

THIS SUNDAY

Civil War Memorial Event Honoring Myer Asch Beth Olam, Shearith Israel Cemetery, 2 Cypress Hills Street THIS Sunday, April 22 | 11:00 am

Please join us for a very special event on the morning of April 22nd when we will honor Colonel Myer Asch, a highly decorated veteran of the Civil War, by installing a special marker of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) Meade Post 1 at his grave. The ceremony will include a color guard, Civil War reenactors, special presentations, and a tour of the cemetery, decorating the graves of veterans of the Civil War buried at Beth Olam. The cemetery is located at the intersection of Cypress Hills Street and the Jackie Robinson Parkway. Please join us for this very special event.

Online registration is closed, but if you'd like to join, please contact Zachary Edinger at zedinger@shearithisrael.org.

Spring Lineup of Guest Speakers at Shearith Israel

We are delighted to welcome these distinguished guest speakers:

Dr. Laura Arnold Leibman
Visiting Scholar
THIS Shabbat, April 21

Following Morning Services:
Jews and Voting in Early America:
The Fight for Civil Rights

Monday, April 30 | 7:00 PM
Shephardic Country Houses

Dr. Geoffrey Herman
Visiting Scholar
NEXT Shabbat, April 28
Following Morning Services:
Talmudic Archaeology:
The Quest for Ancient Jewish Remains in Iraq

Afternoon Class:
King David the Falcon-hunter:
On Persian Motifs in the Babylonian Talmud

Aryeh Green
Thursday, May 23, 7 PM
Love, Loss & Healing in the Holy Land

For more information, visit
shearithisrael.org/spring-speakers

Our next public tour
is **Wednesday,**
May 9 at
11:00 AM

Meet with Our Parnas
Louis Solomon would be delighted to meet with you. Please schedule a visit by email: parnas@shearithisrael.org.

DEBAR TORAH: THE PRIESTLY HEALTH DEPARTMENT: A PILLAR OF GOVERNMENT — HAZZAN RABBI IRA ROHDE —

As I wrote last week, aside from civil [and, included in that, criminal] law, our Torah has built into it as a major constituent a code of priestly law, concerned with the purity of society. And a major component of that concern for the purity of society seems to have been a concern for physical sanitation and health. Now, I'm not suggesting that ritual purity and health are identical. But it's clear to me from the subjects of this week's Parasha - such as the bleeding of the childbearing woman and the "issues" of the male, the discussion of skin lesions, combined with the end of last week's concern with "impure" animals, carrion, and vermin - that health and sanitation were a central concern of priestly-instructed law. And, indeed, these laws are placed in the most central sections of the Torah itself. So it's clear: Having a separate authority for Health and Purity/Sanitation is central to the government envisaged by the Torah. I've been pondering this as I've been contemplating my personal government-mandated healthcare choices and, in the process, growing in understanding America's historical debates about government involvement in healthcare.

It's true: In the Revolutionary Army, George Washington was very involved in healthcare decisions regarding the smallpox epidemic and the vaccinations to ameliorate it; Jefferson was very involved in public hospital reform in Paris; John Adams authorized marine hospitals for seamen in 1798, etc. But for the most part, the founding documents of our central, Federal government are conspicuously silent about the role its law should play in promoting and regulating health, much less devoting a branch of law to it (as well as, for that matter, the ambivalence toward the related second pillar of "welfare" - the promotion and regulation of wealth). There are many reasons for this, among others, such as: 1) The Founding Fathers deliberately wanted to limit government interference as much as possible. 2) They wanted to leave this in the hands of localities and States. 3) They wanted to leave these matters to the several religious communities and individual discipline. 4) They thought, as some Enlightenment figures did, that by leaving matters alone, to personal and familial discretion, good health and welfare would emerge naturally. 5) They inherited a Protestant tradition, whereby health and welfare was a sign of God's Grace and being Chosen for Salvation, vs. sickness, which was sometimes taken as a sign that one was spiritually corrupt as well. 6) They inherited medieval Christian views which prioritized spiritual health over concerns with bodily health, which had, in turn, repudiated Greco-Roman over-concern and glorifying in bathing, aqueducts, and gymnasia, and although this imbalance had been somewhat remedied since the Renaissance, even so, many public institutions of health had yet to be restored.

By contrast, bodily purity, leading to bodily health, for the Israelite community, as well as even at times, for non-Israelites such as Naaman the Aramean leper, is central to our Torah. Separation from impurity, in both body and spirit, leads to sanctification. Jews didn't have the gymnasia or the sports of the Greeks, but seem to have had a huge amount of washing, bathing, and anointing. "Impurity" seems largely defined in quasi-physical terms. Concern for the overall health, healing, and welfare of society-at-large, particularly the sick and the poor, is one of the major preoccupations of the Torah. Perhaps these laws seem severe, invasive, and over-reaching. Perhaps the laws of purity and impurity have the ring of a kind of taboos and primitive magic. But they demonstrate the full breadth of concerns with which the body politic must struggle. It's not enough for a society to be just and pure in spirit. It must be strong, especially if the basis of its strength is to be the citizen-soldier. And to be strong it must be holy, and must concern itself with laws securing uncorrupted health and separating it from impurity. The holistic concern of all politics with bodily health is something we share with Classical civilization. Keeping that concern for health pure and avoiding decadence in so doing has been one of the central aims of our Torah.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL

The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

Shabbat Tazria-Metsora

April 20-21, 2018

Hertz Pentateuch: p. 460; Haftarah: p. 477
Kaplan Living Torah: p. 556; Haftarah: p. 1160

CANDLE LIGHTING | 7:23 pm

MINHAH & ARBIT | 6:30 pm | Main Sanctuary

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | "Friday, Shabbat, and Israeli Independence" | 2017-2018 season sponsored by the Julis family.

ZEMIROT | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary

SHAHARIT (NISHMAT) | 9:00 am | Main Sanctuary

TOT SHABBAT WITH LIZ AND SHANADE | Ages 0-4 | 10:00 am
| Fidanque Youth Room

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

JUNIOR CONGREGATION | Ages 5-12 | 10:30 | Little Synagogue

SPECIAL LECTURE | Visiting Scholar: Laura Arnold Leibman
"Jews and Voting in Early America:
The Fight for Civil Rights"

KIDDUSH IN HONOR OF LAURA ARNOLD LEIBMAN | Levy Auditorium | Sponsored by Karen & Jack Daar, the Haberman Family, and Karen & Roy Simon.

JUNIOR BOOK CLUB | Ages 11-14 | Hosted by Sharon Schechter and Rafe Sasson.

SHABBAT AFTERNOON PIRKEI ABOT SHIUR | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | 6:20 pm | "The Excommunication of R. Eliezer" | Levy Auditorium
MINHAH & ARBIT | 7:20 pm
HABDALAH | 8:20 pm

Weekday Service Times

Mornings:

Sunday: 8:00 am

Monday-Friday: 7:15 am

Evenings:

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



WE WELCOME Visiting Scholar Professor Laura Arnold Leibman

Following morning services, Dr. Laura Arnold Leibman delivers a lecture on:

“Jews and Voting in Early America: The Fight for Civil Rights”

Laura Arnold Leibman is Professor of English and Humanities at Reed College in Portland, Oregon. Her work focuses on religion and the daily lives of women and children in early America, and uses everyday objects to help bring their stories back to life. She is the author of *Indian Converts* (U Mass Press, 2008) and *Messianism, Secrecy and Mysticism: A New Interpretation of Early American Jewish Life* (Vallentine Mitchell, 2012), which won a National Jewish Book Award, a Jordan Schnitzer Book Award from the Association for Jewish Studies, and was selected as one of Choice’s Outstanding Academic Titles for 2013.

Don’t miss Dr. Leibman’s upcoming midweek lecture:

Monday, April 30 | 7:00 pm

“Sephardic Country Houses”

For more information, visit shearithisrael.org/leibman.

Thank you to our sponsors of today’s *kiddush* in honor of Professor Leibman:

Sponsor:

The Haberman Family

Co-Sponsor:

Karen & Jack Daar

Contributor:

Karen & Roy Simon

Don't forget to sign me up!



REGISTRATION DEADLINE:

THURSDAY, MAY 31

Shearith Israel Toddler Summer Camp

June 19-August 16

Tuesdays & Thursdays 9:30-11:30am

1 AND 2 DAY OPTIONS AVAILABLE,

PLUS OUR NEW 50-MINUTE MINI-SESSION OPTION

For ages 16 - 34 months | Caregiver attendance required

Join our wonderfully fun and educational Toddler Summer Camp, held in the new Fidanque Youth Room, with pool time on our Portico. Led by the marvelous Liz Rios.

To learn more and apply, visit shearithisrael.org/toddlerprogram.

Lag La'Omer Singles Party

Wednesday, May 2 | 6:30 PM

Held at: **Lincoln Square Synagogue, 180 Amsterdam Ave**

For singles in their 40s and 50s

Shearith Israel is a co-sponsor of this Israeli-themed buffet event with an ice cream bar, followed by a performance by NYC comedian, Talia Reese.

Early Bird (through April 24) - \$36

Regular - \$45

For more information, visit shearithisrael.org/lag-laomer5778

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mazal Tob to **Dr. Nicole Schreiber Agus** upon being honored on May 14 at Nishmat’s 28th Anniversary Gala Dinner. Shearith Israel is a proud partner of Nishmat in our Yoetzet Halakha Initiative. To honor Nicole and support Nishmat, visit www.nishmatgala.org.

Read about the Lower Manhattan Historical Association’s effort to rename the site of Shearith Israel’s first synagogue building on today’s South William Street “Mill Street Synagogue/Gershom Mendes Seixas Way”: shearithisrael.org/press.

Israel At 70

A 3-Part Lecture Series on Shabbat Mornings

Rabbi Meir Soloveichik

April 14 | May 5 | May 19



Join us for these special lectures marking this momentous anniversary of the State of Israel. Each lecture will take place on Shabbat morning, following services.

READERS NEEDED!

Seeking Girls to Recite The Book of Ruth

First rehearsal: Sunday, April 29 at 4 pm

Reading will take place on Sunday, May 20

As they do each year on the first day of Shabuot, Sunday, May 20, the girls of our synagogue (through college age) will recite the Book of Ruth for the congregation in the Main Sanctuary after services. **We have many openings**, so if your daughter would like to participate, please contact Mrs. Lisa Rohde (lrohde-csi@yahoo.com).

If you would like to sponsor the *kiddush* in honor of our readers, please visit shearithisrael.org/girls-ruth-reading.

Don't Forget to Count *Sefirat haOmer!*

Shearith Israel has two "Omer Boards" which pre-date the Mill Street Synagogue of 1730. They are used in the synagogue to count the seven weeks between Passover and *Shabuot*. This based on Leviticus 23:15, which instructs us to count 50 days from the offering of the new barley sacrifice on Passover until the holiday of *Shabuot* when the new wheat was offered. The measurement of the offering was called an "Omer," and from this unit of measurement comes the name used for this seven-week period. The letters H, S, D found on the boards stand for the *Homer* (H is an archaic way of transliterating the Hebrew letter 'ayin), S for *Semana* (weeks), and *Dia* (days). The boards have been used annually for nearly 300 years.

