

October 10, 2025

Dear Shearith Israel family,

Our Year of Allegiance. *Mo'adim L'simcha* to all! Kippur at Shearith Israel was an inspiring day. And we finished Kippur *last* Thursday night. We had less than a day before Shabbat. We had a Sunday occupied by trying to cram in most of the week's worth of work we are missing this week plus trying to help prepare for Succot. And Monday was a half day, at best. Remarking on the impossibly short interval between Kippur and Succot – especially when so many years include a Shabbat in between – Beth wondered “What G-d was thinking?” Another congregant, a mother of four, said the impossibly short interval was proof positive that G-d is not a woman.

But we all made it. Succot is a cherished, treasured time for us as a community. Our services were wonderful. We boast not one or two but three succot.

One “indoor” succah – plainly a unique structure with a skylight contraption:



One “outdoor” succah, at the back of Paved Paradise (see this great photo of not only that succah but of those helping Rabbinic Intern Baruch-Lev Kelman and creative members, Nicole and Lily Cohen, to decorate it this past Sunday):



And one that our colleagues at Congregation Ahavath Israel in Newport put up on the grounds in front of Touro Synagogue:



A succah is a tangible manifestation of our collective willingness to put our faith in The Almighty. It is a clear reminder of our frailties, our vulnerabilities, and our need not just for Guidance and Sustenance but for each other. Please come enjoy one or both or all three of our succot.

Celebrating our 250th. I LOVE the logo our creatives created for our celebrations of our Nation's 250th anniversary since (roughly) the American Revolution. Yet more than a few people commented that the reference to *Honoring 250 Years of Jewish Life in America* was a bit confusing. Didn't I know that Jews – indeed Shearith Israel itself – has been in America for way *more* than 250 years?

We did and do know that, by the way. The reference to 250 years was about our Nation's celebration and our community's participation in the American Experiment during that period. Still, we listen to our readers. So, ta-da! I present to you our new logo, *Honoring 250 Years of Jewish Life in the United States*? That's not as lyrical, may be a bit clumsy, but hey it's ours:



If this isn't clear enough, we solicit your specific suggestions.

Ner News Celebrating our 250th. Let's discuss two of the significant events we are now planning for Shearith Israel's celebration of our Nation's 250th:

First, Rabbi Soloveichik will be giving ten lectures through the Fall and early Winter on topics pertinent to the Jewish experience in our Nation's first two-hundred-and-fifty years. The first lecture will be on Shabbat morning, October 25. But even before then the Rabbi will be kicking off this year's *Friday Night Lights* series on Friday night, October 17. Mark your calendars, and do join us.

Second, as a community, and in conjunction with Congregation Ahavath Israel (CAI), our resident

congregation at Touro Synagogue in Newport, we are planning two excellent programs at Touro Synagogue on Sunday, November 9. We will be hosting Brown students at the culmination of their special weekend celebrating 130 Years of Jewish Life at Brown; and CAI will be hosting Yale's magnificent *A Cappella* group, Magevet, who will be giving a concert starting at about 2:30 p.m. To make it even more special, many of us will be going to Newport for that Shabbat, Nov. 7-8. Rabbi Soloveichik will be talking a bunch of times at Touro Synagogue over that weekend, including a special Friday Night Lights talk and an installment of his 10-part series in celebration of the 250th (see Ner News above).. We also hope to be having communal meals on Shabbat for anyone who will be there. As we know, Sunday, November 9, also commemorates Kristallnacht. The way I think about it, our weekend at one of our Nation's irreplaceable places of Jewish worship is a fitting response -- across space and time -- to the evils that Kristallnacht represented.

So that we can get a sense of who will be joining us, we will be asking people to sign up for meals for that Shabbat, and to let us know if you will be attending the Sunday lecture and concert. A sign up form will be available soon. The events will be great, and what will make them even greater is if many of us enjoy them together.

Our Fall Fundraiser and Hatanim Luncheon. Our Hatanim lunch is *next* Shabbat. We still need your help – by your generous financial support and by showing up. Five people used the new chair lift on Kippur. That's an amazing number of people whom our investment enabled or assisted in coming to services. Now, we need your help to pay for it.

Our Hatanim lunch is one of our feel-good events of our year. Treat yourself and come. But even if you cannot attend in person, please support our wonderful hatanim and the vital new chair lift. Please [click here](#), and pledge as much as your circumstances permit.

Name That Parasha Tune. We are collecting songs for the remaining parshiot in the Torah: **Parshiot Ki Tetze, Ki Tavo, Nitzavim Vayelevh, Ha'azinu, and V'zot HaBeracha** (*next week's parasha*, since this week we read the **parasha for Succot**).

For **Parasha V'zot Habracha**, Andrew Druck suggests some of the great "end" songs:

- [The End](#), as sung by the Doors
- [The End](#), as sung by The Beatles
- [Pacific Coast Highway](#), as sung by the Beach Boys
- [September of My Years](#), sung by the great Sinatra; and
- [It Was a Very Good Year](#), also by the Chairman of the Board

The World's Shortest Song - Revisited. Belatedly, but with cause, Jonathan Wagner, President of Congregation Kehillath Jeshurun on the East side, suggests inclusion of John Lennon's three-second [Nutopian International Anthem](#), from his 1973 album *Mind Games*. Our Judges are neither biased nor

time-bound. They have reopened our challenge from about a year-and-a-half ago ([see, e.g., our email of 4/11/24](#)) and have officially added *NIA* as the least-song-like song ever to have entered a song contest (it is totally silent for the entire “song”). Thank you, Jonathan.

Tractate Zevachim and Pesah Sheni – Spring in the Fall. I mentioned some years ago ([see my email of 2/4/21](#)) that Pesach Sheni can be thought of as the do-over date occurring a month after Pesah for those who were either impure or too distant from Jerusalem to celebrate Pesah in Nissan. The date is of Biblical origin (Bemidbar 9:10-11) and permits those who missed out on the single most important sacrifice of the year to participate as part of the community. Steve Smith calls it a Jewish Mulligan.

A brief but important discussion of Pesah Sheni appears in the Daf Yomi pages that the global Daf Yomi learning cycle is studying this week (Tractate Zevachim 21-27, especially pages 22b/23a). I can appreciate why you would ask, why am I writing about Pesah and Pesah Sheni during Succot? Well I have an answer, so please read on.

It has long been observed that there are deep and abiding connections between Pesah and Succot. Both holidays start on the fifteenth of their respective Jewish months (fifteen in Hebrew numbering being “tet-vav”). The Talmud and later commentators abbreviate the making of analogies between the holidays with the phrase “Tet-Vav Tet-Vav” or “Tu Tu” ([see my email of 4/1/21](#)). To draw the connection tighter still, there is also a custom – annually observed in the Solomon household by one and only one person (guess who?) – of making matzoh-like challahs for Succot (actually he dragooned his new wife into the chore this year)! The judges are willing to part with one point for each thoughtful connection between Pesah and Succot.

The connection between the holidays in these pages of Tractate Zevachim revolves around 1) the fact that we are learning about Pesah Sheni on Succot, which you might think is a coincidence –there are no coincidences – but is surely circular; and 2) the sacrifices discussed here in the Talmud. Admittedly, the connection is more inferred than stated.

The discussion starts with an analysis of laws adumbrated by the mysterious group called “Elders of the South” (אֲמָרֵי דְּרָוּם). Reference to them alone justifies this brief discussion. Have you ever heard of them? They seem to be a group of Sages about whom we are told essentially nothing. No names, not even if they are Tanaaim or Amoraim. Does anyone know anything about them? Their views are taken seriously; some of the well-known heavy hitters (like Raish Lakesh, possibly) go on record disagreeing with them.

In this discussion, these Elders of the South say that the disqualification of an impure priest in performing the sacrifices (which the Mishna discusses) applies only if the impurity arises from contact with the carcass of one of the impure creeping animals and not from contact with a human corpse. And in the discussion that follows, the Talmud winds up apparently rejecting the position of the Elders of the South in part because, when it comes to Pesah Sheni, any prior impurity, no matter how achieved, is sufficient to permit reliance on the do-over date for the Pesah sacrifice. I’m simplifying, maybe a bit too much, but at this basic level an analogy is made to Pesah Sheni.

Now, if you are with me so far, then the connection between Succot and Pesah becomes clear(er). The Pesah offering needs a community to sign up in advance to partake of it; if you intend to create a community for the Pesah sacrifice but include someone else, or don't include someone you've made arrangements for, then the sacrifice is unkosher, according to one opinion right here in these pages. The point about Pesah here is that community is king. And the point about Succot is also that community is king. It could hardly be clearer on Succot, when our dwelling places, even though temporary and a little cramped, *expressly* invite guests to join us (*ushpizin*). We take the Four Species, which have nothing to do with each other but are mashed together to make one harmonious whole, and which is a pellucid demonstration of the community nature of the holiday (see, e.g., [my email of 10/13/22](#)). Also, our communal sacrifices over the course of the holiday total 70, which Judaism often is used to connote "the whole world, in unity". Community is king. Tu tu!

Publication Notice. Next week, we hope to send out our email at 11 am on **Friday, October 17**, after the final days of the holiday.

In this, our ***Year of Allegiance***, let us couple our collective ***commitment*** with a prayer to The Almighty, ***Hatzlich'ana, help us succeed. Mo'adim L'simcha to all.***

Louis Solomon, Parnas