

Annual Chatham Square Memorial Service

Chatham Square Cemetery | 55 St. James Place

Memorial Day, Monday, May 28 | 10:30 am

This Memorial Day, join us at our Chatham Square Cemetery, the first Jewish cemetery in the United States, to honor members of our congregation who participated in the Revolutionary War. This unique ceremony includes the participation of a color guard, special presentations and memorial prayers, and the decoration of the graves of Revolutionary War veterans with American flags. Veterans are encouraged to attend in uniform!

This year's ceremony is dedicated to the memory of our past Parnas, Dr. Dennis Freilich, Lt. Commander US Navy, whose participation always enhanced the dignity of this very special event.

To register (and sign up for transportation), visit shearithisrael.org/memorial-day-chatham-square.

If you are a veteran, please let us know by contacting Zachary Edinger at zedinger@shearithisrael.org.

Spring Lineup of Guest Speakers at Shearith Israel

We are delighted to welcome these distinguished guest speakers:

Dr. Geoffrey Herman, Visiting Scholar

THIS 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

Dr. Laura Arnold Leibman

THIS Monday, April 30 | 7:00 PM

Sephardic Country Houses

Aryeh Green

Wednesday, May 23 | 7 PM

Love, Loss & Healing in the Holy Land

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: PROHIBITED MIXTURES: SACRED OR PROFANE?

— Z. EDINGER —

You shall keep My statutes: your cattle shall not be bred with different kinds (כלאים), your fields shall not be sown with different kinds, and a garment of different kinds, sha'atnez, you shall not wear.

Leviticus 19:19 prohibits certain kinds of mixtures. This prohibition is found again in Deuteronomy 22:9-11. Although in Deuteronomy, it is ploughing (not breeding) different animals together and it is planting different species in a vineyard (not a field) that are prohibited. Deuteronomy also defines *sha'atnez* as a prohibited mixture of wool and linen.

The rationale behind these statutes is never explained. The prohibition of mixing wool & linen textiles (*sha'atnez*) is particularly confusing as this mixture *is* permitted for *tzitzit* with *tekhelet* and is *required* for some of the priestly vestments! Rashi explains that the term *hukim* (statutes) is used here specifically because these are statutes without any discernible reason. But this has not stopped many Biblical commentators from offering their own explanations for these prohibited mixtures.

Ibn Ezra, Rashbam and others believe that these mixtures are prohibited because man should not tamper with God's natural order. They point to verses in Genesis where God creates plants and animals each according to their *species*. Man should not intermingle or otherwise tamper with these divinely created distinct species.

Maimonides believes the reason for the prohibition of *sha'atnez* is because mixed woolen/linen garments were used for idolatry or by idolatrous priests and therefore were prohibited. He does not, however, explain why this mixture would then be permitted for *tzitzit* or in the priestly vestments.

Unlike Maimonides, Hizkuni believes that *sha'atnez* was prohibited specifically because it was something sacred. Since this mixture of wool and linen was used for the priestly garments it was something too holy for ordinary clothing. He equates the prohibition of *sha'atnez* to the prohibition of eating certain fats or blood which were reserved only for the sacrifices, or the prohibition of using anointing oil or of making incense. To make use these holy items for ordinary or profane purposes would be like a commoner making use of a King's scepter.

In ancient Mesopotamia, wool was the most commonly used textile with linen being reserved for the upper classes and for religious use. Akkadian sources dating from the time of Nebuchadnezzar (~520 BCE) indicate that a mixture of white linen threads with colored woolen threads was used for cultic purposes or for priestly dress. The mixture of blue wool (*takiltu*, i.e. *tekhelet*) with linen garments is specifically attested as being used to create garments for idols. These Neo-Babylonian sources seem to support Maimonides' view that this mixture was closely connected with idolatry. [Interestingly, this was not the case in ancient Egypt which almost exclusively used linen during Pharaonic times. Herodotus writes that wool was prohibited inside Egyptian temples, and it is only very rarely found at all in ancient Egypt.]

In ancient Israel too, it seems, that the mixture of wool and linen was used in the temple for priestly vestments or holy garments such as *tzitzit* with *tekhelet*. This mixture of different species is reserved for sacred clothing. It is interesting to note that the term used in Deuteronomy (22:9) regarding the prohibition of mixing species in a vineyard is “לֹא תִשָּׂא פְּרִי הַתְּאֵנָה” which is usually translated as *lest* [the mixed produce] *be forfeit* but the literal meaning is “*lest it be sanctified*.” This is perhaps a textual support for the opinion of Hizkuni that *sha'atnez* was prohibited because it was taboo - too holy or special to be profaned by ordinary use.

It is likely futile to speculate as to why the mixture of wool and linen was prohibited in the Bible. But archeology does attest that this prohibition was strictly observed during Roman times. *Sha'atnez* textiles from this period in Israel are extremely rare. Out of thousands of textile fragments found from this period only a small handful are of *sha'atnez*. This is in sharp contrast to other locations such as Dura Europus, Palmyra, or Coptic Egypt where *sha'atnez* garments are found in abundance.

Today, woolen-linen garments are no longer used for purposes of idolatry or by the priests of Israel. Nevertheless, the ancient biblical prohibition against wearing wool and linen blended textiles remains. If you would like help arranging for *sha'atnez* testing, please email zedinger@shearithisrael.org.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL

The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

Shabbat Ahare Moth-Kedoshim

April 27-28, 2018

Hertz Pentateuch: p. 480; Haftarah: p. 511
Kaplan Living Torah: p. 584; Haftarah: p. 1168

CANDLE LIGHTING | 7:30 pm

MINHAH & ARBIT | 6:30 pm | Main Sanctuary

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS WILL RETURN NEXT WEEK.

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 WITH A TORAH READING | Ages 5-12

| 10:30 | Little Synagogue

SPECIAL LECTURE | Dr. Geoffrey Herman | “Talmudic

Archaeology: The Quest for Ancient Jewish Remains in Iraq”

KIDDUSH | Levy Auditorium

SHABBAT AFTERNOON SHIUR | Dr. Geoffrey Herman | 6:25 pm

“King David the Falcon-hunter: On Persian Motifs in the Babylonian

Talmud” | Levy Auditorium

MINHAH & ARBIT | 7:25 pm

HABDALAH | 8:28 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 Dr. Geoffrey Herman

Following morning services, Dr. Geoffrey Herman delivers a lecture on:

“Talmudic Archaeology: The Quest for Ancient Jewish Remains in Iraq”

Later, he will teach the afternoon class on:

“King David the Falcon-hunter: On Persian Motifs in the Babylonian Talmud”

Dr. Geoffrey Herman is a member of the School of Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. He researches the Jews of ancient Babylonia in the Talmud era, and its neighboring religious and cultural world. The recipient of the Bertel and Eliezer Shimshon Rosenthal Prize for Talmudic Scholarship in 2015, he has been a Starr fellow at Harvard and a visiting professor at Cornell. He holds a Ph.D. in Jewish History from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

For more information, visit shearithisrael.org/geoffrey-herman.

Lag La'Omer Singles Party

THIS 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.

Tickets: \$45

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

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: THURSDAY, MAY 31

Don't forget to sign me up!



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.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mazal Tob to Pintan Soloveichik on becoming a Bar Mitzva in Israel this Shabbat. Mazal tob to his parents, Rabbi & Layaliza Soloveichik.

Mazal Tob to Hallie Pomerantz on becoming a Bat Mitzva. Mazal tob to her parents, Yvette & Steven Pomerantz, and her grandparents, Yvonne Cohen and Carol & Emil Pomerantz.

Mazal Tob to Gail Propp, for being chosen as the honoree at Keren Or's Women's Division Gala Spring Luncheon. The Luncheon will be held at Park East Synagogue on Wednesday, May 2. To support Keren Or and honor Gail, visit tinyurl.com/gailproppgala.

Mazal Tob to Judy & Joel Schreiber on the engagement of their grandson, Jordan Schreiber, son of Avram and Tammy Schreiber, to Kyra Libin of Woodmere NY.

We welcome Rabbi Nemitoff and the confirmation class of B'nei Jehudah of Overland Park, KS, who are joining us this Shabbat for their annual visit.

Of interest: Our Segan, Michael Lustig, and our Communications Associate, Sarah Meira Rosenberg, are participating as panelists at Jewish Comic Con at Congregation Kol Israel in Brooklyn this Sunday, April 29. Michael's panel on being a comics collector starts at 9 am, and SM's panel on being a Jewish woman in fandom starts at 6 pm. For more information, visit jewishcomiccon.org.

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: THIS 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 is based on Leviticus 23:15, which instructs us to count 49 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.

