Living Torah: p. 280; Haftarah p. 1096

CANDLE LIGHTING | 4:45 pm
EVENING SERVICES (MINHA & ARBIT) | 4:45 pm | Main Sanctuary
FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | “Menachem Begin in Mitzrayim: A Shabbat Story” | *2019-2020 season sponsored by the Julis family.*
ZEMIROT | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary
SHAH RIT | 9:15 am
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
TALK | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | “The Profound Persian Dayenu”
KIDDUSH LUNCHEON | Levy Auditorium | *Sponsored by Vicki & Sam Katz in honor of the upcoming wedding of their daughter, Jennifer, to David Simins.*

SHABBAT AFTERNOON CLASS | **3:40 pm** | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | “The Five Questions” | Levy Auditorium
EVENING SERVICES (MINHA & ARBIT) | 4:40 pm
HABDALA | 5:32 pm
PARENT-CHILD LEARNING & PIZZA | LED THIS WEEK BY JOSH EISEN | *Sponsored by the Shearith Israel League* | 6:45 pm | Elias Room | *for elementary school aged children*
Rosh Hodesh Shebat is on Monday.

| Weekday Service Times | |
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| Mornings: Sunday: 8:00 AM Monday-Friday: 7:15 AM | |
| Evenings: Sunday (Minha & Arbit): 4:45 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

Friday night, February 7 | Following Evening Services

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, visit shearithisrael.org/sasportas-dinner.

Parent-Child Learning & Pizza

Saturday Nights bi-weekly | One hour after Habdala

Next session is THIS Saturday night, January 25, led by Josh Eisen 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 so that we can know how many to expect!

Parent-Child Learning is sponsored by the Shearith Israel League.

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.

Stitch & Fix

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

MAKEUP SESSION: This Sunday, January 26

Sunday, Feb. 9 | Tuesday, Feb. 11

Sunday, Feb. 23 | Tuesday, Feb. 25

Seeking Women's Megillah Readers

Megillah Reading on Purim Morning, Tuesday, March 10 | 8:00 am

Rehearsals on Sunday, February 23 at 6 pm & Sunday, March 8 at 7 pm (following evening services)

On the morning of Purim, the women and girls of the synagogue conduct a parallel Women's Megillah reading in the Little Synagogue.

Join us for our 31st year!

Anyone who wants to participate (must have passed their 12th Hebrew birthday, whether or not a "Bat Mitzvah Ceremony" has been held) should contact **Mrs. Lisa Rohde** at lrohde.csi@gmail.com as soon as possible for an assignment (as short as 3 verses). With the audio available on the Synagogue's website, learning a part is made very mobile and accessible.

A Shabbat Dinner with Hazzan Jonathan Garcia

Friday Night, February 21 | Following 5:30 pm evening services

Come for an intimate Shabbat dinner, featuring the wonderful musical talents of Rabbi Ira Rohde, Z. Edinger, and our young guest Hazzan, Jonathan Garcia, who will be joining us from London, along with his new bride, Micol Bedarida Garcia. Both of our newlywed guests have deep roots and lineage in *Hazzanut* traditions, going back generations.

Together with our clergy, Hazzan Garcia, who regularly leads services at Lauderdale Road Synagogue and occasionally at Bevis Marks, will create a beautiful, music-filled atmosphere for this relaxed dinner, including melodies from the London S&P tradition.

Hazzan Garcia will be returning on Shabbat morning to lead Musaf and give a short seminar on the history of the London musical tradition.

To register or sponsor the dinner, visit shearithisrael.org/garcia-dinner.

WAIT-LIST ONLY

Mark Twain In the Holy Land with Rabbi Soloveichik

Sunday, February 2 | 11:30 am & 12:30 pm | New-York Historical Society

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

THIS SUNDAY: 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.

For questions, or if you are interested in this or future outings, contact **Francine Alfandary** (falfandary@yahoo.com).

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 | *On hiatus until February 16*
- ⇒ **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
- ⇒ **Tuesday Morning Women's Class | Rabbi Soloveichik**
Tuesdays | 9:00 am | *Sign up for weekly reminders at shearithisrael.org/join-our-email-lists*
- ⇒ **Bet Midrash | led by Steven Gotlib**
Monday-Thursday | One hour before evening services