The famous story of the death of Aaron’s sons Nadab and Abihu is placed in the middle of the Inauguration Ceremonies for the Priesthood. Priests must, of course, always follow orders strictly and the punishments for them can be severe. But the occurrence of Nadab and Abihu’s death at the very outset of the Priesthood had special significance. It may indeed have been only a “beginner’s mistake” which they committed, but because it occurred at the inauguration it set important precedents and its consequences had to be grave. As the Hebrew expression goes: “כל התחלות קשות” “All beginnings are hard.”

Even the best beginnings, the ones which go off flawlessly, often require untold sacrifices just to get to that beginning in the first place. And after those preliminary sacrifices have been made, it is not unusual for missteps to occur. Those “beginners’ mistakes” are often serious enough to derail the whole project. I often wondered what gave Aaron the fortitude to persevere and continue with the Inauguration after his great loss. And what made Moses so inhumanely insistent about continuing with the Investiture as planned, not allowing Aaron and his children to mourn? But had they stopped the investiture at that point, the whole procedure would have had to be repeated. Too much had been “Invested” in this Investiture to allow it to be derailed. They had no choice but to proceed, or else the sacrifices already made would be in vain.

Aaron’s famous silent perseverance upon the incident of his sons’ deaths, it occured to me as I read the section this week, has to be understood in this Inaugural context. Sometimes there are “false starts” which should cause us to rethink a course of action we have begun. At other times, so much has been invested and the consequences of stopping are so severe that there can be no going back. The entire Exodus from Egypt was, indeed, a project from which there was no going back. The threats made by Israelite factions to return to Egypt were never realistic nor credible. And even here in this more ritualistic context, too much had been sacrificed and expended already to stop and turn back. A huge amount of resources had been spent on the Tabernacle in general, and even more on the Inauguration ceremonies themselves. Our Parasha’s title, Shemini, meaning the “Eighth” Day of the Inauguration, highlights the “lateness” of this incident. The seven days of purification had successfully passed. The ceremonies on the Eighth Day had just successfully been drawn to a climax as Moses and Aaron blessed the people and the Glory of God was revealed in the Divine Fire which consumed the sacrifices. It was far too late to allow for any further delay. The first missteps indeed actually coincided with the first success. At that point, the only way was to proceed forward to completion. Despite the enormity of Aaron’s sacrifice, The Show Must Go On. Although the consequences of Aaron’s sons’ missteps devastated their father, it was “Too Late to Turn Back Now.” Aaron and his remaining sons were now full-fledged Priests. They were now officially on-the-job, and would have to learn what they needed while continuing on-the-job, for better or for worse.
**THIS SHABBAT**

5782 SEASON FINALE  
*Friday Night Lights*  
This Friday | IN PERSON with Rabbi Meir Soloveichik  
Following 7:00 pm Evening Services with the Shearith Israel Choir  
2021-2022 Season of *Friday Night Lights* is sponsored by the Julis-Rabinowitz family

Shabbat Afternoon Class  
Rabbi Meir Soloveichik  
This Shabbat | IN PERSON | 6:10 pm | 45 minutes before Evening Services

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**COMING UP**

**STARTS IN 1 WEEK - REGISTER NOW!**  
**Karate For Kids**  
Taught by Sifu Eddie Kelen, White Crane Martial Arts  
For children in grades 3 - 7 and their parents (optional) | On Paved Paradise  
Four sessions on Sunday mornings: April 3 & 10; May 15 & 22

Join Sifu Eddie Kelen, a fourth-degree black belt in Karate and a master of T’ai Chi, in this introductory youth Karate course! In the Karate classes that he has specifically designed for children, students learn to increase their concentration, self control, calmness, self defense skills, physical coordination, responsibility, and street smarts. Children develop these skills through the use of martial arts games, stretches and strengthening exercises, self defense techniques, inspirational Karate stories, and meditation.

*Details and registration, visit shearithisrael.org/karate-kids.*

**Mets Game Outing**  
*Sponsored by the Lewin Family*  
Sunday, May 15 | 1:00 pm | Citi Field

Now that the baseball season is back on schedule, Shearith Israel youth and their families are invited on this highly subsidized trip to watch the Mets play the Mariners – only $15 a ticket (actual ticket price: $40)! First come, first served, while supplies last.

*Registration now open to members only at shearithisrael.org/mets.*

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**COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mazal tob to **Elie Sasson**, son of **Sharon & Rafe Sasson**, upon becoming a Bar Mitzvah. We look forward to celebrating with you next month!

Congratulations to **Avi Friedman**, son of **Zoya Raynes & Naftali Friedman**, on qualifying for the national finals of the Chidon HaTzanaach (International Bible competition). Best of luck!

Condolences to **Hayyim Obadyah**, upon the passing of his brother, James H. Thomas III.

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**Election Results**

Congratulations to Rabbi Soloveichik, Rabbi Rohde, and Rev. Edinger upon being re-elected to their constitutional positions of Hazzan, Shohet, and Shamash, respectively.

Congratulations, also, to our newly voted-in electors:

- Isabelle Levy
- Nugzari Jakobishvili
- Scott Shay

Several dozen electors participated in the meeting via zoom. We encourage you to welcome our new electors, and we look forward to having them sign their names in our historic book.