

Schedule for Fast of Tebeth, Tuesday, December 18

Fast begins: 5:46 am

Morning Services: 7:15 am

Minha & Arbit (with *tefillin*): 3:45 pm

Fast ends: 4:50 pm

Major Historical Lecture

Rabbi Meir Soloveichik

Monday, December 17 | 7:00 pm

Brexit and the Bible:

A Reflection on Nations, Empires and Jewish History

CHOIR SELECTIONS THIS SHABBAT

Friday Night (12/14)

V'Shameru (p. 166) | Samuel Naumberg (1817-1880)

Hazzan and Choirmaster at the Great Synagogue of Paris.

Psalms 23 (p. 174) | H. Pereira Mendes (1852-1937)

Minister of Shearith Israel from 1877-1937.

Shabbat Morning (12/15)

Yehi Hasdekha (p. 215) | Leon Hyman

Mr. Hyman has been the choirmaster of Shearith Israel since 1955.

Ubnuho Yomar (p. 218) | Salomon Sulzer (1804-1890)

Hazzan and composer of synagogue music in Vienna.

Adon Olam (p. 232) | Samuel de Sola (1839-1866)

Minister of Bevis Marks synagogue, London, from 1863-1866.

Public Tours

Our next public tour is
this Wednesday,
December 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.

DEBAR TORAH: WHEN JOSEPH TALKS, PEOPLE LISTEN

— Z. EDINGER —

This week's *parashah* contains the dramatic revelation of Joseph's true identity to his brothers. After learning that Pharaoh's vizier was actually their brother Joseph, the brothers are completely dumbfounded (45: 1-3). Joseph reassures them that it was God's plan to send him to Egypt and to raise him to a high position. Joseph also tells the brothers that he will take care of them and their father through the famine, and will settle them in the land of Goshen. During this relatively lengthy speech the brothers do not speak at all. Then Joseph says (45:12):

וְהִנֵּה עֵינֵיכֶם רְאוֹת וְעֵינַי אֲחֵי בְנֵימִין כִּי־פִי הַמְדַבֵּר אֶלְיָכֶם:

"Behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, for it is my mouth that is speaking to you."

What is the meaning of this verse? Why does Joseph tell his brothers to note "it is my mouth that is speaking to you"?

Onkelos translates the verse to mean that Joseph spoke to his brothers in Hebrew. This is also the interpretation given in the *Midrash (Bereshit Rabbah 93:10)*. Most classical commentaries follow this interpretation. In this verse, Joseph is trying to prove his identity to his brothers, he does so by speaking to them directly in Hebrew, their native tongue. Joseph is essentially saying 'See for yourself, I am speaking to you in Hebrew without the aid of my interpreter.' This is the explanation favored by a wide variety of classical commentaries, including: *Rashi, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, Radak*, and many others.

Ramban and *Ralbag*, however, reject this interpretation entirely. For them, Joseph could not have been trying to prove his identity by speaking in Hebrew. Hebrew was not a particularly rare or unique language spoken only among Abraham's family. In fact, says *Ramban*, Abraham didn't originally speak Hebrew, he learned it only after he left *Ur* and *Harra*. Hebrew is Canaanite, the language spoken in the land of Canaan. It must have been spoken by many people in Egypt at that time (see also Isaiah 19:18). We know that there were interpreters in Egypt who spoke Hebrew, there were probably many others as well. We also know that high officials in government often spoke many languages, especially the languages from neighboring countries in the region. No, it is not possible that Joseph was trying to prove his identity by speaking in Hebrew. Besides, he had already given to the brothers much stronger "proof" when he, as *Tzafnat Paneah* the Egyptian vizier, revealed his true name was Joseph and that he had been sold into slavery! This revelation should have been more than enough proof for the brothers. Joseph did not need to speak in Hebrew to prove his identity.

According to *Ramban* and *Ralbag*, the words "*ki pi hamedaber alekhem*" - "for it is my mouth speaking to you" - do not mean that Joseph was speaking in Hebrew, rather Joseph was showing his brothers that he was rich and powerful enough to support them in Egypt. Our verse should be read in context with verses 10 - 11. Joseph has promised his brothers that he will settle them, and their father, in the land of Goshen. He will even provide them all with financial support. In case the brothers should doubt Joseph's ability to make good on this promise, Joseph now tells them in verse 13 that they have already seen with their own eyes how powerful Joseph is. Believe me, Joseph informs the brothers, because it is my mouth speaking. There is no one more powerful in all of Egypt and what I command they will obey. To *Ramban* and *Ralbag*, the meaning of our verse is that when Joseph speaks, people listen.

36th ANNIVERSARY

• 5414 • 5779 •

CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL

Year of Years Celebration

CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL

The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

Shabbat Vayiggash

December 14-15, 2018

Hertz Pentateuch: p. 169; Haftarah p. 178
Kaplan Living Torah: p. 222; Haftarah p. 1086

CANDLE LIGHTING | 4:11 pm

EVENING SERVICES | 4:15 pm

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS | Rabbi Soloveichik | "*Ba'meh Madlikin Brought to Life: An Extraordinary Archeological Discovery*" | 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

SERMON | Rabbi Soloveichik | "The First Rabbi of the New World: The Epic Tale of Rabbi Isaac Aboab da Fonseca"

KIDDUSH LUNCHEON | Levy Auditorium | Sponsored by Vicki & Sam Katz, in honor of former MK Rabbi Haim Amsalem for his great work with "Zera Yisrael."

SHABBAT AFTERNOON SHIUR | Rabbi Soloveichik | 3:30 pm |

"Judaism and Josephism" | Levy Auditorium

EVENING SERVICES | 4:05 pm

HABDALA | 4:56 pm

PARENT-CHILD LEARNING & PIZZA | Rabbi Soloveichik | 6:30 pm | Elias Room

The fast of Tebeth is next Tuesday. See inside for full schedule.

Weekday Service Times

Mornings:

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

Evenings (Arbit only):

Sunday-Monday & Wednesday-Thursday: 6:30 pm

(see inside for Tuesday)

REMEMBERING BAGHDAD—

Between the Tigris and the Hudson:

Celebrating Iraqi Jewish Heritage at Shearith Israel

Special interview with Mr. Ezra Zilkha, and a panel discussion featuring Professor Carole Basri, Mr. David Dangoor, and Mr. David Lavipour

Sunday, December 16 | 7:00 pm

Join us for an unforgettable evening to hear about Jewish life in the cultured, progressive, and cosmopolitan city of Baghdad before WWII, the tragedy of the Farhud and the unprecedented IDF Airlift operation *Ezra & Nehemiah*.

Hear first-hand accounts of life in Baghdad from Jews who lived through it and about how this ancient community still survives in Israel and America today.

Includes a screening of the short film, "What We Left Behind" by Professor Henry Green.

This event is FREE, thanks to our generous sponsors. The special reception is has reached capacity, but if you would like to attend the program ONLY, visit shearithisrael.org/baghdad.



This program, which showcases the extraordinary diversity of our congregation throughout its history until today, is one of our many Year of Years, 365th Anniversary celebration events.

Pre-Pay Your 2019-2020 Dues

Through December 31

As we approach the end of 2018, and back by popular demand, we are again offering you another way to help the synagogue while potentially improving your own 2018 tax position.

Full, associate, and young members may pre-pay 2019-2020 dues at our current rates. If we receive your payment by December 31, 2018, you will be exempt from any dues increase that may be implemented in the upcoming year.

To pre-pay, go to shearithisrael.org/prepay2019.

PTTS Shabbaton 2.0

Shabbat, January 19

After the success of our first PTTS Shabbaton, we're happy to announce our second Shabbat morning where PTTS students are invited to take the lead in our Junior Congregation. And feel free to stick around by signing up for our Shabbat Shira Sing-Along Luncheon!

Calling CSI Teens

Like last time, we are looking for a few experienced Junior Congregation participants to mentor some of our PTTS students to help them prepare for this special event. This is a rewarding and fun chance to support our PTTS students, and can also be used to fulfill community service hours.

Contact Yona Glass at yglass@shearithisrael.org if you would like to help a PTTS student master their part.

Winter Coat Drive

Now Through December 31

Donate gently used coats for men, women, and children, to keep those in need warm this winter season. We will get them to *New York Cares*.

Drop off in the bin outside Levy Auditorium through December 31. (Tax receipts available upon request.)



COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Hazak u'Barukh to Marco DiLaurenti on being honored with the "Community Leadership Award" by the Rabbinical Seminary of America - *Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim*, in Queens.

Hazakot u'Barukhot to Meryl Jaffe and her daughter, Talia Hurwich, on the publication of their book, *Worth A Thousand Words: Using Graphic Novels to Teach Visual and Verbal Literacy*. The book is available on Amazon.com. For more information, including lesson plans, visit meryljaffe.com.

SAVE THE DATE: SHABBAT, JANUARY 19 | Registration coming soon

Shabbat Shira Sing-Along Luncheon

Featuring our talented musical triumvirate:

Hazzan Rabbi Ira Rohde, Associate Hazzan Rev. Philip L. Sherman, and Shamash, Zachary Edinger

Have you ever wished you were more familiar with Shearith Israel's unique liturgy and melodies? Do you ever have the urge to sing along with the Shearith Israel choir (or belt it out at your own home)? At this special Shabbat luncheon, join the uplifting voices of our clergy in discussing, learning, and singing classic Shearith Israel tunes in a laid-back, cozy atmosphere.

All ages are sure to enjoy what will undoubtedly be a chart-topping hit.

Stay tuned for registration and sponsorship details.

THIS SATURDAY NIGHT: Parent-Child Learning & Pizza

On 3 Saturday Nights:

THIS Shabbat, December 15

6:30 pm—Led by Rabbi Soloveichik

January 12 | 6:45 pm—Led by Rabbi Ira Rohde

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

For Elementary School Aged Children & Their Parents or Grandparents

This new initiative gives parents (or grandparents) the opportunity 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 December 15 session (only \$5 per person) at shearithisrael.org/parent-child-learning.

Mitzvot Workshops with Shamash, Z. Edinger

For All Elementary School Aged Children

Select Sunday Mornings at 10:00 am

Sunday, December 23 | 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 December 23 (it's FREE!) at shearithisrael.org/mitzvot-workshop.