

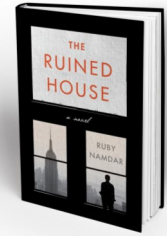
SAVE THE DATE

Special Guest Speaker:
Author Ruby Namdar

Wednesday, March 6 | 7:00 pm

Hailed by the New York Times Book Review as “a masterpiece of modern religious literature,” Ruby Namdar’s debut novel, *The Ruined House*, tells the tale of the collision between tradition and contemporary life through the story of Andrew Cohen, a professor at NYU whose happy, meticulously-arranged world begins to mysteriously unravel, disrupted by visions of an ancient religious ritual.

Ruby Namdar was born and raised in Jerusalem to a family of Iranian-Jewish heritage. *The Ruined House* won the Sapir Prize, Israel’s most prestigious literary award. He currently lives in NYC with his wife and two daughters, and teaches Jewish literature, focusing on Biblical and Talmudic narrative. The English edition of *The Ruined House* was published in the US by Harper Collins in November 2017.



CHOIR SELECTIONS THIS SHABBAT

Friday Night

V'Shameru I (p. 166) | Samuel Naumbourg
Psalm 23 (p. 174) | Leon Kramer

Shabbat Morning

Misheberakh (p. 208) | Leon Kramer
Tehilat (p. 216) | Jonathan Koch
Ubnuho Yomar (p. 218) | Leon Kramer

At last week’s Shabbat Shira Sing-Along Luncheon, Rabbi Rohde taught the *Azharot* for *Shabu'ot*. He specifically chose this melody because we will use it as the musical theme this Shabbat for *Shabbat Yithro* and the ten commandments. This melody will be used this Shabbat for *Kaddish*, *Yigdal* and *Adom Olam*. In many homes it is also sung for *En Kelohenu* before *Birkat haMazon* specially for this Shabbat.

WHY JETHRO GETS CREDIT FOR THE GIVING OF THE TORAH

—HAZZAN RABBI IRA ROHDE—

Exodus 18:18-21: “You will surely wither away, both you and this people that is with you: for this thing is too heavy for you; you will not be able to do it yourself alone. Hearken now unto my voice, I will give you counsel, and God shall be with thee: You should face God for the people, that you might bring matters unto God. And you shall admonish them in the statutes and laws, and instruct them the way wherein they must go, and the deeds that they must do. And you shall identify men of ability from among all the people, those such as fear God, men of truth, hating gain, and put such over them...”

The episode of the visit of the non-Israelite Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, bringing Zipporah and Moses’ two sons, marks a low-key break in a story-line filled with high-action drama: before it, there is a miraculous escape from slavery; being lead miraculously through the desert; then the drowning of Pharaoh’s pursuing army; escape from thirst and hunger in the desert; and a miraculous defeat of marauding Amalekites. After it comes smoking, cloud-covered, quaking mountains, the lightning and thundering of Sinai. And, in between, we get this little scene of Jethro’s visit, his questioning of Moses, and Jethro’s advice. It certainly gives some needed relief in the build-up of the action’s tension.

But the episode also seems to serve as a crucial link to the lawgiving story at Mount Sinai which follows. It serves to explain the place of civil laws and a code of law within this narrative. Moses had asked Pharaoh to let the Israelites go to worship their own God at a festival of sacrifice and worship in the wilderness. So that, once the Israelites are freed from threats, the next step would be to proceed to God’s worship. And that is, in fact, what happens at Mt. Sinai after the legal part is over: they have a Festival at an altar near Sinai first, and then they get instructions on building the Tabernacle. But first we get all these laws given at Mt. Sinai, many of which don’t have that much to do with worship. And it will be remembered that when Moses first came to Mount Sinai and saw the Burning Bush, God told him: “When you have brought the People out of Egypt, you shall worship God upon this mountain” (Ex. 3:12). It doesn’t say anything about lawgiving there, just worship! So, had it not been for this episode of Jethro, we might have only expected worship, not lawgiving, at Sinai, hard as that may be to imagine, and we might have been at a loss to explain the lawgiving. The Jethro episode explains why there had to be law, along with worship. Moses’ plan for Sinai seems to have evolved, seems to have changed. And it seems that only Jethro could have bought about this change, this evolution.

This was firstly because, after all, it had been while tending Jethro’s flocks that Moses had had his vision of the Burning Bush at Sinai in the first place. Therefore, if Moses’ vision of Sinai was now evolving or was being reinterpreted, only someone who had been with Moses at the very beginning could have catalyzed that evolution. Secondly, Moses respected his father-in-law Jethro’s position as a political/religious leader and an elder of his tribe, with experience in keeping order among the people and keeping a society functioning. And thirdly, Jethro had particular know-how in regard to life in wilderness or desert conditions, which Moses respected. Jethro does not tell Moses to set up a kingship. Jethro, like Moses, values the relative freedom of desert life, in close contact with the God of nature, where only God is the True Judge. But even in the freedom of the wild, Jethro says, people need law and order. So Jethro’s suggestion of a system of Divine Law administered in a decentralized fashion is accepted and adopted as part of Moses’ vision, as Jethro had adopted Moses earlier. Moses originally could think of nothing but how to escape from slavery into the freedom to worship God and serve God directly, led by God alone. Each matter and indeed each case would be decided directly by God, the only True Judge, according to Moses’ original vision. But this was untenable. Jethro’s warning that “this thing is too heavy for you” recalls the immediately preceding battle with Amalek where, in order to keep the Israelites winning, the weight of Moses’ hands literally requires support. Only a Divine Law and a tribal system of justice like that suggested by Jethro could preserve the freedom and the immediacy of God in the Wilderness and combine it with the order and stability a people needs to survive and thrive. In Jethro’s native desert, where almost everything withers and dies, his sagacious warning that “you will surely wither” (נבל תבל) must have seemed strikingly salient. Only a Code of Law could give them stability that could last. This was only one of the many Lessons which the Wilderness would have in store for the Israelites.

36th ANNIVERSARY

• 5414 • 5779 •

CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL
Year of Years Celebration

CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL
The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

Shabbat Yithro
January 25-26, 2019

Hertz Pentateuch: p. 288; Haftarah p. 302
Kaplan Living Torah: p. 344; Haftarah p. 1114

CANDLE LIGHTING | 4:47 pm
EVENING SERVICES | 4:45 pm
FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS | Rabbi Soloveichik | “The Mysterious Lyrics of Shelomo Alkabets” | 2018-2019 season sponsored by the Julis family.

MORNING SERVICES | Main Sanctuary | 8:15 am
TOT SHABBAT | Ages 0-4 | 10:00 am | Fidanque Youth Room
YOUTH GROUPS | Ages 5-12 | 10:00 am | Elias Room
JUNIOR CONGREGATION | 10:30 am | Little Synagogue
TALK | Rabbi Soloveichik | “The Shofar of Sinai in the 20th Century”
KIDDUSH | Levy Auditorium

SHABBAT AFTERNOON SHIUR | Rabbi Soloveichik | 3:40 pm | “The Twenty Commandments” | Levy Auditorium
EVENING SERVICES | 4:40 pm
HABDALA | 5:34 pm

Weekday Service Times

Mornings:

Sunday: 8:00 am | Monday-Friday: 7:15 am

Evenings (Arbit only):

Sunday-Thursday: 6:30 pm

THE SHEARITH ISRAEL SISTERHOOD PRESENTS

Wrapunzel

Sunday, February 3 | 11:00 am - 2:00 pm

Proceeds will benefit Sharsheret, an organization dedicated to helping Jewish cancer patients and their families

Want to give your creative side a twist?

Looking for an elegant solution to a bad hair day?

Tired of shivering, windblown, as temperatures drop? Intrigued by well-priced soft silk scarves and a side order of technique?

Know a cancer patient who might benefit?

Join the Shearith Israel Sisterhood, Wrapunzel, and Sharsheret at this special event, featuring demonstrations, one-on-one tutorials, plus scarves, accessories, and specialty gear for sale.

To register, visit shearithisrael.org/wrapunzel.

Only \$5 in advance; \$10 at the door.

Light refreshments will be served. Women only, please.

NEW YOUTH INITIATIVE:

Knitting For Teens

Presented by the Shearith Israel Sisterhood

On three upcoming Saturday nights | 7:00 pm-8:30 pm

This week, January 26 [SESSION IS FULL]

February 2 | February 16

Held at a private home on the Upper West Side

Our member, Karen Daar, an accomplished knitter, will instruct the basics of knitting—how to cast on, the garter & purl stitch, how to increase, decrease, and bind off—everything one needs to know to create a knitted project.

All teens are welcome to try their hands at this new activity. The first session is full, but if you're a teen or have a teenager who is interested in future sessions, contact Karen at kdaar@icloud.com for location information and other questions.

Note: There will be a nominal fee (about \$15) for materials (knitting needles and yarn).

Public Tours

Our next public tour is
Wednesday,
February 13, at 11:00 AM

Parnas Office Hours

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

Jewish Education Alert

- Rabbi Silber's new class on the Book of Judges will begin on **Sunday, February 3**. To learn more and register (FREE for Shearith Israel members), visit shearithisrael.org/silber-judges.

UPCOMING FILM SCREENING

Wednesday, February 6 | 7:00 pm

The Last Jews of Baghdad

Marking the anniversary of the Baghdad Hangings
With opening remarks from producer Carole Basri

Today, only 5 Jews remain in Iraq from a population of 160,000. This film asks, "Why did the Iraqi Jews leave?" The answer is found in the discriminatory laws and policies enacted by Iraq's government and leaders against these former members of Iraqi society who still consider themselves "Iraqi Jews."

Register at shearithisrael.org/baghdad-screenings.

Only \$5 per member/\$8 per non-member
in advance, \$10 at the door.



This screening is part of our many Year of Years, 365th Anniversary events, showcasing the extraordinary diversity and heritage of our congregation.

Brunch & Learn with Rabbi Soloveichik

For Elementary School Aged Children & Their Parents

Sundays, 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

February 10 | March 10

On several Sundays over the course of the year, children and their parents start the day together with morning services after which they will proceed to a topical "Brunch and Learn" with Rabbi Soloveichik.

Register at shearithisrael.org/brunch-learn.

Meldadura of Reverend A. L. Cardozo

THIS Monday, January 28

Following 6:30 pm Evening Services

All are welcome to join us at the Meldadura marking the 13th *nahala* of Reverend Abraham Lopes Cardozo.

Services begin at 6:30 pm with Arbit in the Little Synagogue.

Parent-Child Learning & Pizza

Final Session:

Saturday Night, February 9 | 7:00 pm—Led by Z. Edinger

For Children Aged 5-12 & Their Parents or Grandparents

A wonderful opportunity for parents (or grandparents) to study Torah with their children together with Shearith Israel's clergy.

Pizza and prizes help make this a fun-filled evening of inter-generational learning.

Register for the February 9 session (only \$5 per person) at shearithisrael.org/parent-child-learning.

Mitzvot Workshops with Shamash, Z. Edinger

For Children Aged 5-12

Select Sunday Mornings at 10:00 am

Sunday, March 3 | Sunday, April 14

These Mitzvot Workshops are a wonderful opportunity for our elementary school age youth - both boys and girls - to learn to sing the melodies of selected prayers from the Shabbat and holiday services as well as learn about the parts of the Torah service, and receive training in the hands-on parts of the service.

Sign up for March 3 (it's FREE!) at shearithisrael.org/mitzvot-workshop.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

We mourn the passing of our member,
Margot (Mendes) Oppenheimer.

Condolences to our devoted member, Mrs. Lisa Rohde, on the passing of her father, Herbert Brun.