וְהָיָה לְךָ לְאוֹת עַל יָדְךָ, וּלְזִכָרוֹן בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ, לְמַעַן תִהְיֶה תוֹרַת יְהוָה, בְפִיךָ:
כִּי בְיָד חֲזָקָה, הוֹצִיאֲךָ יְהוָה מִמִצְרָיִם
וְהָיָה לְאוֹת עַל יָדְכָה, וּלְטוֹטָפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ:
כִּי בְחֹזֶק יָד, הוֹצִיאָנוּ יְהוָה מִמִצְרָיִם.

והטף אל דרום — "אל תטיפו"

On the Word Tefilot
Z. Edinger (Based on Balashon, 124/2007)
And this shall serve you as a sign upon your hand and as a reminder on your forehead—
in order that the Teaching of the Lord may be in your mouth—and that with a mighty hand the Lord freed you from Egypt. Exodus 13:9

These verses appear at the end of this week’s parashah. Moses instructs the people that they are to observe a holiday (verse 6) and sanctify the first born (verse 12) even when they are settled in the land of Israel. These observances must be explained to the children (verses 8 & 14) to teach them about the miraculous Exodus from Egypt. After mentioning the obligation to teach the story of the Exodus we are then confronted with the above verses. R. Samuel b. Meir (Rashbam, 11/12 c) explains that the obligation to remember and tell over the Exodus story should be as if it were written on your arm or hanging on your forehead like a piece of jewelry. In other words, that these observances and memorials should be as near and clear to us as if they were on our body, impossible to forget.

The meaning of the word tefilot unclear. Onkelos (2-3 c) translates tefilot as tefillin. i.e. the phylacteries that are worn every day during prayer. Indeed verses with two similar verses in Deuteronomy (well known from the Shema) are the biblical sources for the obligation to wear tefillin. Unfortunately, this does not help us to understand the meaning of the word tefilot.

The Talmud (Sanhedrin 4b) gives two explanations of the word that both indicate a relationship to the number four—an allusion to the number of biblical sections placed into the tefillin. R. Akiha (quoted by Rashi) gives an unusual etymology “Tefil in Capite means two, and “Tefil” in Afriki” thereby indicating the number four—of the tefillin.

Rashi seems unsatisfied with this explanation and quotes Midrashim ben Shurq (Spain, 10 c) that “Tefilot means to speak— as in שְׁמֹאֲלָה אַל תַעֲשֵׂה. And speak to the south”. (Ezekiel 21:2) and "פָּרֹק דָּבָק" (Micha 2:6). Tefilot therefore is compared to the memorial of our first verse— "a reminder between your eyes” (Ex. 13:9) "for whoever sees them tied between their eyes will remember the mistake and speak about it.”

Ramban (Nahmanides) rejects this explanation, and prefers to translate Ta’effit as a headband— relying on the Talmud’s use of this word in the Tractate Shabbat (57a) that “[A woman] may not go out (on the Sabbath) with a tefﯤth.” Rabbi Abdu said: “What is a tef�이th? It is a forehead-headband extending from ear to ear.”

Most modern day academic explanations seem to favor headband as the meaning of tefilot. In Isaiah (3:19) we find certain jewelry called netherparti— a type of headband which dropped (tippath on the forehead. Alternatively, the word could be related to the Arabic ‘Taffa’ which means to go around or encircle.

Regardless of the etymology— what is clear is that the tefilot we wear are intended to be a lasting memorial to the miracle of the Exodus. Laying tefilot on our arm and foreheads is a reminder that the Exodus should be as impossible to forget as something bound physically to us.
UPCOMING EVENTS AND INITIATIVES

Chai Tea with Janet Kirchheimer
Tuesday, January 27 | 5:30 pm | Elias Room
“Chai Tea” is our version of high tea with a Jewish twist. Join Janet R. Kirchheimer to discuss and enjoy the works of Carl Den- nis, Emma Lazarus, C.P. Cavafy, Nancy Dugan and more. Come mingle, learn, and discuss over tea and light refreshments. All are welcome! Recommended donation: $10 CSI members; $12 non-members. Please RSVP to ashultz@shearithisrael.org.

Tu B’Shevat Centerpieces for Your Table
Sponsored by The Sisterhood
Wednesday, January 28
11:15 am – 12:00 pm (following Esther Hidary’s class)
AND 7:00 – 7:30 pm (following evening services)
Tu B’Shevat, the New Year of the Trees, is almost here, a day that has been designated to eat numerous fruits and nuts. Rose Edinger, will demonstrate how to design an edible, floral, centerpiece using assorted fruits and nuts. All are welcome to come and learn a fun way to display edible for the table. RSVP to rgedinger@gmail.com.

Friday Night Lights&Bites
Next Shabbat, January 30: The Wines and Fruit of Tu B’Shevat
Join us for cocktails and light hors d’oeuvres. For registered guests.
To Register: shearithisrael.org/bites

Women’s Service
Next Shabbat, January 31 | 9:15 am | Little Synagogue
All women and girls are welcome as we celebrate Shirin Kaye becoming a Bat Mitzvah. For more information, please contact Mrs. Lisa Rohde at lirohde-csi@yahoo.com.

The First Shearith Israel League Chulent, Hamin, Adafina, Chili, or just “Stew” Cook-Off Shabbat Dinner
Friday Night, February 6
Sign up by February 3rd
shearithisrael.org/cook_off_shabbat_dinner

Meaning & Melody: The Depth and Beauty of Jewish Prayer
A Shabbat Morning Interlude with Rabbi Shalom Morris
10:00 am in the Small Synagogue
Starting February 7, 2015
Rabbi Morris will offer “Meaning & Melody” most Shabbat mornings. The shiur will consist of brief discussions focusing on prayers and their meanings as well as a review of their melodies. All are welcome to attend.

With Encouragement and Support of the Shearith Israel League Instrumental Recital for Young Musicians!
Saturday, February 7 | 7:00 pm
To be held in a private home
Are you a music lover? A heartey clapper? A cheerful supplier of uncritical applause? We are now accepting registration for members of the Shearith Israel congregational family to attend the recital as an audience member to support our junior musicians. To sign up or for questions, please contact Lalyaza Soloveichik at lalyiza@gmail.com.

Continue the Unity: Organized by OneFamily
Sunday, February 8 | 3:00 pm
Held at The Ramaz Upper School 60 East 78th Street
Come show your solidarity with Israel and welcome Rachelle Fraenkel, Bat Galim Shaer and Iris Yifrach, bereaved mothers of Naftali z’l, Gilad z’l and Eyal z’l.
RSVP at onefamilytogether.org/unity

The Continuing Mysteries of the Aleppo Codex
Next Saturday, January 31 | 7:00 pm
In partnership with the Shearith Israel League
Matti Friedman, author of “The Aleppo Codex: A True Story of Obsession, Faith, and Pursuit of an Ancient Bible” will give a presentation with Rabbi Hidary.

With encouragement and support of the Shearith Israel League

Yoetzet Halakha
If you have any questions regarding Taharat Hamishpakha (Jewish Family Law) laws of Niddah, sexuality and women’s health, please contact our Yoetzet Halakha, Lisa Septimus in confidence at 917-382-9008 or nycyoetzet@gmail.com.

Yom HaAtzmaut:
Israel’s Independence Day
Monday, May 5

Tenth Anniversary of the Shearith Israel League
Friday, May 23

Weekly Judaic Education

View all our spring classes at shearithisrael.org/education

Sunday
◦ Psalms and Spirituality | Rabbi Hidary | 8:40 am
◦ Saadia Gaon’s Emunot ve’Deot on Revelation and Commandments | Simon den Hoolander | 9:30 am

Monday
◦ Maimonides’ Guide for the Perplexed on Prophecy | Rabbi Hidary | 7:00 pm
◦ YL Monday Night Learning* | 7:00 pm
◦ Hebruta Program* | 7:15 pm
◦ Living Jewish | Rabbi Morris | 7:30 pm
◦ Bet Midrash | 8:00 pm
◦ Rambam Rules for Young Professionals | Rabbi Morris | 8:30 pm
*In partnership with JICNY

Tuesday
◦ Shulhan Arukh | Rabbi Hidary | 7:45 am
◦ Jewish Time: The Festivals in Halakha and Jewish Thought- A Class for Women | Rabbi Soloveichik | 9:00 am
◦ History of the Sephardim, the Spanish & Portuguese Jews | Rabbi Morris | 6:45 – 7:30 pm
◦ Talmud Class: Tractate Berakhot and the Philosophy of Jewish Prayer | Rabbi Soloveichik | 8:00 pm

Wednesday
◦ Parashat Hashabua | Esther Hidary | 10:00 am

Tai Chi with Lewis Paleis | Thursdays at 11:00 am

Our next public tour is:
Tuesday, February 10 at 11:00 am
Meet with our Parnas
Our Parnas would be delighted to meet with you. Please schedule a visit at parnas@shearithisrael.org.