

Those Destined for Leadership

Parashat Vayesheb clearly continues the “Royal Family” succession narrative in concentrating upon the strongest of the rival claimants for succession rights among Jacob’s (Israel’s) sons. Reuben is, of course, the true first-born, but he forfeits his rights through his failure to protect his half-brother Joseph while Reuben had gone away. This story probably reflects the tribe of Reuben’s remoteness on the southern East Bank of the Jordan and failure to participate in Israelite affairs, as mentioned in the Song of Deborah. Reuben’s actually being the firstborn probably reflects the fact that Reuben settled on its land first, before the other tribes had taken their territories. Reuben manages to prevent a fratricide, but Joseph’s being sold into slavery represents the ultimate disgrace for a royal family or nobility, and Reuben’s failure to prevent that dooms his chances for succession, especially since that one failure to keep one brother out of slavery eventually dooms the entire royal and noble family of Israel to slavery in Egypt.

Joseph’s two sons Ephraim and Menasseh develop into the tribes which by and large controlled the ruling dynasties in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. And Judah’s lineage, particularly the lineage of Peretz, whose birth is mentioned here, gives rise to David and the Davidic Royal House of Judah. The story of Tamar, Er, and Onan is a royal scandal in the Judean lineage, which reflects upon later degrees of scandal in the line of the Judean kings. Benjamin also has a minor role as the story continues, which reflects upon that tribe’s important subordinate Royal role in-between the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. But the concentration upon these particular brothers clearly show that this is a “rival succession” narrative.

Joseph is hands-down the most industrious and politically able among the brothers. Jacob’s giving him the “coat of many colors” is clearly meant to designate him for succession. Joseph is clearly politically ambitious. He is indeed seen as overly ambitious, but Jacob does not fully condemn Joseph for his ambition; Jacob realizes that this ambition, as well as his good looks and ability, are a sign of Joseph’s leadership potential and destiny. Perhaps the seeing of Joseph as overly ambitious reflects upon Judean contesting of Northern Israelite leadership of the majority of the tribes. Certainly the claim of Judah to have saved Joseph from fratricide and Judah’s later rescue of Benjamin buttress the Judean throne’s claim to be the savior of all of Israel.

Joseph’s eventual leadership is clearly seen as prophetically “fated,” and seemingly nothing can prevent his eventual rise to power. The story of Potiphar also hints at sexual innuendo which is the common plague of royal lines. The mentions of stars and later the stories of prediction, dreams and divination in some ways make Joseph’s “fated” rise despite every setback somewhat similar to the prophetically “fated” rise of Oedipus in the Greek myth, despite every attempt to avert that fate. Every setback Joseph faces only positions him to rise.



Shabbat Vayesheb

December 16-17, 2022 | 16 Kislev 5783

SHABBAT SCHEDULE

Hertz: p. 141 | Haftarah: p. 152
Kaplan: p. 182 | Haftarah: p. 1082

Candle Lighting | 4:12 pm

Friday Evening Services | 4:15 pm | Main Sanctuary

Friday Night Lights | following services | Main Sanctuary

Zemirot | 8:15 am

Shahrit | 9:00 am | Main Sanctuary | *Bat Mitzvah of Ruth Sherizen*

Youth Program | 10:00 am | Fidanque Youth Room

Kiddush Luncheon | following services | *Sponsored by the Sherizen family, in honor of Ruth becoming a Bat Mitzvah*

Special Shabbat Afternoon Class | 3:30 pm | Rabbi Soloveichik

Part III of Rabbi Soloveichik's Hanukkah Series

The Menorah Through The Ages

Socrates vs The Menorah

Evening Services | 4:10 pm | Main Sanctuary

Habdala | 4:57 pm

Hanukkah begins on Sunday night. See inside for candlelighting and Hanukkah programming details.

Weekday Service Times

Mornings:

Sunday: 8:05 am | Monday-Friday: 7:05 am

Evenings:

Sunday-Thursday: 4:15 pm

The earlier time means a harder time making a minyan. If you can help out and attend minyan, morning or evening, please contact Z. Edinger.

THIS SHABBAT AFTERNOON

SPECIAL SHABBAT AFTERNOON LECTURE:

Socrates vs The Menorah

Part III of Rabbi Soloveichik's 4-Part Hanukkah Series

"The Menorah Through The Ages"

THIS Shabbat, December 17 | 3:30 pm

Final Lecture: Shabbat Morning, Dec. 24

To sponsor a session, visit shearithisrael.org/hanukkah-series5783.

COMING UP

Sisterhood Sunday Matinee Film Festival

Final Film Discussion, **THE LITTLE DICTATOR**

Sunday, January 8

Films provided in advance to registrants | Each film: \$10

Discussion on Zoom with filmmaker & actor Emanuel Cohn on Jan 8

Registration and details at shearithisrael.org/events/sisterhood-film-fest.

A link will be sent to you to watch the film, a week before the appointed date, together with a second link to join the Sunday discussion on Zoom. For questions, contact rgedinger@gmail.com.

Synagogue Stories: Jewish History of New York

Presented by DOROT | Sign up at tinyurl.com/synagoguestories

Final session THIS Wednesday, December 21:

Conclusion with Historian David Kaufman

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mazal tob to honorary trustee **Esme & Roger Berg**, upon their granddaughter, Noa Elizabeth Berg, daughter of Jonathan & Virginie Berg, becoming a Bat Mitzvah.

Mazal tob to trustee **Dr. Victoria Bengualid & Gabriel Goldstein**, upon the birth of a grandson, born to Tova Goldstein & Yishai Chamudot in Israel. Congratulations as well to great-grandfather, honorary trustee **Henri Bengualid**.

Mazal tob to **Ruth Sherizen**, upon becoming a Bat Mitzvah. Congratulations to her parents, **Jodie & Ari Sherizen**, and her brother, **Abe**.

Condolences to **Muriel (and Alexander) Seligson**, upon the passing of Muriel's brother, Yitzhak (Zucky) Sutt.

HANUKKAH WITH SHEARITH ISRAEL



Hanukkah Candlelighting - Beginning Sunday Night

Sunday-Tuesday: after 4:31 pm

Wednesday-Thursday: after 4:32 pm

Candle Lighting at Shearith Israel All nights of Hanukkah

Come experience the lighting of our colonial era *hanukkiab* (from 1730) at the conclusion of 4:15 pm evening services on each night of Hanukkah.

It's important to show up!

Shine A Light on Antisemitism in Times Square

Monday, December 19 | 5:00 - 6:30 pm

Times Square - enter at Broadway and 47th Street

Antisemitism is intensifying. It's become normalized across our culture — on social media, in pop culture and politics, and on the streets. This Hanukkah, we'll publicly display our Jewish identity as we light the menorah together and raise awareness about antisemitism.

In Partnership with UJA, AJC, and JCRC-NY

CSI Youth Hanukkah Glowfest

Sunday, December 25 | 4:00 pm

Enjoy waffles, snacks, prizes, Kahoot Trivia, family candlelighting, Rabbi Rohde & his accordion, and much more! Bring your friends and have them experience Shearith Israel's hospitality and unique waffles tradition for themselves.

Sign up at shearithisrael.org/events/hanukkah-glowfest.

Hanukkah Concert With *Yonina*

Tuesday, December 20 | 7:00 pm | Park East Synagogue

In partnership with the UJA-Federation

Yonina is an Israeli-American couple who started sharing music through weekly home videos on social media. Their music has now reached millions of viewers around the world, and now they're coming to our neighborhood to enhance our Hanukkah celebration! Shearith Israel is a proud official Community Partner.

Register at shearithisrael.org/events/yonina-concert.
