

Capability to Make Rational Distinctions Without Intoxicating Emotion

You do not drink wine and strong drink, you and your sons with you, in your going into the Tent of Meeting, and do not die—a continuous statute throughout your generations, so as to make a separation between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the pure; and to teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which the Lord has spoken to them by the hand of Moses.”

(Lev. 10:9-11)

Aaron and his sons the Priests are prohibited from drinking wine and intoxicating drink when serving in the “Tent of Meeting.” There are points of conjunction of this law prohibiting intoxication with what precedes and with what follows: The use of the terms “Tent of Meeting” and “That you shouldn’t die” connect this verse with the previous section prohibiting Aaron, Elazar and Ithamar from rending their clothes the Tent of Meeting, all of which they presumably would have wanted to do out of mourning for Nadab and Abihu. Presumably wine-drinking was similar to these other strongly “emotive” mourning practices and which could lead to their becoming impure and thus unable to properly perform the required priestly functions during the time of their service. This would bring about God’s wrath which would cause their death. However, the prohibition of intoxicating drink is then generalized as “an eternal statute for your generations,” unlike the previous commands not to rend garments nor leave the Tent which seem addressed specifically to Aaron and his remaining sons.

Prohibiting intoxication while on duty is also connected (although somewhat ambiguously in the literal text, via a conjunction meaning “and so to”) with distinguishing between the sacred and the profane, the defiled and pure, as well as with being able to instruct Israel regarding following the statutes communicated to them by God through Moses. Intoxication can lead to unwarranted expressions and unauthorized procedure, which is problematic in and of itself. And intoxication can also cloud judgment and hence lead to the issuance of faulty rulings and flawed instruction. Therefore, intoxication must be prohibited when they are on-duty as the main officiating priests based in the Tabernacle.

Having one’s wits about him is defined in Judaism by the capability to make distinctions. On Purim, the measure of prescribed intoxication is defined as the exact opposite: the inability to distinguish between “cursed be Haman” and “blessed be Mordecai.” Then too, I would say, strong, overwhelming emotion plays a part: It’s not that we don’t care about the evil plots of our enemies, but that in retrospect, in celebrating our overwhelming victories in defeating them, the occasions of their particular plots come to matter less to us. But for instruction to the people, a clear and level head among its leaders, not swayed by emotion, is necessary. The ability to make rational distinctions is central to defining the laws, evaluating the situation, as well as to defining procedural options and deciding among them. For these functions, it is critical that the leadership not be swayed by intoxicating emotion.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL
The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

Shabbat Shemini-HaHodesh

April 5-6, 2024 | 27 Adar II, 5784

SHABBAT SCHEDULE

Kaplan: p. 536 | Haftarah: p. 1284 | HaHodesh: p. 308

Hertz: p. 443 | Haftarah: p. 1002 | HaHodesh: p. 253

Candle Lighting | 7:08 pm

Evening Services | 6:45 pm

Friday Night Lights will return next week for the Season Finale.

Zemirot | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary

Shahrit | 9:00 am | Main Sanctuary

Shabbat Morning Talk | At Morning Services | Baruch-Lev Kelman

Tot Shabbat | 10:00 am | Fidanque Youth Room

Youth Groups | 10:00 am | Elias Room

Jr. Congregation | 10:30 am | Little Synagogue

Kiddush | following services

Shabbat Afternoon Class | 6:20 pm | Baruch-Lev Kelman | Main Sanctuary

No Teen Shiur this week.

Evening Services | 7:05 pm

Habdala | 8:03 pm

Rosh Hodesh Nisan begins on Monday night.

Weekday Service Times

Sunday Morning: 8:05 am

Monday-Friday Mornings: 7:05 am

Sunday-Thursday Evenings (Minha & Arbit): 6:30 pm

NEXT WEEK

CSI Young Professionals & Base UWS present

Food Distribution & Passover Learning

For Young Professionals, 20s & 30s

**NEW DATE: THIS Tues, April 9 | 7-9:15 pm | Meet at Base UWS, 99 CPW
(following 6:30 pm Evening Services at Shearith Israel)**

Young Professionals will cook and distribute hot meals for those in need, followed by learning and discussion focused on Passover. Participants are encouraged to join our 6:30 pm Evening Services minyan.

Refer to our emails for the registration link.

NEW TIME:

Monthly Public Tours With Rev. Z. Edinger

2nd Wednesday of the Month | 5:45 pm | Before 6:30 pm Evening Services

Next tour: THIS Wednesday, April 10

Explore the rich history of Shearith Israel with our free monthly tour, open to the public. Led by Reverend Edinger, join us on the second Wednesday of each month to delve into the fascinating narrative of our synagogue and community. Come, learn, and experience the heritage of the first Jewish community in North America.

Young Professionals Pre-Pesah Shabbat Dinner

Featuring a talk by Rabbi Soloveichik

Friday, April 12 | Ages 21-35

Services: 6:45 pm | Friday Night Lights: 7:45 pm | Dinner: approx. 8:15 pm

Join Congregation Shearith Israel's Young Professionals for a delightful Shabbat dinner, with Pesah wisdom from Rabbi Soloveichik.

Register at shearithisrael.org/events/yp-pre-pesah.

ONGOING

Youth Soccer & Golf on Paved Paradise

Sundays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays, April-June

Starts THIS Wednesday, April 3

(Summer Camps begin on June 24)

Members, use our promo code "Shearith15" for a 15% discount!

Soccer Stars in partnership with Congregation Shearith Israel is back for soccer and golf on our beautiful Paved Paradise lawn!

Check soccerstars.com for details and registration.

STANDING WITH ISRAEL – THIS SUNDAY!

Rally For Our Hostages:

Six Months – They Are Out Of Time

THIS Sunday, April 7 | 12 pm | Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza (E 47 St & 2nd Ave)

Please join the Hostages & Missing Families Forum for a demonstration marking six months since hostages were taken by Hamas on Oct. 7. We'll be joined by prominent speakers from Israel, families of the hostages, and released hostages themselves.

PESAH IS COMING

Visit shearithisrael.org/pesah5784 in order to:

- Sell Your Hametz
 - Give Maot Hittim
 - Sponsor Rabbi Soloveichik's Shabbat HaGadol Derasha
 - View the Pesah Schedule
 - Refresh your memory of Pesah halakhot and customs
 - Sponsor a Pesah kiddush
 - NEW:** Join the Women's Virtual Shir HaShirim (*details below*)
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NEW: Now on Zoom, in partnership with our sister synagogue, Mikveh Israel

Women's Pre-Pesah Virtual Shir HaShirim Reading

Thursday, April 18 | 7:00 pm | On Zoom

Now open to girls & women of all ages -

Moms and grandmothers, consider doing this with your girls!

Girls and women of all ages in our congregation will recite the Song of Songs.

This year we are again partnering with our sister synagogue, Mikveh Israel, for a virtual reading.

To sign up for a part, please contact Ella Lalwani:

Email: ella.lalwani@gmail.com

text: 732.485.1863

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Hazak u'Barukh to **Moshe Sasson** upon completing the Tractate of Succot.

In the Press

In this week's Wall Street Journal, Rabbi Soloveichik shared poignant reflections on the legacy of Senator Joseph Lieberman. Read it at shearithisrael.org/press.