Staying Comfortable in the Summer

During the summer months, we turn on the air-conditioning in the synagogue. We realize that it sometimes gets a little chilly, especially in the women’s section. For your convenience, we provide pashmina scarves found in the corridor outside the women’s gallery. Thank you for your understanding.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Musaf Tish
Rev. Phil Sherman and Andrea Raab on the marriage of Reuven Sherman to Molly Ray.

Condolences to Leon “Muk” Eisenmann on the passing of his mother, Evelyn Eisenmann.

Welcome to the Shearith Israel Family:
Alene Schneierman
Lawrence Mondschein and Alexandra Corbin

Hazakot U’Bereshit to Our Girls’ Megillah Ruth Readers:

Our next public tour is:
Tuesday, June 9 at 11:00 am

Parnas Office Hours
Louis Solomon would be delighted to meet with you. Please schedule a visit at parnas@shearithisrael.org.

The First Forty-Niner
Rabbi Richard Hidary

A profound and provocative midrash describes the giving of the Torah as follows:

R. Yanai said: The Torah that the Holy One, blessed be He, gave to Moses was given with forty-nine interpretations in favor of pure and forty-nine interpretations in favor of impure...He [Moses] said to him [God]: How shall it be practiced? He responded, if those who declare impure outnumber then it is impure; if those who purify outnumber then it is pure. R. Abahu said in the name of R. Yohanan: R. Akiva had a distinguished student who knew how to interpret the Torah in forty-nine ways in favor of pure [and forty-nine ways in favor of impure] with each reason being different. They said: That student is a chip off of Mount Sinai (Pesikta Rabbati 21).

This midrash struggles with the fundamental problem that all texts are open to interpretation. God’s Word may be the one unified Truth, but since the Torah takes the form of a text, how can we be sure that we have understood it correctly? When various rabbis and readers each present convincing opinions, are all but one of them simply wrong? The brilliant answer of the midrash is that the Torah, even at its origin contained within all its possible interpretations—seven times seven, the number symbolizing the epitome of completeness and comprehensiveness.

The Talmud (Yerushalmi Sanhedrin 4:1) derives this message from the verse: “The words of the Lord are pure words, silver purged in an earthen crucible, refined seven times seven (Deut 4:29)” (Ps. 12:7). The process of interpretation is here likened to the process of mining. The student who studies Torah is like a miner who breaks off a piece of rock. The ore contains many useful metals and minerals just as the Torah text is pregnant with many meanings. Argumentation for and against each interpretation is likened to the smelting process of heating up the alloy to separate the elements. Once the various elements separate, the metalurgist can isolate the pure silver just as the sage is best able to pick out the one halakha that he deems should be normative. It is precisely the heated arguments of the sages that breaks apart the various aspects of each law and makes it possible to then isolate one as the view best suited for practice.

Among the forty-niners who settled in California during the Gold Rush in 1849 was the Jewish inventor of denim, Levi Strauss (he actually came in 1853). But the first forty-niner was Moshe Rabbanu who, on the forty-ninth day after leaving Egypt, mined the mountain of Sinai for precious nuggets of Torah that is likened to gold and silver. God gave us the Torah as a gift, but we still must work tirelessly to extract the layers and faces of meaning enshrined in each prophetic word. May we have the same zeal as these early gold miners did as we humbly dedicate ourselves to appreciating the sparks of divine Truth embedded not only in the views we agree with but also in the opposing views, all forty-nine of them.

CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL
The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

May 22-25, 2015
Shabbat Bemidbar and Shabu’ot

Candle Lighting | 7:54 pm
MINNAH | 6:45 pm

ZEMIROT | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary
SHAHARIT (NISHMAT) | 9:00 am | Rabbi Soloveichik delivers a talk entitled: “Megillat Ruth vs. The Princess Bride: A Short Shiur on True Love”
LEARNERS’ SERVICE | 9:45 am | Rabbi Moritz | Sponsored by Nicholas Gare and contributor, Yedidya Flasger
TOT SHABBAT | Ages 0-4 | 1:00 pm | Levy Auditorium
YOUTH GROUPS | Ages 5-12 | 1:00 pm | Children’s Library
JR. CONGREGATION Ages 5-12 | 10:30 am | Little Synagogue
KIDDUSH | Levy Auditorium
PARASHAT HASHABAUA: THE PARTS THEY SKIP IN HIGH SCHOOL | Rabbi Hidary | 6:35 pm | For high school students
MINNAH/ARBIT | 7:55 pm
END OF SHABBAT/FESTIVAL CANDLE LIGHTING | 8:54 pm

Summer Schedule
Starting Tuesday, May 26, evening services will begin at 6:45 pm. Starting Friday, May 29, evening services held in the Little Synagogue.
Starting Saturday, June 27, morning services held in Levy Auditorium

Shabu’ot Schedule Inside
**SHABU’OT SCHEDULE**

**FIRST NIGHT OF SHABU’OT**

*Saturday Evening, May 23rd*

- Minah & Arizit .......................................................... 7:55 pm
- End of Shabbat/Candle Lighting ...................................... after 8:54 pm
- Rabbi Soloveichik’s Shabbat Lecture ............................... 11:30 pm

**FIRST DAY OF SHABU’OT**

*Anniversary of Crosby Street Synagogue (1834) Sunday Morning, May 24th*

- Zemirot ................................................................. 8:15 am
- Shahrit ................................................................. 9:00 am
- Debar Torah by Rabbi Soloveichik
- Assigned Jr. Congregation in Little Synagogue .......... 10:30 am
- Girls’ Reading of the Book of Ruth .......................... 11:30; 12:30 am
- Kiddush | Sponsors: Lawry Frierer, Tauber Family, Wagnam Family, Supporters: Blau Family, Doby and Melvin Neumark, Contributors: Kaplan family, Daniela Weiss and Avi Yehoshuaf

**SECOND NIGHT OF SHABU’OT**

*Sunday Evening, May 24th*

- Ashcurat Reading Part 1 ........................................... 7:30 pm
- Evening Services (Minah & Arizit) .............................. 8:00 pm
- Candle Lighting ........................................................ 8:40 pm

**SECOND DAY OF SHABU’OT**

*Monday Morning, May 25th, Memorial Day*

- Zemirot ................................................................. 8:15 am
- Shahrit ................................................................. 9:00 am
- Seminar by Rabbi Hidary on the topic “From Precepts to Poetry: the Art of Counting the Commandments”
- Cheesecake Kiddush .................................................. following services
- Ashcurat Reading Part 2 ............................................ 7:30 pm
- Minah & Arizit ........................................................ 8:00 pm
- Monday Evening Festival Habdalah ............................. after 8:41 pm

**UPCOMING EVENTS AND INITIATIVES**

| Alhambra Sephardic Music Ensemble Concert  
Thursday, June 4 | 8:00 pm | Levy Auditorium  
The Shearith Israel League is organizing and sponsoring an evening of Judeo-Spanish songs from Spain, Turkey (Salonica, Istanbul), Egypt, the Greek Isles, Jerusalem, and the Balkans. Isabelle Ganz, mezzo-sopran, will direct a group of singers and performers on the oud, duduk and other traditional instruments. Refreshments will be served. While the concert is free, you may make a voluntary donation to the League at shearithisrael.org.

*"From Slave to Merchant Prince: The Remarkable Journey of Sarah Brandon Moses." A Multi-Media Presentation | Tuesday, June 9 | 7:15-8:15 pm  
Dr Laura A. Leibman, professor of English and Humanities at Reed College and author of *The Jesuits, Secret, and Mysticism: A New Interpretation of Early American Jewish Life*, winner of the 2012 National Jewish Book Award, shares her most recent research into slavery in early American Jewish life and how it impacted the personal lives of our community’s early families.

Shearith Israel Book Club  
**NEW DATE:** Wednesday, June 10 | 8:00 pm  
Held in a private home | Esther Hidary
Join us for the last meeting of the year. Now there is no excuse not to start reading “The UnAmericans” by Molly Antopol. RSVP to chidary@gmail.com.

**End of the Year Picnic**  
**Saturday, June 13** | Following Shabbat Services  
Join us for our annual Family Shabbat Picnic in Central Park. Bring a sheet to sit on, appropriate clothing, and we’ll provide the food. There will be activities with “Roll Joel” for the children, Liz and Shunade will play with the toddlers and Rabbi Soloveichik will lead a class for the parents. As long as the sun is shining, we’ll be outside otherwise, we’ll bring the party indoors. RSVP at shearithisrael.org/picnic.

Pay Tribute to Rabbi Ir Reid for 25 Years of Devoted Service as our Hazan  
**Saturday, June 20** | Following Morning Services  
Join us for a special tribute to Rabbi Reid and a Kiddush lunch in his honor. Go to shearithisrael.org/tribute25 to be added to the list of sponsors and contributors.

**WEEKDAY JUDAIC EDUCATION**

*View all our spring classes at shearithisrael.org/education*

**Weekday Toddler Summer ‘Camp’**  
June 23rd - August 20th  
Tuesdays and Thursdays | 9:30-11:50 am  
For children aged 10-35 months.
Includes outdoor play and a wading pool. Adult caregiver presence is required. Register online at shearithisrael.org/content/summer-toddler-program-2015

**Hebrew classes**  
*Level 1: Sunday 10:00 am - 11:00 am*  
To sign up: shearithisrael.org/hebrewclasses