

Schedule Alerts

- Hanukkah begins on Sunday evening (candle lighting: 4:32 pm).
- Our offices will be **closed** on December 25.
- PTTS is on hiatus next week for winter break. It will resume on **Thursday, January 2**.
- Toddler Program's Fall Semester concludes on **Monday, December 23**. Spring Semester begins on **Monday, January 6**.

CHOIR SELECTIONS THIS SHABBAT

Friday Night

V'Shameru #1 (p. 166) | Samuel Naumbourg

Psalm 23 (p. 174) | Leon Kramer

Shabbat Morning

Misheberakh (p. 208) | Leon Kramer

Tehilat #3 (p. 218) | Traditional

Choir Rehearsal

Next Friday, December 27 | Main Sanctuary | 3 pm

All are welcome to come watch the choir rehearse for Shabbat Hanukkah.

Stitch & Fix—Presented by the Sisterhood

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

See schedule below | Elias Room

Drop in, select an item from our synagogue vestments that needs mending, then stitch and fix. For questions, contact Rose Edinger at rgedinger@gmail.com.

Sunday Jan. 5 | Tuesday Jan. 7

Sunday Feb. 9 | Tuesday Feb. 11

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

We welcome new member **Roger Gerber** to our growing Shearith Israel family.

Mazal tob to Mrs. Lisa & Rabbi Ira Rohde on the upcoming marriage of their daughter, Ruth Malkah, to Steven Gotlib. The congregation is welcome to join their *Sheba Berachot* celebration on **Thursday, January 2**, following 6:30 evening services.

DEBAR TORAH

—AARON SCHWARTZ-MESSING, BET MIDRASH PROGRAM—

This week's *Parasha* begins with a single verse about Yaakov's return to Canaan, and immediately thereafter focuses on Yosef and his story. Rashi cites a *midrash* which sharpens the connection between these two seemingly unconnected topics: "*When Yaakov desired to live in serenity, the trouble of Yosef sprung upon him. When the righteous desire to live in serenity, the Holy One Blessed be He says 'Is the reward that awaits the righteous in The World to Come insufficient for them, such that they desire to live in serenity in this world?'*"

At first glance, this *midrash* is puzzling. Is it not understandable that Yaakov, who appears to have had the hardest life of all of the *Abot*, would want a break from his hardship? Is needing a break indeed a punishable offense? Was Moshe not criticized by Yithro for pushing himself too hard: "*But Moshe's father-in-law said to him, The thing you are doing is not right; you will surely wear yourself out...*" (*Shemot* 18:17-18).

The answer to this question lies in Hashem's statement at the end of the *midrash* above: *the Holy One, Blessed be He, says 'Is the reward that awaits the righteous in The World to Come insufficient for them, such that they desire to live in serenity in this world?'*" It is natural - and indeed obligatory - for people to take breaks to replenish their strength. Human beings need pleasure and comfort. The trouble lies in how this comfort is viewed.

It is taught *Pirkei Abot*: (4:16) *Rabbi Yaakov said: this world is like a vestibule before the world to come; prepare yourself in the vestibule, so that you may enter the banqueting-hall.* Our goal in this world is not to have a good time, but rather to prepare ourselves and those around us for the World to Come. When pleasure becomes the reward, an end in and of itself, that is where the trouble lies. When life becomes a pleasure-seeking endeavor, one is in danger of losing sight of the ultimate goal.

This is why God couldn't let Yaakov live in serenity. He saw in Yaakov's desire to live in serenity an element of pleasure-seeking, not merely as a means to replenish his energy and double-down in his *Abodat Hashem*, but rather for its own sake. God, out of his love and dedication to Yaakov, saw that it would be spiritually damaging to allow the righteous Yaakov to begin down this dangerous path.

Although we may not be on the level of Yaakov Avinu, we can still learn a valuable lesson from his experience. Even though comfort and pleasure play an important role in our daily lives, we should always remember that they are not the reward, not an end in and of themselves, but rather tools that we can use to elevate ourselves, and catalysts to bring holiness into our lives and the lives of those around us.



• 5414 • 5779 •
CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL
Year of Years Celebration

CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

Shabbat Vayesheb December 20-21, 2019

Hertz Pentateuch: p. 141; Haftarah p. 152
Kaplan Living Torah: p. 182; Haftarah p. 1082

CANDLE LIGHTING | 4:13 pm

EVENING SERVICES (MINHA & ARBIT) | 4:15 pm | Main Sanctuary

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | "The Golem vs. Shabbat" | 2019-2020 season sponsored by the Julis Family.

ZEMIROT | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary

SHAHARIT | 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

LECTURE | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | "What Did the Original Menorah Look Like?"

KIDDUSH | Levy Auditorium | *Kiddush is sponsored anonymously in honor of Liz Rios. All Honor Roll contributions will go to support our Youth Programming. See Honor Roll for full listings.*

SHABBAT AFTERNOON HANUKKAH SHIUR | 3:30 pm | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | Levy Auditorium

EVENING SERVICES (MINHA & ARBIT) | 4:05 pm

HABDALA | 4:58 pm

Hanukkah begins on Sunday night.

Our offices will be closed on December 25. See below for service changes.

Weekday Service Times

Mornings: Sunday & Wednesday (December 25): 8:00 AM

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, & Friday: 7:15 AM

Evenings: Sunday (Minha & Arbit): 4:15 PM

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

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

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

After Shearith Israel's highly attended *Smash The Stigma* event last year, we knew there was a deep communal need for more mental health oriented events, and we are proud to be a part of this one.

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. The training will be a mixture of lecture style and breakout sessions, facilitated by a mental health professional. Lunch will be provided.

This event is FREE, but space is limited to 60 participants, so sign up today!

To register, visit shearithisrael.org/mental-health-training.

Parent-Child Learning & Pizza

Saturday Nights bi-weekly | One hour after Habdala

Next Session will be Hanukkah-themed on December 28, and will be led by Rabbi Meir Soloveichik

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/pclearning so that we can know how many to expect!

Public Tours

Our next public tour is
Wednesday, January 8, at
11:00 AM

Parnas Office Hours

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

THIS SHABBAT MORNING

Kiddush In Honor of Liz Rios

Shabbat, December 21 | Following Morning Services

Generations of children who have passed through Shearith Israel have experienced the warmth, creativity, and enthusiasm of our tireless Tot Shabbat and Toddler Program leader, Liz Rios. Join us as we present Liz with a special thank-you gift as a token of our appreciation.

We love you, Liz!

Film Screening: Children of the Inquisition

with special guest speaker, Rabbi Marc Angel

Saturday Night, January 4 | 7:30 pm

At Lincoln Square Synagogue, 180 Amsterdam Ave

Shearith Israel and Lincoln Square are proud to present a screening of this remarkable film about the history and experiences of Sephardi Jews following the Spanish & Portuguese expulsions and the descendants of crypto-Jews all the way to our time. After the film, **Rabbi Marc Angel** will speak about the religious issues surrounding identity, conversion. and his own work with modern-day descendants of crypto-Jews.

\$15 in advance, \$20 at the door. To register, visit shearithisrael.org/children-inquisition.

Pre-Pay Your 2020-2021 Dues

Through December 31

As we approach the end of 2019, and back by popular demand, we are again offering you another way to help the synagogue while potentially improving your own 2019 tax position. Full, associate, and young members may pre-pay 2020-2021 dues at our current rates. If we receive your payment by December 31, 2019, you will be exempt from any dues increase that may be implemented in the upcoming year.

To pre-pay, go to shearithisrael.org/prepay2020.

ONLY A FEW SPOTS LEFT

Mark Twain In the Holy Land

Sunday, February 2 | 11:30 am & 12:30 pm

At The New-York Historical Society

Mark Twain's memoir of his tour of the Holy Land launched his career; his experiences are particularly fascinating when considered from the perspective of Jewish history and religion. Join Rabbi Meir Soloveichik for a tour on the final day of the New-York Historical Society's exhibit on Twain's trip through the Mediterranean.

Registration is currently open to sponsors only (\$180) at shearithisrael.org/nyhs-twain.

JEWISH EDUCATION 5780

- ⇒ **Friday Night Lights | Rabbi Soloveichik**
Friday Nights | Following Evening Services
- ⇒ **Shabbat Afternoon Class | Rabbi Soloveichik**
Shabbat Afternoons | One hour before Mincha (*but never earlier than 3:30 pm*)
- ⇒ **The Guide to the Duties of the Heart | Rabbi Sjimon den Hollander**
Sunday Mornings | 8:45 am | Following 8:00 am morning services
- ⇒ **The Road to Kingship | Rabbi David Silber**
Sunday Mornings | 10:00 am | *final session this Sunday*
- ⇒ **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

RABBI SOLOVEHICK'S UPCOMING MAJOR LECTURES:

Mark Your Calendars and Watch Your Emails

Following Evening Services

- ⇒ **Wednesday, January 8:** *"From Mitzrayim To Manhattan: What the Metropolitan Museum Teaches Us About the Exodus"*
- ⇒ **Monday, February 10:** Special History Lecture
- ⇒ **Tuesday, March 3:** Major Pre-Purim Shiur

YOUTH CORNER

- ⇒ **Upcoming Parent-Child Learning & Pizza**
 - Saturday, December 28 | One hour after habdala | Led by Rabbi Soloveichik
 - Saturday, January 11 | Led by Z. Edinger | Register for each session at shearithisrael.org/pclearning
- ⇒ **Mitzvot Workshop with Z. Edinger**
Sunday, January 5 | 10:00 am | *for elementary school aged children* | Register at shearithisrael.org/mitzvot-workshop
- ⇒ **Brunch & Learn with Rabbi Soloveichik**
Sunday, February 9 | 10:30 am | *for elementary school aged children* | Register at shearithisrael.org/brunch-learn