

PESAH 5777

Sale of *Hametz*

If you would like to appoint Rabbi Meir Soloveichik as agent to sell your *Hametz* before Pesah, please fill out the form at shearithisrael.org/hametz before Thursday, April 9 at 9 am.

Maot Hittim

In the opening paragraph of the Haggadah, we read: "All who are hungry, let them come and eat." As part of experiencing freedom ourselves, we must also ensure that our fellow Jews have the means to celebrate freedom too. *Maot Hittim* is a special Passover fund, originally intended to provide the poor with matzah. Make an online donation by filling out the form at shearithisrael.org/maothittm or by making out a check exactly to "Congregation Shearith Israel—Rabbi's Discretionary Fund" with "Maot Hittim" in the memo.

Pre-Pesah Dinner

Friday, April 7 | Following Evening Services

Ease your Pesah preparations and join us for a lovely buffet dinner. Preferred pricing for members. Register at shearithisrael.org/pre-pesah-shabbat-dinner.

Teen Girls Shir Hashirim Reading Saturday, April 15 | Fifth Day of Pesah

After musaf, the teen girls of our synagogue, are invited to take part in our unique tradition as they read The Song of Songs for the congregation in the Main Sanctuary after services. Full preparation and training provided. Newcomers welcome! For information, and to participate, please contact Yehudit Robinson at yehuditrobinson@gmail.com. To sponsor the Kiddush in the girls' honor go to shearithisrael.org/teen-girls-shir-hashirim-2017

Parnas Office Hours

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

Our Next Public Tour is:
Wednesday, May 10 at 11:00 am
No tour in April due to Pesah

The Fabric of Jewish Life Rabbi Ira Rohde, Hazzan

"All the most skilled-hearted craftsmen workmen made the Tabernacle of ten tapestries of twined linen, together with sky-blue, dark red, and crimson wool, [brocaded with] cherubs. All the tapestries were the same size, 28 cubits long and four cubits wide. He sewed the [first] five tapestries together, and he sewed the [other] five. He made loops of blue wool on the edge of the innermost tapestry of the second group [of five]. There were 50 loops on the first tapestry, and 50 on its counterpart on the second group. With all the loops [on one side] parallel to those [on the other side]. And he made 50 gold fasteners to attach [the sets of] tapestries together, and the Tabernacle became one (Ex. 36:8-13)."

The Tabernacle, God's desert Abode, was, after all, a tent, and a tent is made largely of fabric. There are wooden supporting beams, sitting in metal sockets, with metal fasteners, usually interpreted as hooks, at the top, from which to hang the tapestries. But until I taught these Parashiyot in some depth to two Bar-Mitzvah students last year, I had not really appreciated that actually what Mishkan consisted of and what really held everything together and made it one unit were nothing but sheets and sheets of fabric and their fastenings. The Kaplan translation of cherubs "brocaded" into the fabric reminded me of the Tuesday Sisterhood meetings in my early days at the synagogue at which old women from different backgrounds all sat together with their brocaded fabrics preparing Torah-covers and other drapings for the synagogue.

What does it mean for us that the Ideal Abode of God described in the Torah, what binds it all together, is fabric – a tent? In later years, David and his son Solomon build the Temple out of solid materials, saying that it wasn't fitting that God's dwelling was cloth tapestry while the king dwelled in a solid house. But that move always remained problematic, symbolic as it was of the problematic of replacing the rule of rotating chieftains with a permanent dynasty. The attempt to build a permanent dynasty as well as of a permanent Temple ended up dividing the nation.

The hangings, screens, and curtains of a tent provide needed barriers of separation and protection. They are "mehitzot," dividers, keeping what we don't want out and providing a secure environment to nurture that which lies within. Kabbalists refer to This World as "*Olam haMehitzot*," – The World of Dividers." In Our World we must concern ourselves firstly and foremost with protection and separation. Take away the barriers and you don't have a building, for you have taken away the protective structure, and the whole building is open to collapse. But fabric barriers and screens have a flexibility about them which more fixed structures do not have. They have some capacity to bend and give under ordinary conditions. They are also thinner and more ethereal dividers. They sketch out a form rather than impose it. They are closer to being theoretical rather than hard and solid walls. The Torah describes the math of the dimensions of these tapestries, but much less about the actual crafting of their materials.

The *tekhelet*, which Kaplan here translates as "sky-blue" wool, is supposed to reflect the firmament of the heavenly sky stretched out over us. (This tradition is reflected to this day in the sky-blue ceiling of our Little Synagogue.) The less-firm structure reminds us that it is God who founded and stretched forth the earth and the "tent" of the sky upon whom we truly rely for support, not upon the seeming material solidity of man. The great phenomenologist of religion Mircea Eliade in his book examines the most traditional religious structures and finds these types of motifs in common. The sacred space must reflect and be in harmony with the laws and dimensions of Nature.

Through the Torah's more primitive setting in the desert, living in tents, we come to understand and appreciate the more theoretical elements of life and law more clearly. Stripped of their material coverings and complications, we come to appreciate the most sophisticated concepts and resolve issues into basic, solvable problems. Solid walls seem more secure but the sense of security they offer can be false, and their solidity itself can even invite attack. Oddly, the more primitive trust in pure structure and Divine order is often more secure. Josephus and Philo, and, following them, Eusebius, liken the Jews to the Spartans among the Greeks, with their ascetic attempt to remain more primitive in their ways. The Spartans, according to Plato, also only worshipped one god – Apollo, whose oracle at Delphi gave their system of law to their lawgiver, Lycurgus. The Spartans were famous for revering and imitating primitive ways, even as their society became more civilized. The Spartans, at one time, did not even build city walls. "Our men are our walls!" – such was their claim.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL

The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

Shabbat Vayaqhel-Pequde-HaHodesh

March 24-25, 2017

Hertz Pentateuch: Vayaquel-Pequde p. 375, HaHodesh p. 253 ; Haftarah p. 1002
Kaplan Living Torah: Vayaquel-Pequde p. 464, HaHodesh p. 308 ;
Haftarah p. 1284

CANDLE LIGHTING | 6:55 pm

MINHAH | 6:45 pm

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS: HAGGADAH EDITION | Following evening services | Rabbi Soloveichik gives a talk on the topic "Lincoln's Beard and Elazar Ben Azaryah's" | 2016-2017 season sponsored by the Julis Family | This week is sponsored by Barbara Reiss in memory of her father, Moshe bar Gedalia, on the occasion of his 40th nahala

ZEMIROT | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary

SHAHARIT (NISHMAT) | 9:00 am | Rabbi Soloveichik delivers a lecture on the topic "The Greatest Pesah Stories in American History"

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

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

JR. CONGREGATION | Ages 5-12 | 10:30 am | Little Synagogue

KIDDUSH | Levy Auditorium

SEUDAH SHELISHIT AND PRE-PESAH AFTERNOON SHIUR |

Rabbi Soloveichik on the topic "The Incredible Evolution of the Seder Plate" | 5:50 pm | Levy Auditorium | Spring semester is sponsored anonymously in memory of Irma Cardozo

MINHAH/ARBIT | 6:50 pm

HABDALAH | 7:49 pm

Weekday Service Times

Mornings: Sunday: 8:00 AM, Monday-Friday: 7:15 AM
Evenings (Minhah & Arbit): Sunday– Thursday: 6:30 PM

UPCOMING EVENTS AND INITIATIVES

Wine and Cheese:

A Pre-Pesah Educulinary Event with Rabbi Soloveichik
This Wednesday, March 29 | 7:00 pm
RSVP Deadline: Midnight, This Monday, March 27



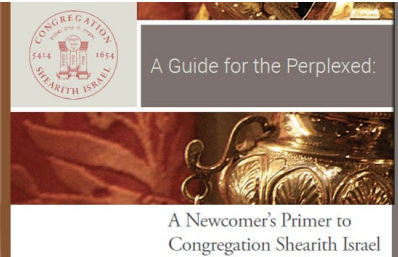
Say “Cheese!” In the tradition of our past stand-out “educulinary” events, we are delighted to bring you a spirited and educational wine and cheese pairing party. We will sample a spectrum of wines carefully paired with a wide range of goat, sheep, and cow cheeses. We will learn about the biblical sources and Israeli history of wine production by Israel’s pioneer vintner, **Yacov ben Dor of Yatir wineries**, learn about quality kosher cheese making from, “**The Cheese Guy**”, **Brent Delman**, hear about the amazing gastronomical advances in Israel’s wine and cheese culture, all moderated and peppered with Torah and halakha by our own **Rabbi Soloveichik**. Register at shearithisrael.org/wine_and_cheese. Wines and kosher for Passover cheeses will be offered for purchase.

Announcing a Very Special Shabbaton
Learn History. Celebrate History. MAKE History
in Washington DC and Monticello
Friday, May 5 - Sunday, May 7

Join this truly once in a lifetime opportunity to make history with Rabbi Soloveichik as we conduct the first ever *hashcabah* (memorial service) for Rachel Phillips Levy, Shearith Israel forebear, and the only Jew buried on the grounds of Monticello. Spaces are highly limited. For details, terms, and registration go to shearithisrael.org/Monticello.



NEW: Pick Up a Copy of CSI’s Guide for the Perplexed
Ever find yourself sitting in our services and wondering about one of our unique customs? Check out our attractive and user-friendly new “Guide for the Perplexed: A Newcomer’s Primer for Congregation Shearith Israel.”
Hard copies available at the synagogue.



Shearith Israel is a Proud Sponsor of
American Sephardi Federation’s
New York Sephardic Jewish Film Festival
March 30– April 6, 2017
Nysephardifilmfestival.org



A Shabbat Hagadol Derasha
by *Rabbi Meir Soloveichik*

Next Saturday, April 1, 2017
(a week before Shabbat Hagadol)
Following Morning Services



The IDF’s First Pesah: A 1948 Seder Story

WEEKDAY JUDAIC EDUCATION

For details go to: shearithisrael.org/judaic-education

Sunday

◇ **Saadiah Gaon's Book of Beliefs and Opinions** | Sjimon den Hollander | 8:45 am |

Monday, Wednesday, & Thursday

◇ **Habruta (Paired) Learning** | 5:15 pm - 7:15 pm | Before and after evening services, Rabbi Chaim Yanetz and rabbinical students from YU are available in the Elias Room to study in *habruta* with congregants of all ages.

Tuesday

◇ **Minyan Class and Breakfast** | Following Morning Services | *Sponsored by Chaim Katzap*

◇ **Feasts and Fasts: The Festivals in Jewish Thought - A Class for Women** | Rabbi Soloveichik | 9:00 am | *Spring semester is sponsored anonymously in memory of Debby Neumark*

◇ **Talmud Class: Tractate Sanhedrin** | Rabbi Soloveichik | 7pm

Wednesday

◇ **Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Shearith Israel: A Monthly Q & A** | Z. Edinger | 7:00 pm | On select Wednesdays | Email questions to zedinger@shearithisrael.org.

To sponsor a single class or an entire semester,
go to shearithisrael.org/sponsoraaclass

To find out when your favorite class is held, canceled or for special topics, go to
shearithisrael.org/join-our-mailing-lists
to select which emails you’d like to receive.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome New Members to the Shearith Israel Family:
Jacqueline Carter and Andrew Klaber
Paul Kurlansky
Rabbi Steven Nemetz

Mazal Tob to **Rabbi Meir Soloveichik** upon the marriage of his sister, Nechama Soloveichik to Menachem Wecker this past Monday.

Hazak U'barukh to **Rabbi Chaim Yanetz** upon earning the title, "Yadin Yadin", the highest form of semikhah, bestowed to only three newly ordained rabbis at YU's Hag Hasemikha this past Sunday.