Pre-Shabuot Mini-Series: Revealing Ruth with Shira Hecht-Koller
Wednesday, May 29 & Wednesday, June 5 at 11:00 am
Shearith Israel is proud to partner with Drisha to study the book of Ruth with an eye toward literary nuance and character development.
To register, go to drisha.org/ongoing-classes.
To request a Shearith Israel member discount code, visit tinyurl.com/drisha-ruth.

Rabbi Soloveichik’s Shabuot Lecture
Saturday night, June 8 | 11:00 pm
Rabbi Soloveichik’s annual Shabuot lecture has become a go-to destination for the full UWS Shabuot experience. Come for the Torah, stay for the cheesecake!
For sponsorship opportunities, visit tinyurl.com/shabuot-lecture.

Girls’ Ruth Reading
1st day of Shabuot, Sunday, June 9 | following morning services
Following morning services, the girls of our synagogue (through college age) recite the Book of Ruth for the congregation in the main sanctuary. Don’t miss this beautiful Shearith Israel tradition!

CHOIR SELECTIONS THIS SHABBAT
Friday Night
V'Shameru” #1* (p. 166) | Samuel Naumovich
Psalm 23 (p. 174) | Leon Kramer
Yigdal’ #1* (p. 177) | Samuel de Sola

Shabbat Morning
Misheberakh (p. 208) | Salomone Rossi
Yehi Haashekha (p. 215) | Leon Hyman
Unhuho Yemer (p. 218) | Leon Hyman
En Kelohenu (p. 229) | Samuel de Sola
Adon Olam (p. 232) | Salomone Rossi

Public Tours
Our next public tour is Wednesday, June 12, at 11:00 AM

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

OMER AND SHABUOT: THE AGONIZING FINAL COUNTDOWN
Hazzan Rabbi Ira Rohde

The listing of holidays in Leviticus Chapter 23 is much more directly connected with agriculture than similar lists of them elsewhere, as, for a book preoccupied with sacrificial offerings, both animal- and plant-based. Of course, the holiday cycle is everywhere based upon the crop cycle. But the recounting of the cycle in Leviticus 23 is punctuated with more agricultural detail than others in the list. In detail in which the Omer wordsthe following is described: the shedding of the leaves made from the new grain crop on Shabuot, the reminder to leave gleanings in the field when harvesting, and especially the detail of reaping with tree branches on Succot. Most of this detail is focused simply upon the grain crop. I have always found that this is an indicator of the text’s authenticity. It’s hard for us to imagine what the vast majority of the society’s calendric intake came from the wheat and barley crop, but archaeology of the ancient Levant’s agriculture is even more ancient. Some other crops do get mentioned in the Torah (and other ancient Mesopotamian sources), but agricultural life is described starkly in simple terms as revolving around grain. I am always reminded that archaeology seems to confirm the Levant’s (O.K., the northern Levant, northern Syria on the border with Turkey near Abraham’s father) as the most probable origin of wheat and barley, which spread quickly from there to Egypt, Mesopotamia, and even to China. So, as a civilization, we Israelis descend from perhaps the oldest crop-based culture in the world. And we have one of the oldest agricultural practices, popularized using an accessible alphabetic writing system, which celebrates that basic plant cycle: I have always found that this is an indicator of the text’s authenticity. At this point in our year, we are between Israel’s first Omer (a bundle, perhaps 10 or 12 bundles of barley grain harvest (presumably barley, as it seems to indicate in such sources as the Book of Ruth, although it doesn’t say so in Lev 23) and the offering of the first real “bread” (presumably wheat, harvested later according to the Book of Ruth) from the new crop on Shabuot. But it’s odd. If they had already harvested the Omer of new grain and “waved” it, would the offering of new grain be brought into the Holy Place? Why wait until Shabuot? Verse 14 seems to indicate that Israelites themselves were permitted to eat the new crop any time after the Omer was brought. So why the seven-week wait for an offering of new grain?
One could answer that barley makes a poor bread, lacking grain that binds it together, a coarse paste, perhaps less capable of being stored. And for these reasons and more, the main bread destined for the Shabbat and the Holydays was made from wheat.

But one could go further and say that any grain harvested before Shabuot, no matter whether it was barley or wheat, was not likely to make a good bread, because it wasn’t sufficiently mature to be ground into flour. Nor would this grain have stored well. Nor would this be one of the main advantages to a grain-based food-supply. Our text doesn’t actually say that the Omer was necessary from barley. So any early-harvested grain was still considered, rather handy. I suggest that this is why two particular terms are used in addition to “bread” in v. 14: “You shall not eat any bread, or roasted or new grain, until the very day you bring this offering to your God.”

These two latter terms ἔτι and πρότερον have always fascinated the “foodie” in me. I imagine that because of its poor quality for bread, the “green” grain might have had to be baked almost like German “graubrot.” Or, alternatively, the green grain would have been roasted, until the roasted rendered the kernels and the kernels themselves could be chewed, or else the roasted grain allowed the grain to grow enough so that an inferior but passable type flour or grits could be made like German “grauerl.”

Coconut and almonds are usually interpreted as “bread” in v. 14. You must not eat any bread, or roasted or new grain, until the very day you bring this offering to your God.

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The construction of this day in the middle part of the Middle East, especially among Arabs in Israel and Turkey, green wheat is roasted and ground into a cereal called “bread.” I’m not sure the procedure is the same today, but in ancient times the grain was left on the cornfield stalks, piled up in the field, and if some were to be consumed quickly. Some piles of stalks were set on fire. Using the stalks and chaff as fuel, the kernels of wheat would be roasted, separating from the burning stalks in the process. And when the fire went out, the separated kernels (which were heavier and more dense, falling to the bottom of the pile) would be found collected near the ground underneath the ashes. The more fully-roasted kernels could be eaten as is, or dipped in vinegar as “bou’a” worcester. And the less thoroughly roasted could be ground or mixed into “fleisch” and cooked or bottled with salt. But for most of the grain crop, there had to be this agonizing wait at the end, until the crop would be fully ready for optimal use, as well as optimal storage. It was this agonizing wait at the very end the final countdown and test of the farmer’s patience, which is what our Omer period is about.

CANDLET-lighting: 7:50 pm
EVENING SERVICES: 6:45 pm
MORNING SERVICES: Main Synagogue | 8:15 am
TOT SHABBAT: Ages 0-4 | 10:00 am | Fidanza Youth Room
YOUTH GROUPS: Ages 5-12 | 10:00 am | Portico
JUNIOR CONGREGATION: 10:30 am | Little Synagogue
SHIUR | Rabbi Soloveichik | “The Cave of Socrates and Shimon Bar Yoqha”
KIDDIUS | Levy Auditorium | Sponsored by Jennifer Ash and Seth Haberman in honor of Isaac Haberman’s upcoming marriage to Rachel McCoy
SHABBAT AFTERNOON PIRKEI ABOY SHIUR | Rabbi Soloveichik | 6:45 PM | “The Mysterious Talmidim of Rabbi Akiba” | Levy Auditorium
EVENING SERVICES: 7:45 pm
HABDALA: 8:49 pm

Lag LaOmer begins on Wednesday evening.

Weekday Service Times
Mornings:
Sunday: 8:00 am | Monday-Thursday: 7:15 am
EVENINGS:
Sunday-Thursday (Minha & Arvit): 6:30 pm

Central Park West at 70th Street, New York City • www.shearithisrael.org
**THIS SUNDAY**

Chatham Square Cemetery Memorial Event
Honoring the patriotic service rendered by our members
THIS Sunday, May 19 | 10:30 am
Chatham Square Cemetery | 55 St James Place
Please join us for our annual Memorial Service to honor members of our congregation and to decorate the graves of 19 veterans of the American Revolution. This year’s ceremony includes special presentations by Colonel Jonathan de Sola Mendes, USMC, Retired, and by Lieutenant Arthur Goldberg, USN, Retired. This truly special ceremony features the participation of a color guard and field music and is both enjoyable and moving.

To sign up for transportation (space permitting), contact Z. Edinger at zedinger@shearithisrael.org.

This program is one of our many Year of Years, 365th Anniversary events, showcasing the extraordinary historical roots and uniquely American history of our congregation and community.

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**Menachem Begin:**

Lessons from a Rich Legacy of Leadership
with Rabbi Meir Soloveichik & Senator Joseph Lieberman

THIS Sunday, May 19 | 7:00 pm
Join Rabbi Dr. Meir Soloveichik and Senator Joseph Lieberman as they analyze Menachem Begin’s philosophy, actions, and lessons they hold for us today.

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**COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**IMPORTANT Website Update:** Our website is back up, but is not yet up to date; the prayer services schedule is NOT yet available. We are working to restore all functionality as quickly as possible. If you cannot find what you need on the website, you can refer back to our weekly emails for service times, and use the links provided here or in our emails to register for programs.

We welcome new member **Merry Winslow** to our growing Shearith Israel family.

Condolences to Chaim Edelstein, on the passing of his sister, Sarah Friedel.

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**The Media and Religion: Trends and Challenges**

THIS Wednesday, May 22 | 7:00 pm

A panel discussion moderated by Rabbi Meir Soloveichik, with:
- Emma Green, Writer, Editor, The Atlantic
- Terry Mattingly, Senior Fellow for Media and Religion, The King’s College
- John Podhoretz, Writer, Editor, Commentary Magazine
- Soliab Amari, OpEd Editor, New York Post; Contributing Ed, Catholic Herald

This event is free but registration is required at religiousfreedomconf.org.

To sponsor, visit tinyurl.com/media-religion.

Coproduced by the Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought, the International Center for Law and Religion Studies of Brigham Young University, and the J. Reuben Clark Law Society.

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**DON’T LET YOUR GRADUATE GO UNNOTICED!**

2019 Graduate Scroll of Honor & Graduation Kiddush

Shabbat, June 15 | Following Morning Services

Let’s spread the good news and celebrate the success and accomplishments of all our graduates from pre-school to PhDs! Visit tinyurl.com/graddkiddush19 by June 13 to ensure that we can properly list and congratulate your graduate(s) in our 2019 Scroll of Honor. Even if you cannot attend, please send us listing information for your graduates, and consider co-sponsoring our graduation kiddush for $180 or just $36.

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**Young Couples and Families Year-End "Celebrate Israel" Picnic**

Shabbat, June 1 | Following Morning Services

**Featured Speaker:** Hai Piaščeky

Chairred by Zeya Raynes and Rivka Wiznia

School is ending and the Celebrate Israel Parade is coming! Join our young families the Shabbat before the parade to celebrate Israel with this Israeli-themed luncheon. Our third PTTS Shabbaton will be happening this same Shabbat, so don’t pass up this chance to mingle!

Hai Piaščeky, originally from Moshav Gea, is now living in Manhattan serving as a Senior Community Shulich (emissary) for the UWJ on behalf of the Jewish Agency for Israel and the UJA Federation. In his capacity as Shulich, Hai works with more than 25 different organizations, building communal connections to Israel.

For registration and sponsorships, visit tinyurl.com/israel-picnic.

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**VERY FEW SPOTS REMAINING!**

Day Trip to Touro with Rabbi Soloveichik

July 4 | Departing at 7:00 am

Spaces currently available to “1776” and “365” sponsors only

If any spots remain, we may open registration more broadly

Join Rabbi Soloveichik for an all-day field trip to Newport, Rhode Island, home of our historic sister synagogue, the Touro Synagogue.

Highlights of this full-day excursion will include:
- preparatory talks on the bus by Rabbi Soloveichik
- walking tour of Jewish Newport, led by Rabbi Soloveichik
- costumed reading of the Declaration of Independence from the balcony of the Old Colony House as they did in 1776
- memorial service (hashkabah) at the cemetery, led by Rabbi Soloveichik
- light lunch and dinner, hosted by Congregation Jeshuat Israel
- major historical lecture delivered by Rabbi Soloveichik, at the Touro Synagogue

If you wish to join as a sponsor, register at tinyurl.com/touro-trip.

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**PTTS Shabbaton**

Shabbat, June 1

Don’t miss the final PTTS Shabbaton of the school year! While students are welcome and encouraged to attend services every week, you definitely don’t want to lose this chance to take center stage in Junior Congregation and showcase how far you’ve come since the beginning of the year. Followed by the Young Families Year-End Picnic (see center panel). We look forward to celebrating all our PTTS students’ accomplishments together.

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Register now for PTTS Hebrew School 2019-2020

Held on Thursdays afternoons, with special programming on select Sundays

Early bird pricing until May 31 | School begins: October 24

Polonies Talmud Torah School, provides children and teens with a substantive Jewish education in a positive and engaging environment. For questions, contact Barbara Reiss at breiss@shearithisrael.org.

Register at tinyurl.com/hebrewschool19.