

## בצאתי ממצרים — WHEN I LEFT EGYPT:

### Celebrating Egyptian Jewish Heritage at Shearith Israel

Wednesday, May 8 | 7:00 pm

Please join us for an evening celebrating Egyptian Jewish Heritage at Shearith Israel. This very special event will take place on the eve of Yom HaAtzmaut — itself a seminal moment that changed the lives of the Jews of Egypt.

Moderated by Rabbi Soloveichik, the program will feature presentations by noted author, Andre Aciman, personal reminiscences from Emy Cohenca and her family, a panel discussion and more. The evening will also include light traditional refreshments and an exhibit about Jewish life in Egypt, curated by our partner, the American Sephardi Federation, featuring photographs and artifacts loaned for the occasion by members of Shearith Israel. A special commemorative booklet highlighting family histories and photographs of Jewish life in Egypt will be distributed to all attendees.

Register for only \$5 at [shearithisrael.org/egypt-heritage](http://shearithisrael.org/egypt-heritage).

We are currently collecting submissions for our commemorative booklet—if you would like to share your family's story and photographs from their time in Egypt, please submit them for consideration to [zedinger@shearithisrael.org](mailto:zedinger@shearithisrael.org) by April 5.



*This program is one of our many Year of Years, 365th Anniversary events, showcasing the extraordinary diversity of our congregation and community.*

## CHOIR SELECTIONS THIS SHABBAT

### Friday Night

*V'Shameru* “#1” (p. 166) | Samuel Naumbourg  
*Psalm 23* (p. 174) | Leon Kramer

### Shabbat Morning

*Yehi Hasdekha* (p. 215) | Leon Hyman  
*Tehilat* “#3” (p. 216) | Traditional  
*U'benuho Yomar* (p. 218) | Salomon Sulzer

## UNAVOIDABLE DANGERS

— Z. EDINGER —

In this week's Parasha we read of the mysterious death of the sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu. “*Now Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu each took his fire pan, put fire in it, and laid incense on it; and they offered before the LORD alien fire, which He had not enjoined upon them. And fire came forth from the Lord and consumed them; thus they died in front of the Lord*” (Lev. 10:1-2).

Why did Nadab and Abihu die? The Torah makes clear that it has something to do with the strange fire that they offered before God. But the reason why their actions caused their death is a mystery. This mystery has caused all who study this portion discomfort. For it seems that Nadab and Abihu were trying to do something good—to worship God. Why should their efforts (even if not commanded or improperly done) be worthy of death?

Rabbinic and Midrashic traditions offer at least 12 different interpretations of what sin the brothers committed:

1. They came too close to the divine presence, or entered too far into the Tabernacle.
2. Their offering was improper, or their incense was improperly made.
3. They brought an impure fire from an oven.
4. They brought their offering while drunk with wine.
5. They did not properly wash their hands and feet before approaching the Holy place.
6. They were naked or otherwise not wearing the proper Priestly vestments.
7. They presumed to decide the Law in front of Moses.
8. They failed to consult with one another (or with Moses) before their actions.
9. They did not have children.
10. They refused to marry, because they thought no woman was worthy enough.
11. They were arrogant and wished to replace Aaron and Moses.
12. They gazed directly upon the Divine presence.

These explanations are brought down in a variety of *midrashim*—especially the *Sifra* and *Pesikta deRab Kahana*. They fall into two major categories. The first six all relate to improper performance of the ritual. The last six are related improper haughtiness or presumptuousness.

A different view completely can be found in the writings of Philo: *It is thus that the priests Nadab and Abihu die in order that they may live, receiving an incorruptible life in exchange for mortal existence, and being translated from the created to the uncreated. Over them a proclamation is uttered betokening immortality, "They died before the Lord" (Lev. 10:2), that is, "They came to life," for a corpse may not come into God's presence. De Fuga*

For Philo, Nadab and Abihu were not punished with death, but rather rewarded for their zealous offering by their souls being released from this world directly into the World to Come.

This interpretation is perhaps behind another strand in some *midrashim* that seem to praise Nadab and Abihu. Thus we find in the *Sifra*: “*And the sons of Aaron took*”: *When they saw the new fire, they, in their joy, wanted to add love to love so they took [their own fire]: "taking" is nothing other than joy.*”

Their deaths being seen as a kind of reward for their zealousness seems to be indicated by yet another tradition found in the *Sifra*: “*The Holy One Blessed be He said to them: I will honor you more than you have honored Me. You have brought before Me an impure fire; I will burn you with a pure fire.*”

Ultimately, we cannot understand why Nadab and Abihu were killed. It remains a mystery. Personally, I prefer to think of this incident not in terms of divine punishment (or reward). Rather, I imagine that there are some things in this world that are inherently dangerous, regardless of one's intent. These need to be handled with care and to be kept at a distance.

Our late minister, Dr. Mendes, in his book for children, “Jewish History Ethically Presented,” wrote: “*The Punishment of Nadab and Abihu, as swift and as mysterious as if the Ark had become charged with electricity and they had received a shock from it, is regarded as a warning against improper worship or worship in an improper condition.*”

The lesson of Nadab and Abihu is that encountering the Divine, as sublime as it may be, is inherently dangerous—proceed with caution!



• 5414 • 5779 •

CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL

*Year of Years Celebration*

CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL

The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

Shabbat Shemini-Parah

*March 29-30, 2019*

Hertz Pentateuch: p. 443; Haftarah p. 999

Parah: p. 652

Kaplan Living Torah: p. 536; Haftarah p. 1278

Parah: p. 756

CANDLE LIGHTING | 6:59 pm

EVENING SERVICES | 6:30 pm

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS: HAGGADAH EDITION | Rabbi Soloveichik | “The Missing Rabbi of the Haggadah” | *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

YEAR OF YEARS LECTURE | Rabbi Soloveichik | “The Sephardic Ambassador, the Hasidic Rabbi, and the President: The Incredible Tale of Benjamin Franklin Peixotto, Grant's Consul to World Jewry”  
KIDDUSH | Levy Auditorium

SHABBAT AFTERNOON SHIUR | Rabbi Soloveichik | 5:55 PM | “Pesah, Tocqueville, and the Torah” | Levy Auditorium

EVENING SERVICES | 6:55 pm

HABDALA | 7:54 pm

*Rosh Hodesh Nisan begins next Shabbat.*

### Weekday Service Times

#### Mornings:

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

#### Evenings:

Sunday-Thursday (Minha & Arbit): 6:30 pm

## Schedule Alert

Rabbi Silber's Sunday morning class will NOT meet this week.  
A make-up session has been scheduled for **Sunday, May 5**.

### The Site of Shearith Israel's First Synagogue To Be Named: "Mill Street Synagogue/Seixas Way"

*Ceremony at the SE Corner of S. William & Broad Streets*

**Monday, April 8 | 12:30 PM**

Thanks to the efforts of the Lower Manhattan Historical Association, the site of Shearith Israel's first synagogue building will be co-named "Mill Street Synagogue/Seixas Way." All are invited to the ceremony that will unveil the new street sign. The ceremony will include presentations by city officials and dignitaries, including our own Rabbi Meir Soloveichik, the 10th Minister of Shearith Israel since the Revolution and a great fan of our first minister, the "patriot rabbi" Reverend Gershom Mendes Seixas.

RSVP to [james.kaplan@lmha-nyc.org](mailto:james.kaplan@lmha-nyc.org) is requested, and required to attend the reception to follow at the Fraunces Tavern Museum.

For more information, visit [lmha-nyc.org/mill-street-synagogue](http://lmha-nyc.org/mill-street-synagogue).

### Teen Girls Can Still Join our Team of *Shir HaShirim* Readers!

**Eighth Day of Passover, Saturday, April 27**

After *musaf*, the teen girls of our synagogue 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 Hazzan Rabbi Ira Rohde at [irohde@shearithisrael.org](mailto:irohde@shearithisrael.org) as soon as possible.

To sponsor the *kiddush* in the girls' honor, go to [shearithisrael.org/teen-girls-shir-hashirim-2019](http://shearithisrael.org/teen-girls-shir-hashirim-2019).

### COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Mazal Tob* to **Linda & Morris Shamah** on the recent marriage of their granddaughter, Elisheva Esses to Alexander Fuchs.

#### Public Tours

Our next public tour is  
**Wednesday, April 10,**  
at 11:00 AM

#### Parnas Office Hours

Louis Solomon would be delighted to meet with you. Please schedule a visit at [parnas@shearithisrael.org](mailto:parnas@shearithisrael.org).

## PRE-PESAH PACK-A-THON

### JUST OVER A WEEK AWAY!

NO JEW SHOULD BE DEPRIVED OF A  
PROPER PASSOVER MEAL

**Tuesday, April 9 | 7:00 pm | For all ages**

Register at [shearithisrael.org/pesah-packathon](http://shearithisrael.org/pesah-packathon)

Another way to fulfill the mitzvah of Maot Hittim this Pesah!

Together with Chamah, Shearith Israel will provide ample food to Jewish families who otherwise could not afford to have proper holiday meals on Pesah.

**Our volunteers will be packing several hundred hearty, substantial food packages including enough meat and fish for families to enjoy throughout Pesah** (and perhaps beyond). The packages will not be distributed

through food pantries; rather, Chamah volunteers deliver the meals directly to the homes in a discreet, anonymous fashion.

**The cost for this Pack-a-thon is upwards of \$30,000, so we need your donations and your participation!**

Chamah has offered us a 1 to 1 matching grant so that every dollar we raise will be matched by Chamah.

To volunteer and/or donate to this important cause, visit [shearithisrael.org/pesah-packathon](http://shearithisrael.org/pesah-packathon).

All ages are welcome—the younger children will be creating holiday cards for the packages to give them that extra human touch—so sign up your whole family!

*Thank you to trustee and Chamah board member **Oliver Stanton**, who helped facilitate this meaningful partnership.*

### Top 10 Myths and Misconceptions in Keeping *Taharat Hamishpaha*

**THIS Tuesday, April 2 | 7:30 pm | Women Only**

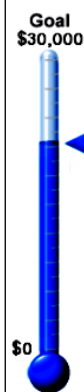
Hosted in a private home on the UWS—address provided upon RSVP

Join our *Yoetzet Halakha*, Shiffy Friedman, for a discussion of the Top 10 Myths and Misconceptions in Keeping *Taharat Hamishpaha* (Jewish Family Purity Law), including issues of mental health and anxiety that can arise from keeping *Taharat Hamishpaha*, and how the laws of *Taharat Hamishpaha* can remain relevant for married women of all ages and stages.

To RSVP, visit [tinyurl.com/misconceptions-rsvp](http://tinyurl.com/misconceptions-rsvp).

*Thank you to our Shearith Israel host committee:*

*Vicki Bengualid and Zoya Raynes*



Don't forget to sign me up!



REGISTRATION IS OPEN

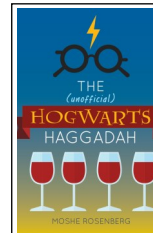
### Toddler Summer Camp

June 18-August 15 | Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 am

For ages 16-34 months | *Caregiver attendance required*

During our summer session, weather permitting, we enjoy outdoor time with small wading pools outside on our Portico "beach," in addition to the beautiful Fidanque Youth Room. There is time for play, craft projects, exercises, saying *berakhot* (blessings), snack, stories, music and more. To learn more and enroll, visit [shearithisrael.org/toddler-summer-camp](http://shearithisrael.org/toddler-summer-camp).

## PREPARE FOR PESAH



### Potter & Pesah

*With the author of The Hogwarts Haggadah,*  
**Rabbi Moshe Rosenberg**

who will be introduced by his daughter,  
Shearith Israel's Communications and Programs  
Associate, Sarah Meira Rosenberg

**Sunday, April 7 | 5:30 pm | For ages 7 - 107**

What does the most famous boy wizard in the world have in common with the Exodus story? More than you think! Learn how to bring some magic to your *seder* with Rabbi Rosenberg's bestselling haggadah.

Rabbi Moshe Rosenberg is the spiritual leader of Congregation Etz Chaim in Kew Gardens Hills, and the author of many works on Harry Potter and Torah, including *The Unofficial Hogwarts Haggadah*, *Morality for Muggles*, and recently, *The Unofficial Muggle Megillah*.

**This event is FREE** and open to the public, but registration is encouraged—and enters you to win a **free** signed copy of the *Hogwarts Haggadah*!

Sign up at [shearithisrael.org/potter-pesah](http://shearithisrael.org/potter-pesah).

### Maot Hittim 5779

As part of experiencing freedom ourselves, we must also ensure that our fellow Jews have the means to celebrate freedom too. You can contribute to our Pre-Pesah Packathon (see center panel), or through the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund, by submitting online or by check made out exactly to "Congregation Shearith Israel Rabbis Discretionary Fund" (indicate "maot hittim" in the memo). To donate, please go to [shearithisrael.org/maot-hittim](http://shearithisrael.org/maot-hittim).