The Second Mill Street Synagogue and the Founding Fathers
By Z. Edinger, Shamash
Shabbat HaGadol is the anniversary of the consecration of Shearith Israel’s second synagogue building, the Second Mill Street Synagogue. It housed our congregation from April 17, 1818 until April 13, 1833. At its dedication, Mordecai Manual Noah gave a lengthy address in which he extolled the United States as a beacon of religious freedom: “[f]or the first time in eighteen centuries, it may be said that the Jew feels he was born equal, and is entitled to equal protection.” It was because of this toleration that, according to Noah, the new synagogue needed to be built. “From the attractions of light and liberty which our dear country holds forth to the persecuted of all nations, many of our people have emigrated from Europe, and their increasing number made it necessary for their accommodation, that we should enlarge our place of worship.”

Afterwards, Noah sent a copy of his remarks to many of our founding fathers. Below are some of the responses he received:

Copy of a letter from Thomas Jefferson.
Monticello, May 28th, 1818.
Sir,—I thank you for the Discourse on the consecration of the Synagogue in your city, with which you have been pleased to favor me. I have read it with pleasure and instruction, having learnt from it some valuable facts in Jewish history which I did not know before. Your sect, by its sufferings, has furnished a remarkable proof of the universal spirit of religious intolerance inherent in every sect, disclaimed by all who feel, and practised by all who are in power. Our laws have applied the only antidote to this vice, protecting our religious, as they do our civil rights, by putting all on an equal footing. But more remains to be done; for although we are free by the law, we are not so in practice; public opinion erects itself in an Inquisition, and exercises its office with as much fanaticism as fans the flames of an Auto da fe. The prejudice still crouching on your section of our religion, although the elder one, cannot be unfelt by yourselves; it is to be hoped that individual dispositions will, at length, mould themselves to the model of the law, and consider the moral basis on which all our religions rest, as the rallying point which unites them in a common interest; while the peculiar dogmas branching from it, are the exclusive concern of the respective sects embracing them, and no rightful subject of notice to any other; public opinion, needs reformation on that point, which would have the further happy effect, of doing away the hypocritical maxim of “intrus et libet, foris ut morit.” [Latin for “within as pleasures, without how maintained” i.e. do as you please in private, but in public behave as is customary.]
PESAH 5777
Help Us Go 100% Hametz Free
Please remove all hametz from your drawers in the synagogue before Passover. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sale of Hametz
If you would like to appoint Rabbi Meir Soloveichik as agent to sell your Hametz before Pesah, please fill out the form at shearithisrael.org/hametz before Sunday, April 9 at 9 am.

Maot Hittim
Maot Hittim is a special Passover fund, originally intended to provide the poor with matzah. A $100 contribution will enable us to pay for someone in need to attend a communal haggadah (seder). Make an online donation of any amount by filling out the form at shearithisrael.org/maothittim or by making out a check exactly to “Congregation Shearith Israel—Rabbi’s Discretionary Fund” with “Maot Hittim” in the memo.

Teen Girls Shir Hashirim Reading
Saturday, April 15 | Fifth Day of Pesah
After musaf, the teen girls of our synagogue take part in our unique tradition as they read The Song of Songs for the congregation in the Main Sanctuary after services. To sponsor the Kiddush in the girls’ honor go to shearithisrael.org/teen-girls-shir-hashirim-2017

Pesah Kiddush Sponsors Wanted
We are still seeking sponsors and contributors for our kiddushim over Pesah. Please contact Barbara Reiss at breiss@shearithisrael.org if you are interested.

PASSOVER PREPARATIONS
Search for Hametz, Sunday Evening, April 9 | after 7:29 PM
Fast of First Born, Monday Morning, April 10
Fast Begins (dawn) | 4:59 AM
Morning Service & Szyyum by Pin Tan Soloveichik | 7:15 AM
Finish Eating Hametz | by 10:46 AM
Dispose of Remaining Hametz | by 11:51 AM

PASSOVER FIRST DAYS SCHEDULE

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<th>PASSOVER: DAY 1</th>
<th>PASSOVER: DAY 2</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monday Evening, April 10</td>
<td>Tuesday Evening, April 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Candle Lighting</td>
<td>7:12 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evening Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haggadah (Seder)</td>
<td>after 7:54 PM</td>
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<td>Tuesday Morning, April 11</td>
<td>Wednesday Morning, April 12</td>
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<td>Morning Services</td>
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<td>Tikkan HaTfil</td>
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<td>Service</td>
<td>11:25 AM</td>
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<td>Kiddush</td>
<td>Sponsored by the Haberman Family</td>
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<td>NO</td>
<td>Tot Shabbat, Youth Groups, or Jr. Congregation on the first day</td>
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UPCOMING EVENTS AND INITIATIVES

Learn History, Celebrate History, MAKE History
A Very Special Shabbaton
in Washington DC and Monticello
Friday, May 5 - Sunday, May 7
Join this truly once in a lifetime opportunity to make history with Rabbi Soloveichik as we conduct the first ever hashkabal (memorial) service for Rachel Phillips Levy, Shearith Israel forebear, and the only Jew buried on the grounds of Monticello. Spaces are highly limited. For details, terms, and registration go to shearithisrael.org/Monticello. Deeply discounted rates at the Park Hyatt Hotel last until, next Friday, April 14.

Mark Your Calendars for Great Events this Spring
• Monday, May, 7, 00 pm—Yom Haatzmaut Lecture
• Wednesday, May 3, 7:00 pm—Treasures of the Caribbean Book Launch Event
• Wednesday, May 17, 7:00 pm—Carralho’s Journey Film Screening
• Sunday, May 21, 10:30 am—Chatham Square Memorial Service
• Wednesday, May 24, 7:00 pm—“Achdut in Action” Fleet Week Event

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Hazak L’Barukh to our member, Scott Shay, whose essay, “If You Only Read One Chapter of the Bible, Read This” was published in last week’s Forward.

WEEKDAY JUDAICA EDUCATION
For details go to shearithisrael.org/judaica-education

Sunday
◊ Saadia Gaon’s Book of Beliefs and Opinions | Sjimon den Hollander | 8:45 am

Monday, Wednesday, & Thursday
◊ Habura (Paired) Learning | 5:15 pm - 7:15 pm | Before and after evening services, Rabbi Chaim Yanetz and rabbinical students from YU are available in the Elias Room to study in habura with congregants of all ages. | NO SESSION THIS MONDAY AND WEDNESDAY

Tuesday
◊ Minyan Class and Breakfast | Following Morning Services | Sponsored by Chaim Katzap
◊ Feasts and Fasts: The Festivals in Jewish Thought – A Class for Women | Rabbi Soloveichik | 9:00 am | Spring semester sponsored anonymously in memory of Debby Neumar | NO CLASS THIS WEEK
◊ Talmud Class: Tractate Sanhedrin | Rabbi Soloveichik | 7 pm | NO CLASS THIS WEEK

Wednesday
◊ Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Shearith Israel: A Monthly Q & A | Z. Edinger | 7:00 pm | On select Wednesdays | Email questions to zedinger@shearithisrael.org. | Next Class April 26

To sponsor a single class or an entire semester, go to shearithisrael.org/sponsoraclass
To find out when your favorite class is held, canceled or for special topics, go to shearithisrael.org/join-our-mailing-lists to select which emails you’d like to receive.