

## IN REVIEW: Charleston Shabbaton

Thank you to all the participants who joined Rabbi Soloveichik on our Shabbaton to historic Charleston, South Carolina last Shabbat. It was a truly inspiring, educational, and enjoyable weekend for all. We had the opportunity to bond with the Jewish community of Charleston, to tour the famed colonial Beth Elohim Synagogue and its Coming Street Cemetery, and to be a part of the flag ceremony on Fort Sumter.



*In the words of our participants:*

"An absolutely fabulous Shabbat/weekend in Charleston. It was **fun, educational and uplifting** all at the same time."

"A great trip - steeped in American Jewish history, the Rabbi's always superb lectures & comments, and fabulous camaraderie amongst our participants."  
Job well done!!"

"We were so privileged to be part of the Charleston Shabbaton; it was a remarkable experience. We loved the southern hospitality of the BSBI community, they couldn't have done more for us. We also loved hearing our own Rabbi Soloveichik shed his brilliant light on history.  
**It was unforgettable.**"

Our next public tour is  
**Wednesday,  
December 13**

**Parnas Office Hours**  
Louis Solomon would be delighted to meet with you. Please schedule a visit at  
[parnas@shearithisrael.org](mailto:parnas@shearithisrael.org).

## DEBAR TORAH: JEWISH VIEWS OF DYNASTIC MONARCHY

— BY HAZZAN RABBI IRA ROHDE —

“... נשיא אלקים אתה בתוכנו ... “...A Prince of God are you among us...” (Gen. 23:6)

In the story-line of this week's Torah reading, the establishment of a rightful succession is assured for Abraham's dynasty through his son Isaac. In the haftarah, the establishment of a rightful succession for David's dynasty is assured through the establishment and designation of Solomon as the rightful heir. Abraham has already acted as a statesman in dealing with other potentates. He is called נַשִּׂיא, a chieftain or noble, and this Parasha is filled with “courtly” motifs. Indeed, only a prince or king (like Pharaoh) would purchase a royal tomb for himself and his “Princess,” Sarah, the way Abraham does here. So it is legitimate to ask what the significance of the focus upon the dynastic succession of this “Prince of God” means.

Jews *love* dynastical monarchies, and we *hate* them, as well. In effect, all Israelites are princes and rightful heirs of the dynasty of Abraham. Kohanim and Levites among us belong to special sub-dynasties. Only the return of the Dynasty of the House of David can bring ultimate Redemption. We are dazzled by royal dynastic grandeur and charmed by the courtly love, grace and disciplined culture born of princely breeding. At the same time, we hate Pharaoh, the greatest dynastical monarch, who remained a symbol of tyranny and oppression for all time. All those kings who usurped the place of God, enslaved their people, and overtaxed their people's resources out of their lust for power, etc., were likened to Pharaoh. The Bible rails against the abuses of dynastical monarchies, and yet admires them, at the same time. Of course, it's natural for all those who consider *themselves* princes and noblemen (as all we Jews do) to feud with the ruling Crown. But, at the same time, we do recognize that royal dynasties give protection and stability, in which the rule of law is executed consistently and vigorously, affording justice to all elements of society, especially those likely to be downtrodden.

Now, monarchies *could* be elective, but what makes dynasty the primary form of monarchy, elevating the importance of dynastic succession? Well, to continue my theme from last week's Debar Torah, we instinctively prefer models of political/social organization which are *organic*. The basic unit of social/political order is family, building from those bonds to the clan. From there ties extend to the tribe, proceeding from thence to the attachments to city and commonwealth. We thus tend to see security, continuity, and order on the highest levels most naturally and organically assured through familial connections, as well, i.e. through a dynasty. If societal order is assured on the lower levels through respect for our brethren and relations, then surely it would be enhanced on the higher levels by treating our fellow citizens as brethren and children of the same kingly father-figure, modeling the dominion after the family. A holistic continuity of law and order would seem to be most reliably assured thereby.

And yet, familial, dynastic models have serious drawbacks. Jewish views of political leadership sometimes parallel Jewish views of divine rule. Jews view pagan gods as either doing too little, out of a lack of concern or power, or else as doing too much. Gods (and politicians) who do too little out of a lack of concern or because of conflicts with other gods (and politicians) allow evil to triumph over the good through inaction. On the other hand, gods (and politicians) who order men around overmuch according to the differing whims of differing gods (and politicians) actively cause evil, or at least give an active excuse for it, for example in the sacrifice of children or in cult prostitution. Pagan religion and thought could either leave man in the hands of the logical working-out/unfolding of an uncaring destiny-fate and/or natural law, or else pagan thought might leave man at the mercy of the direct blows and stray arrows from pagan divine dynastic caprice and intrigue among powers perennially at war, either way resulting in miscarriage of justice. So it is with human monarchies. And even when the ruler, human or divine, is properly concerned, the ruler's retribution may be too cruel and heartless, or else too merciful to the undeserving and thereby unfair. Or there may be a lack of a consistent, logical law, ruling instead by fiat, instead of by the wisdom of lawful justice. Alternatively, unfairness may arise from legalistic over-consistency and a lack of organic humane insight and wisdom as to how to improve society.

At other times, Jewish views of human political leadership run counter, rather than parallel, to its views of divine rule. Since Adonai is the only True King, then properly, in some senses, there can be no real dynastic power; there is, at least, an automatic Jewish check upon the power of a dynastic monarch. The monarch's power and the very continuation of his dynasty itself are in God's hands. The pagan king, by contrast, can rival a god, if he wishes, although he, too, can be subject to the whims of the populace as well as the working-out of the inexorable logic of fate. The Jewish view of Law and Justice being sacred and coming from a Revelation of God means that the Jewish monarch is subject to that Law. His job is to execute that law and carry out Divine justice and retribution, *not* to impose his own law, unlike the typical pagan monarch. The pagan monarch, on the other hand, *is* subject to common custom and precedent, but not checked by it to such an extent.

Still, all-in all, for Judaism, the dynastic model of leadership remains important as an ideal of the organic, holistic, humane way the members of the Jewish body-politic ought to relate to each other: as brethren, noble descendants of the same dynasty and fellow-citizens and subjects of a common Dominion, subject to the consistent but caring Commands and Regulations of a Lawful, yet Merciful Monarch.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL

The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

## Shabbat Haye Sarah

### November 10-11, 2017

Hertz Pentateuch: p. 80; Haftarah p. 90  
Kaplan Living Torah: p. 100; Haftarah p. 1066

CANDLE LIGHTING | 4:24 pm

MINHAH & ARBIT | 4:30 pm | Main Sanctuary

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | “Shabbat, King George, and Rehov King George: A Tale From the British Mandate” | 2017-18 season sponsored by the Julis family.

ZEMIROT | 8:15 am

SHAHARIT (NISHMAT) | 9:00 am

TOT SHABBAT WITH LIZ AND SHANADE | Ages 0-4 | 10:00 am | Levy Auditorium

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

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

SERMON | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | “Faith, Flags, and Fort Sumter”  
KIDDUSH LUNCHEON | Levy Auditorium | Sponsored by Joy Saleh and Bruce Roberts in honor of Daniella becoming a Bat Mitzvah.

SEUDA SHELISHIT & SHABBAT AFTERNOON PIRKEI ABOT  
SHIUR | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | 3:30 pm | Levy Auditorium | Fall semester sponsored by Scott Shay, in memory of Chana Razel bat Aaron v'Sarah.

MINHAH & ARBIT | 4:15 pm

HABDALAH | 5:10 pm

### Weekday Service Times

**Mornings:** Sunday: 8:00 am

Monday - Friday: 7:15 am

**Evenings (Arbit Only):** Sunday - Thursday: 6:30 pm

## THANKSGIVING AT SHEARITH ISRAEL

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2017

Morning Services with our Special Thanksgiving Hallel |  
Main Sanctuary | 7:45 am

Rabbi Soloveichik's Address | Main Sanctuary  
Children's Hessed Craft Activity (during the Rabbi's  
Address and Pack-a-thon) | starting 8:30 am

Hot Cocoa & Refreshments | Elias Room | 9:00–11:00 am  
Parade Viewing for Youth | Portico

Hunger Alleviation Pack-a-thon (registration required)  
9:30–11:30 am | Levy Auditorium

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25

Young Couples and Families Thanksgiving Luncheon  
See inside center panel for details ➡

Would You Like To Sponsor Our Thanksgiving Festivities?  
Visit [shearithisrael.org/thanksgiving](http://shearithisrael.org/thanksgiving).

## THIRD ANNUAL THANKSGIVING PACK-A-THON

Thursday, November 23, 9:30 am | Levy Auditorium

Building on the success of the past two Pack-a-thons, this year we have expanded our circle of UWS faith community partners to include our founding partner, the West End Collegiate Church, The Jewish Center, and, this year, the Church of Latter-day Saints.

We are also delighted to announce that, like last year, every dollar you donate to this initiative will be TRIPLED through the generosity of an anonymous matching grant.

Help us reach our goal of \$18,000 and register to participate or donate at [shearithisrael.org/pack-a-thon-2017](http://shearithisrael.org/pack-a-thon-2017).



FROM THE DISTRIBUTOR THAT BROUGHT YOU  
“THE WOMEN’S BALCONY”  
*The Film Critics are Calling a “Must-See” and “A Masterpiece”*  
“1945”

Now playing at Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, with a special screening to be held at Shearith Israel, on  
Yom Hashoah, April 11.

On a summer day in 1945, an Orthodox man and his grown son arrive in a small village in Hungary while the villagers prepare for the wedding of the town clerk's son. The townspeople—suspicious, remorseful, fearful, and cunning—expect the worst and behave accordingly. A superb ensemble cast, lustrous black and white cinematography, and historically detailed art direction contribute to this eloquent drama.

**REGISTER NOW: Young Couples and Families Luncheon**  
**Shabbat, November 25 | Following Morning Services**  
Young couples and families are invited to a Thanksgiving Weekend Shabbat Lunch with Rabbi and Layalza Soloveichik & Co. Join us for a family-friendly afternoon of Torah and good company. For registration and sponsorship details, visit [shearithisrael.org/thanksgiving-luncheon](http://shearithisrael.org/thanksgiving-luncheon)

**SAVE THE DATE: Sisterhood Pre-Hanukkah Hands-On Jewelry Making Workshop**  
Sunday, December 3 | 4:00 pm

Please join the Sisterhood for a family-friendly workshop with hand-crafted jewelry designer Ofra. For adults and children 5 and older. Details to follow.

**SAVE THE DATE:**

**Shabbat Luncheon Featuring A Conversation Between Rabbi Soloveichik and Historian Andrew Porwancher**  
*The Jewish Friends and Clients of Alexander Hamilton*  
Saturday, December 9 | Following Morning Services

This extraordinary event will reveal incredible, little known details about Alexander Hamilton's relationships with Jews in New York, mostly members of Shearith Israel. We will discuss fascinating court cases in which Alexander Hamilton represented Jews, and the story of Jews at Columbia College, Hamilton's alma mater. Questions to be addressed include: How friendly was Alexander Hamilton with New York's Jews? How did his Jewish friends help form his own views about the future of the United States? Most tantalizingly, what do these relationships tell us about Jewish links in Hamilton's own past?

*Andrew Porwancher is the author of the forthcoming The Jewish Founding Father: The Secret Life of Alexander Hamilton, to be published by Harvard University Press.*

**Hebra Hased Va’Amet Screening of**  
*No. 17 is Anonymous*

**Sunday, November 19 | 4:00 pm**

Join the Hebra for this special screening of this Israeli documentary, set in the aftermath of a suicide bombing that killed 17 on a bus, in which all but one of the victims were identified. The filmmakers document the search to identify the man no one had reported missing.



*The film runs 75 minutes, and is in Hebrew with English subtitles.*

The screening will be followed by a discussion led by psychiatrist and Shearith Israel member, Dr. Rebecca Chaplan

(Nathan). **Childcare will be available** and light refreshments will be served. This event is FREE thanks to the Hebra's sponsorship, though registration is encouraged (and required for childcare). Donations to the Hebra are welcome. Visit [shearithisrael.org/Anonymous17](http://shearithisrael.org/Anonymous17) to sign up.

## COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Mazal Tob* to **Talia Berman** on becoming a Bat Mitzvah. Congratulations to her mother, **Sara Berman**, and her father, David Berman.

*Mazal Tob* to **Daniella Roberts** on becoming a Bat Mitzvah. Congratulations to her parents, **Joy Saleh and Bruce Roberts**.

*Thank you* to all our sponsors, donors, and contributors for this past week's Balfour Centennial lecture:

**Sponsor:** The Solomon Family

**Donor:** Lynette & Jonathan Tulkoff

**Chai Contributor:** Rachel and Dr. David Vorchheimer

**Contributor:** Warren R. Stern

*Hazakim U'Barukhim* to our participants in the NYC Marathon: **Shari Sussman Goldberg, Alex Levi, Samuel Neumark, and Amanda Schachter**.

*We mourn the loss of our member* **James Powell**. Condolences to his wife, **Connie Lu Powell**, and to his entire family.

Executive Director, **Barbara Reiss**, was quoted in *Atlas Obscura*, a guide to the worlds' wondrous and curious places, in their cover article about Louis Comfort Tiffany's forays into Judaica, including our sanctuary and stained glass windows. You can find the article at [shearithisrael.org/press](http://shearithisrael.org/press).