Visiting Hazzan, Jonathan Garcia

- On Friday night, pre-registered guests enjoy Shabbat dinner, featuring guest hazzan, Jonathan Garcia, who will be joining us from London. 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, sharing melodies and stories from the London Sephardic tradition.
- On Shabbat morning, Hazzan Garcia will return to lead Musaf at morning services.

SEASON FINALE: Parent-Child Learning & Pizza

Saturday Nights bi-weekly | One hour after Havdalah
Final Session of the Season:
February 22, led by Rabbi Rohde
The program is free, but please register for this session at shearithisrael.org/pCHILD so we can know how many to expect.
Parent-Child Learning is sponsored by the Shearith Israel Synagogue.

UPCOMING SISTERHOOD PROGRAMMING

Stitch & Fix
Bi-Monthly on Sundays & Tuesdays | 10am-12pm
THIS Sunday, Feb. 23 | THIS Tuesday, Feb. 25
Sunday, March 15 | Tuesday, March 17
For anyone handy with a needle and thread—teenagers welcome!
Join our Sewing Circle to repair and restore our beautiful Shearith Israel vestments to their original glory! If you’d like to participate or have questions, contact Rose Edinger (rogedinger@gmail.com).
Visit shearithisrael.org/stitch-fix for additional dates.

Sisterhood Tambourine Workshop
Sunday, March 1 | 10:00am-12:00 pm
Miriam Liebermann, MSW, author, community activist, and inspirational speaker, will conduct this tambourine-dancing 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.

DEBAR TORAH

―STEVEN ROHDE GOLDBERG, BEIT MIDRASH COORDINATOR—

Then he took the record of the covenant and read it aloud to the people. And they said, “All that the LORD has spoken, we will faithfully do!”

(Translation from sefaria.org)

Sforso explains the language of the above quote, which can also read as the people saying that “we will do what we’re told first and hear about the specifics later,” as meaning that the Israelites were so eager to accept God’s commands that they didn’t even think about the potential rewards for it. But what was it that made the Israelites so eager to follow God’s words? What made them so passionate that they were willing to do so before even contemplating the rewards they could be offered? The answer lies in what philosophers have come to call “The Kuzari Principle.”

What is this principle? The Kuzari was compiled by Yehuda HaLevi around 1140. It presents the King of the Khazars, who wishes to determine which religion is correct by examining the philosophical arguments of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In his argument for Judaism, the rabbi explains that the Jewish people are unique because they possess an intimate relationship with God, “first from personal experience, and afterwards through uninterrupted tradition, which is equal to the former.” The personal experience referenced is the mass revelation at Mt. Sinai where God initially revealed Himself not just to Moses but to each and every person at once. This kind of personal knowledge of God is so powerful that no one could bring themselves to doubt His legitimacy. Based on this, the Kuzari Principle asserts that the tradition which spawned from that pure acceptance is then just as legitimate as the initial revelation.

Over the years, the Kuzari Principle has been at the center of many debates between religious Jews and atheists. The latter tend to argue that the argument of a mass revelation centuries ago is not sufficient to prove that the Bible is accurate or that God exists. What these debates miss, however, is what the Kuzari Principle is really trying to teach. Yehuda HaLevi did not pen his argument in the hopes of presenting irrefutable proof that God exists to people who do not want to believe in Him. Rather, he wrote it to demonstrate to those who already believe in Him that the Jewish people have a unique personal history with God which has not repeated itself (and, in fact, cannot repeat itself) with any other group of people. While Christianity and Islam may claim their own prophets, everyone acknowledges that only the Israelites met God individually and therefore possess an unending personal relationship with Him. That personal relationship has traveled down the generations via our tradition and has now landed in our hands, presenting us and our families with the incredible gift of being able to continue that legacy. May we each have the strength and blessing (Hashak U’Barukh) to continue the passion of our ancestors by walking into the challenges and opportunities of life hand-in-hand with God. Shabbat Shalom.

CANDLE LIGHTING | 5:19 pm
EVENING SERVICES (MINHA & ARBIT) | 5:30 pm | Main Sanctuary
HAZANNU DINNER FEATURING GUEST HAZZAN, JONATHAN GARCIA | Levy Auditorium | for pre-registered guests
ZEMIROTH | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary
SHAHIRAT | 9:15 am
MUSAF | led by Guest Hazzan, Jonathan Garcia
TOT SHABBAT | Ages 0-4 | 10:00 am | Fidanic Youth Room
YOUTH GROUPS | Ages 5-12 | 10:00 am | Elsea Room
JR. CONGREGATION | Ages 5-12 | 10:30 am | Little Synagogue
SERMON | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | “The Woman Who Saved the Davidic Dynasty: An Incredible and Uncelebrated Tale from Tanakh”
KIDDUSH | Levy Auditorium | Sponsored by Emma & Joel bliss
SHABBAT AFTERNOON CLASS | 4:15 pm | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | “Eating: A Theology” | Levy Auditorium
EVENING SERVICES (MINHA & ARBIT) | 5:15 pm
HABDALA | 6:10 pm
SEASON FINALE: PARENT-CHILD LEARNING & PIZZA | led this week by Rabbi Rohde | 7:15 pm | Elsea Room | for elementary school aged children

Ros Hodesh Adar is on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Weekday Service Times
Mornings: Sunday: 8:00 AM | Monday-Friday: 7:15 AM
Evenings: Sunday (Minha & Arbit): 5:30 PM
Monday-Thursday (Arbit only): 6:30 PM

Public Tours
Our next public tour is Wednesday, March 11, at 11:00 AM

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

Central Park West at 70th Street, New York City • www.shearithisrael.org
Major Pre-Purim Shiur
Rabbi Meir Soloveichik
Tuesday, March 3 | Following Evening Services

CSI YOUTH PRESENTS: “Esther Saves The Day!”
A Purim Puppet Show from WonderSpark Puppets
Monday Evening, March 9 | 7:00 pm | Elias Room
When the evil Haman threatens the Jews of Persia, it’s up to the brave Esther and her clever uncle Mordecai to save the day in this Purim Shpiel. It’s the Purim story as you’ve never seen it before!
This show is for all children to enjoy while parents attend 7:15 pm megillah reading. Children under 5 must be accompanied by an adult.
If you would like to sponsor this year’s Purim Youth Programming, visit shearithisrael.org/wonderspark.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS
Annual Purim Dinner
Monday Evening, March 9 | following 7:15 megillah reading
Dinner details and pricing coming soon.

Don’t forget to give Matanot L’Evyonim
One of the mitzvot of Purim is to give charity to the poor. Matanot L’Evyonim. You can easily fulfill this mitzvah through the Rabbi’s Discretionary Fund. Donate online at shearithisrael.org/matanot, or send a check made out exactly to “Cong. Shearith Israel Rabbis Discretionary Fund” (in the memo, write: “Purim”). Your gifts will be distributed by Rabbi Soloveichik Purim to those in need.

LAST CHANCE to Join Our
Women’s Megillah Reading!
Megillah Reading Purim Morning, Tuesday, March 10 | 8:00 am
Rehearsals THIS Sunday, Feb. 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. Contact Mrs. Lisa Rohde at lirohde.csi@gmail.com as soon as possible for an assignment if you’d like to participate.