SAVE THE DATE  
“Pulpit Swap”  
Shabbat, March 10, 2018

In the spirit of friendship and mutual respect, Rabbi Levine and Soloveichik will “swap” synagogues, enjoying the warmth of their peer kehillot and each treating the other to a special lecture after morning services.


To join our list of sponsors for the kiddush following this special lecture, visit shearithisrael.org/pulpit-swap.

JNF’s Tu B’Shevat Festival: Shuk Shack “Experience Israel in NYC”  
Wednesday, January 31, 2018 | 7:00 pm  
JAC HQ, 555 West 18 Street, New York, NY  
Shearith Israel is proud to co-sponsor this enormous communal festival. To RSVP and learn more about the festival, including the VIP Cocktail Reception, and JNFuture afterparty, visit jnf.org/shukschak.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS
Mazal tov to Marlene & Michael Sperling on the birth of a grandson to their children, Shoshana and Will Yagoda.

We welcome the following people to the Shearith Israel family:  
George Klein  
Vida & Arthur Mantel

Our next public tour is Wednesday, February 14  
Parnas Office Hours  
Louis Solomon would be delighted to meet with you. Please schedule a visit at parnas@shearithisrael.org.

DEBAR TORAH FROM SLAVE TO SCHOLAR THE NEW MOON AND THE REDEMPITIVE PROCESS  
— ASHER FINKELSTEIN

As the drama of the Exodus reaches its height towards the end of this week’s Parasha, it is seemingly interrupted by a legalistic lunar interlude: “This month shall be for you the beginning of months, it shall be the first month of the year to you” (12:2). Based on Rabbinic tradition, Maimonides (Book of Mitzvot, Positive Commandments 53) codifies this verse as the halakhic command to “sanctify and calculate months and years” according to lunar and other astronomical cycles. What is this mitzvah doing at the height of the Exodus narrative? Many explain that the intention is to create a lasting reminder of the Exodus by counting the months of the year from that event. Rabbeinu Yonah, however, adds a fascinating angle which points towards larger themes about freedom and national self-image: “Also, since they were leaving back-breaking labor, he exhorted them first to learn wisdom, for knowing the month requires knowing the movement of the spheres—the stars which is a splendid wisdom and it is the ladder to ascend to the knowledge of God.” In other words, command was a key component of the redemptive process—by bringing their ploughshares into books and morphing from slaves to scholars, the Jewish people would successfully transition from degradation and bondage into purposeful and meaningful freedom.

As Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks and others are fond of pointing out, harder than taking the Jews out of Egypt was taking Egypt out of the Jews. This does not merely refer to Jews steeped in the immorality culture of Egypt itself, but also refers to the national self-image the Egyptians foisted upon the Jews—doubtless one of degradation and servitude. Removing this slave mentality and low national self-esteem was a formidable task indeed. The above comment of Rabbeinu Yonah highlights one aspect of the Divine plan to “take the Egypt out of the Jews.” An interesting comment of Rashbam earlier in the Exodus narrative points at another. At the burning bush, Moshe proclaims himself unfit for the task of addressing Pharaoh on the grounds that he is “heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue.” Most understand that Moshe had a speech impediment. The Rashbam suggests, however, that this mentions that Moshe spoke Egyptians with difficulty. Having been nurtured in the house of his parents, and fled to Midian at a relatively young age, Moshe now found himself unable to speak proper Egyptian. How could he speak before Pharaoh? God of course responds that who but He has given man a mouth and chosen whom to make mead or deaf, etc.

There is a Divine logic behind the choice. If we may speculate as the contents of that logic, the following conjecture appears quite plausible: In a society in which “Hebrew” or “Jew” meant a slave, an object of disdain, someone at the bottom of the social pyramid, it was difficult for the Jews to view themselves in any other way. Yet Berlin identifies this very phenomenon as the root of the Jewish self-hatred of people like Marx. Often people cannot help but view themselves through the prism of the values and prejudices of the society around them. So Moshe’s unfamilarity with the Egyptian language was actually his greatest strength. He was not familiar with the language in which “Hebrew” meant “slave.” He only knew the Holy Tongue, in which “Hebrew” is a mark of pride. This was the person who would be able to take the Egypt out of the Jews and transform them into a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

So as Rabbeinu Yonah (and less consciously) Rashbam both intimate, “taking the Egypt out of the Jews” was a tough task which required a diverse toolbox—lunar, linguistic, and otherwise. In this way, a holistic redemptive process was enacted, setting the stage for the glorious Jewish future ahead.

Asher Finkelstein is a student at Yeshiva University and a member of our ongoing Hebrew (Passer Learning) Program.

CANDLE LIGHTING | 4:40 pm
MINAH & ARBIT | 4:45 pm | Main Sanctuary
FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | “The Sabbath River and the British Museum” | 2017-2018 season sponsored by the JCC.
ZEIMROIT | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary
SHARHAT (NISHMAT) | 9:00 am | Main Sanctuary
TOT SHABBAT WITH LIZ AND SHANADE | Ages 0-4 | 1:00 pm
Fidanek Youth Room
YOUTH GROUPS WITH RACHEL | Ages 5-12 | 10:00 am | Ellis Room
JUNIOR CONGREGATION WITH A TORAH READING | Ages 5-12 | 10:30 | Little Synagogue
TALK | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | “A Passover Meal in the Palace of Saddam”
KIDDUSH | Levy Auditorium | Sponsored by Judy and Joel Schreiber, in honor of the naheila of Joel’s father, Aaron Schreiber a”h.
SHABBAT AFTERNOON SHUR | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | 3:35 pm | “The Mezuzah and the Sacrifice” | Levy Auditorium
MINAH & ARBIT | 4:35 pm
HADDALAH | 5:26 pm

Weekday Service Times  
Mornings: Sunday: 8:00 am  
Monday-Friday: 7:15 am  
Evenings: Wednesday (Minah & Arbit—note new time): 4:45 pm  
Monday–Thursday (Arbit only): 6:30 pm

Please note our NEW Sunday evening service times: Beginning this Sunday, January 21st, we will be offering both minah and arbit services at the synagogue at 4:45 PM. Please check weekly as the time for the Sunday evening service will vary according to the calendar. This will replace the arbit only service at 6:30, which will no longer meet on Sundays.

Central Park West at 70th Street, New York City • www.shearithisrael.org
TU B’Shevat at Shearith Israel

Junior Congregation with a Torah Reading
Shabbat, January 27 | 10:30 am
If you missed your opportunity to read the Torah in Junior Congregation last week, parts of Torah reading and services for next Shabbat, January 27 are still available for participants (ages 5-12) to lead. Many of them are quite brief and excellent for beginners. Please contact Mrs. Lisa Rohde to arrange a part for your child (lirohde-csi@yahoo.com).

HAPPENING NEXT WEEK!
Young Couples and Families
Pre-Tu B’Shebat Luncheon
NEXT Shabbat, January 27
Following Morning Services
Mark the new year for trees and celebrate the Jewish link to the fruits of the Holy Land with Rabbi and Layaliza Soloveichik & Co. Join us and invite your friends for a family luncheon of Torah and fruity goodness.

Members: $35/adult, $15/child under 12
Non-Members: $40/adult, $18/child under 12

Sponsorship Opportunities:
$180 (includes 2 adults and their children)
$250 (includes 2 adults and their children)

For registration and sponsorship details, visit shearithisrael.org/tu-bshebat-lunch.

Tu B’Sheva Shiur
Rabbi Meir Soloveichik
Tuesday, January 30
7:00 pm
Rabbi Soloveichik will deliver a shiur dedicated to the themes of Tu B’Shevat. Tasty Tu B’Shebat treats will be served.

For sponsorship opportunities for this public lecture, visit shearithisrael.org/tu-bshebat-shiur.

Purim at Shearith Israel

SAVE THE DATE
Herringfest: The Purim Edition
Featuring herring from the world-famous Russ & Daughters, foods from other fine purveyors, and an entertaining talk from Rabbi Soloveichik
Wednesday, February 28 | Following Megillah Reading
It’s our annual Purim Dinner—with a twist! This year, after the success of last year’s Herringfest, we’re holding the sequel—with even more herring! on Purim night, after megillah reading. Other smoked fish with delicious bagels and spreads will round out this delectable dinner.
Registration and sponsorships coming soon.

Be Part of Our Women’s Megillah Esther
Purim Morning, Thursday, March 1
Services begin at 7:15 am
Calling all women aged 12 and up to read megillah this year, for the 29th year of this Shearith Israel tradition. Assignments are as short as 3 verses and all audio is available at shearithisrael.org/megillah-esther. It’s easy to learn and is a great way to participate in this Purim! Contact Mrs. Lisa Rohde at lirohde-csi@yahoo.com for more information and to get involved.

Sponsor Our Annual Purim Breakfast
Thursday, March 1 | 8:30 am
Every year we treat our congregation to a festive Purim Breakfast following the reading of the megillah on Purim morning. Help ensure that we have plenty of hamantashen to go around by going here to sponsor: shearithisrael.org/purim-breakfast

Send Mishloah Manot to a Member
Take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to send special Purim greetings and to reach out to our Shearith Israel community. This project will support the Sisterhood’s many projects. Please stay tuned for more information via email about how to participate. For questions, please contact Mrs. Lisa Rohde at lirohde-csi@yahoo.com or Mrs. Carla Schein at scheinc6@gmail.com.

Schedule Alerts
- Rabbi Soloveichik’s Women’s Class and Talmud Class will NOT meet this Tuesday, January 23.
- Toddler Program will have a make-up session on Friday, January 26, for those who missed last Wednesday’s cancelled session.
- PTTS is not in session over Yeshiva Week (Sunday, January 14-Sunday, January 21). School resumes on Thursday, January 25.

Special Offer for Shearith Israel Members
50% Discount on Rabbi Soloveichik’s New Online Course: Jewish Ideas and the American Founders Provided by The Tikvah Fund
If you’ve ever wanted to learn from Rabbi Soloveichik in the comfort of your own home, this is the course for you.

In eight new lectures, Rabbi Soloveichik will take you through early American Jewish history and explain the connections between Jewish ideals and the founding of America. You can:
- watch or listen to these lectures at your own pace
- watch or listen as often as you like
- gift them to others

Regular cost for this online course is $40, but using an exclusive 50% coupon code for Shearith Israel members brings the price down to only $20.

Simply go to tikvahfund.org/course/jewish-ideas-american-founders, create an account, and enroll in the course with the coupon code "ShearithIsrael" to start learning today.

View all our Winter Semester classes at shearithisrael.org/judaic-education

Sign up to be notified of any schedule changes or cancellations at shearithisrael.org/join-our-email-lists.