

DEBAR TORAH by RABBI ROHDE

“I Can’t Judge, Because God Made It All Work Out for the Best”

19 But Joseph replied, “Do not be afraid. Am I in the place of God? 20 As for you, what you intended against me for evil, God intended for good, in order to accomplish a day like this — to preserve the lives of many people.

(Gen. 50:19-20)

We have from Joseph this powerful affirmation of faith, this “Justification of the Divine Decree.” It is not a statement just anyone can make at any time, but it serves us as a powerful example. Joseph is called in Jewish lore by the epithet “the Righteous One (Heb. ‘Tsaddik’),” which also relates to his “justification” of God here. What does Joseph mean by “Am I in place of God”? It seems to mean something like this: Joseph gives up his right to hold his brothers accountable for their evil plotting and intent because God has brought it about that it was all for the best. The truth is, Joseph’s pain and suffering and the sufferings of the family were incalculable, and Joseph would have had every right to hold a reckoning with his brothers. But in light of the salvation brought upon them, a salvation which could have only come about through suffering evil, the evil designs of his brothers are seen in the light of the great and good salvation to Israel which they brought in their wake. To be able to see evil in the light of the salvation it brings in its wake is a hallmark of the Tsaddik. Joseph as proto-Prophet is now able in hindsight to interpret his plight in the light of the unfolding fulfillment of the prophecy foretold in his dreams.

To interpret Evil befalling some chosen individuals in the light of the unfolding of Salvation and Redemption for the People as a whole becomes key in the writings of later Prophets such as Isaiah and Jeremiah. Isaiah and Jeremiah help to keep the people from falling into despair over the evil which befalls them with promises of the great Salvation and Restoration which will follow. In the Torah, that type of attitude is first pre-figured here with Joseph as proto-prophet.. It’s interesting that this attitude is also hinted at just a little earlier in our Parashah in Jacob’s line (49:18) “I hope for Your Redemption, O Lord.” But Jacob had said to Pharaoh that the days of his life were “few and evil.” Joseph was different, and rather had fully developed into the Righteous Prophet who could see any evil in his plight as part of the unfolding of God’s Redemptive Design.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL
The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

Shabbat Vayhee

December 29-30, 2023 | 18 Tebet, 5784

SCHEDULE

Kaplan: p. 240 | Haftarah: p. 1090

Hertz: p. 180 | Haftarah: p. 191

Afternoon & Evening Services | 4:30 pm

Candle Lighting | 4:19 pm

Friday Night Lights | Following Services | Main Sanctuary | *5784 Season of Friday Night Lights is sponsored by the Julis-Rabinowitz family*

Zemirot | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary

Shahrit | 9:00 am | Main Sanctuary

At the conclusion of the last word of Genesis, the congregation says:

חֲזַק וְנִתְחַזַּק - חֲזַקוּ וְיִצְמַח לְבַבְכֶם כָּל הַיְמֵי הַלַּיִל הַזֶּה

Be Strong and let us be Strengthened - Be strong, and let your heart take courage, All ye that hope for the LORD.

Morning Talk | At Morning Services | Rabbi Soloveichik

Tot Shabbat | 10:00 am | Fidanque Youth Room

Youth Groups for ages 5+ & Jr. Congregation will resume next week.

Kiddush | following services | *Kiddush sponsored by Melvin Neumark, Susan & Avery Neumark, and Rachel Neumark Herlands & Jonathan Herlands, in memory of Debby Neumark; Susan’s mother, Betty Adler; and her brother, Edward Adler*

Shabbat Afternoon Class | 3:30 pm | Rabbi Soloveichik | Main Sanctuary

Teen Class | 3:30 pm | Baruch-Lev Kelman | Elias Room

Evening Services | 4:15 pm

Habdala | 5:04 pm

Weekday Service Times

Sunday & Monday (Legal Holiday) Morning: 8:05 am

Tuesday-Friday Mornings: 7:05 am

Sunday-Thursday Evenings (Arbit Only): 6:30 pm

COMING UP

For details & registration, go to shearithisrael.org

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: THIS Monday, January 1

Community Shabbat Dinner

The Return of Magevet, Yale's premier Jewish acapella group

Friday Night, January 5 | after Friday Evening Services & Friday Night Lights

All ages welcome!

Preferred Pricing for Young Professionals & Families

with fun for kids provided by Baruch-Lev Kelman

in partnership with BASE UWS for 20s & 30s

NEW: SPECIAL INVITATION FOR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

After the dinner, Young Professionals are cordially invited for an oneg with drinks and dessert next door at BASE UWS.

Coney Island Polar Bear Club New Year's Day Plunge

Shearith Israel participants led by Rabbi Rohde

Monday, January 1 | Group departs from synagogue at 10 am

Sunday Matinee with Sisterhood

All proceeds will be donated to Friends of the IDF

Individual films: \$18.00 each

Link to film will be sent in advance for viewing at your leisure

Film discussion with host Emanuel Cohn will take place on Zoom

FINAL FILM DISCUSSION: Sunday, January 7 | 4:00 pm | "Footnote"

Grandparents, parents, and kids are invited to bond at

Parent-Child Learning

On Select Saturday Nights | 1 hour after Habdala

Next session with Baruch-Lev Kelman: **Sat. night, January 13 | 6:00 pm**

Please register so we'll be sure to have enough to eat!

The Shearith Israel League is a proud co-sponsor of

Bendichas Manos: The 7th Annual New York Ladino Day

Sunday, January 21 | 2:00-4:30 pm

15 W 16th St | Hosted by the American Sephardi Federation

Featuring: Rabbi Marc Angel, Rachel Amado Bortnick, teacher and founder of the renowned online group, Ladinokomunita, Elizabeth Graver, author of the 2023 Sephardic novel Kantika, Sarah Aroeste, singer/songwriter, and Susan Barocas, foodwriter

Register at tinyurl.com/nycladino.

COMING UP

For details & registration, go to shearithisrael.org

COMMUNITY SHABBAT DINNER

featuring Rabbi Soloveichik

in Conversation with Author Liel Leibovitz

Friday Evening, February 2 | after Evening Services & *Friday Night Lights*

Join Rabbi Soloveichik and Liel Leibovitz for a spirited discussion of Leibovitz's inspiring book, *How the Talmud Can Change Your Life: Surprisingly Modern Advice from a Very Old Book*.

SAVE THE DATE

Tu B'Shebat Seder

Wednesday, January 24 | 7:00 pm | Baruch-Lev Kelman, Rabbinic Intern

Our rabbinic intern and newest CSI gourmand, Baruch-Lev, will lead this tasty banquet of fruity delights native to the land of Israel. With explanations of its ceremonies and Kabbalistic origins, this unique holiday tradition is sure to be a treat for all ages. **Registration coming soon!**

COMMUNITY SHABBAT DINNER

featuring Rabbi Soloveichik

in Conversation with Yosel Tiefenbrun

Friday Evening, March 8 | after Evening Services & *Friday Night Lights*

As our rabbi and resident Anglophile, Rabbi Soloveichik will engage a unique guest in what will surely be an informative and entertaining conversation.

Yosel Tiefenbrun, the Hasidic founder of TIEFENBRUN atelier, was raised in London. During his formative years, he embarked on a path to become a rabbi, but also began nurturing his love for design and clothing. At age 21, Yosel decided to study at the renowned Savile Row Academy. He ultimately relocated to New York to establish his own tailoring house, and has become an esteemed presence in today's tailoring industry, working alongside movie sets, dressing royalty and world leaders.

PREPAY YOUR DUES

Membership Pre-Payment Offer

through January 15, 2024 | Prepay by Dec 31 for 2023 tax deduction

Members, remember that you can pre-pay your July 2024-June 2025 dues now at this membership year's rates. **Note: You must be logged into your Shulcloud account in order to pay your dues.** Refer to our emails for the link.