

Joseph, the Prototype of the Court Prophet

The Torah's overall attitude towards monarchy in Parashat Mikketz is overwhelmingly positive. A wise king is capable of saving his people and improving their lot in the hardest of times, and he is entitled to the utmost obedience and respect, provided that the king heed and honor God's prophetic directives to him. In many ways, for the Bible as a whole, the massive government building program Joseph has Pharaoh initiate (as well as some of the taxation!) anticipate the building projects undertaken by King Solomon and Hezekiah. And Joseph himself here acts in the role of "court prophet." Joseph exemplifies what an exemplary relationship between a prophet and a king should look like. Pharaoh brings his question and perplexity to God's prophet, gladly accepts every piece of Joseph's advice, and then rewards and honors Joseph with the highest rank and the authority in order to follow through and carry out his recommendations.

Pharaoh gives utmost authority to Joseph, going so far as to say something like "according to your say all my people shall submit," Joseph clearly uses the authority given over to him in rather high-handed ways and quite proudly, as a man of rank, in a way which might offend the sensibilities of a later era, and yet our text here doesn't insinuate anything wrong with it. Joseph's political ambition may have been suspect when he was younger, perhaps, but as Court Prophetic Counselor to Pharaoh he has found his legitimate outlet and fulfillment. Our narrative proudly tells us:

Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt." Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph's finger. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. He had him ride in his chariot for the second-in-command, and people shouted before him, "Bow down!" Thus he put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, but without your word no one will lift hand or foot in all Egypt."

(Gen. 41: 41-44)

Joseph's vast plan to build city grain storage facilities and to enrich Pharaoh by having the people pay for grain, eventually enslaving most of Egypt outright, is seen here as unquestioningly legitimate and wise. Our Torah militates against this type of enslavement among Israelites, but here it is accepted. Pharaoh "sits above" Joseph on the Throne in terms of authority. But Joseph's position as "court prophet" and vizier, directing the kingdom according to God's design, serves as a prototype for how a kingdom should properly be ruled and how a successful monarch should heed the Wisdom of the Word of God. As long as the monarch recognizes that God is the source of all wisdom and authority and tries to heed the advice of the God-fearing religious authorities, the exertion of political power for the betterment of the king as well as the people as a whole is entirely justified and legitimate. This has served to justify a positive attitude towards Jewish wielding of political power, whether in the days of the Judean Monarchy, in the Vizier Mordecai's day, under the Maccabees, or in our own day.



Shabbat Mikketz-Rosh Hodesh-Hanukkah

December 23-24, 2022 | 30 Kislev 5783

SHABBAT SCHEDULE

Hertz: p. 155 | Rosh Hodesh: p. 695 | Hanukkah: p. 599 | Haftarah: p. 987
Kaplan: p. 200 | Rosh Hodesh: p. 814 | Hanukkah: p. 656 | Haftarah: p. 1360

Candle Lighting (Shabbat & 6 Hanukkah) | 4:15 pm

Friday Evening Services | 4:00 pm | Main Sanctuary

Friday Night Lights | following services | Main Sanctuary

Zemiroth | 8:15 am / **Shahrit** | 9:00 am | Main Sanctuary

Youth Program | 10:00 am | Fidanque Youth Room

Following Services: **Finale of Rabbi Soloveichik's Hanukkah Series**

The Menorah Through The Ages

The Menorah of the White House & of Berlin:

Two Incredible Interconnected Stories of Jewish Eternity

Kiddush | following the lecture | *Sponsored by Shearith Israel Touro Synagogue Affiliates, Dr. Henry & Felicia Spencer, in honor of the birth and naming of their first granddaughter, born to Rachel & Justin Turetsky*

Shabbat Afternoon Class | 3:30 pm | Rabbi Soloveichik

Evening Services | 4:10 pm | Main Sanctuary

Habdala & 7 Hanukkah Candles | 5:00 pm

Weekday Service Times

Mornings:

Sunday & Monday (legal holiday): 8:05 am | Tuesday-Friday: 7:05 am

Evenings:

Sunday-Thursday: 4:25 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

SERIES FINALE:

The Menorah of the White House & of Berlin:
Two Incredible Interconnected Stories of Jewish Eternity
Finale of Rabbi Soloveichik's 4-Part Hanukkah Series
"The Menorah Through The Ages"
THIS Shabbat, December 24 | Following Morning Services

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.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Schedule Changes

- Our office will be **closed** this Monday, December 26, for the legal holiday.
- Services on Monday morning will be at **8:05 am**.

We welcome new members **Paulina & Russell Light** to our growing Shearith Israel family.

Mazal tob to Shearith Israel Touro Synagogue Affiliates,

Dr. Henry & Felicia Spencer, in honor of the birth and naming of their first granddaughter, born to Rachel & Justin Turetsky.

Condolences to our former Hazzan, **Rabbi Albert Gabbai** (Minister of Congregation Mikveh Israel, Philadelphia), upon the passing of his brother, Isaac.

We mourn the loss of our member, **Irwin Shapiro**. Condolences to his wife, **Ruth**.

HANUKKAH WITH SHEARITH ISRAEL

Hanukkah Candlelighting Next Week

Sunday, 8 candles: after 4:34 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.

CSI Youth *Hanukkah Glowfest*

THIS 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.

Pricing:

In advance: \$8 per person, \$18 family cap

At the door: \$10 per person, \$36 family cap

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

SAVE THE DATE

A Community Shabbat Dinner with *Magevet*,

Yale's Jewish Acapella Group

Friday Evening, Shabbat Shira, February 3

Following Evening Services & *Friday Night Lights*

What better way to enjoy Shabbat Shira than with *shira*, song? Following our Friday evening services – always musically exquisite – registered guests will enjoy a festive Shabbat dinner enhanced by a musical performance by *Magevet*, Yale University's Jewish, Hebrew, and Israeli acapella group. A co-ed ensemble, comprised of talented undergraduate students at Yale University, *Magevet* is known for its sweet blend of voices, unique arrangements, and lighthearted sense of humor, and is one of the nation's premiere Jewish acapella singing groups.

Stay tuned for registration details coming soon!