

## Shearith Israel *Kippah*

Did you see the new Shearith Israel *Kippah* that recently premiered at our Gala? Wondering where you can get one? Shearith Israel *Kippot* are available for purchase on our website at [shearithisrael.org/store](http://shearithisrael.org/store) for \$10 each! Show off your great sense of style and allegiance to CSI and grab this great deal while it lasts!

### COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Thank you for underwriting our Intimate Shabbat Dinner For Singles with Rabbi and Esther Hidary*

Oliver Stanton  
John Lewin  
Rivka Shoulson and Marc Wiznia

*and to the planning committee: Deborah Bendheim, Z. Edinger, Esther Hidary, Rabbi Richard Hidary, Ruthie Israel, Erica Markowitz, Maurine McCabe, Rivka Shoulson*

*Thank you to the sponsors of our Shabbat with Eric Goldstein:*

#### Underwriter

Oliver Stanton

#### Sponsor

Debbie and David Sable

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Peter Neustadter

Deborah and Michael Rapoport

Alene Schneierson

## A Standing Question: Is God Static or Dynamic?

Rabbi Richard Hidary

וַיְהִי־לִּם וַיְהִי־סֵלֶם מִצָּב אֶרְצָה וְרָאִשׁוּ מִגִּיעַ הַשְּׁמַיִמָּה וַיְהִי־מִלְאָכִי אֶ-לֹהִים  
עֲלֵי־ם וַיִּרְדּוּ־ם בּוֹ: וַיְהִי־ יְקוֹם נִצָּב עָלָיו

“He had a dream; a stairway was set on the ground and its top reached to the sky, and angels of God were going up and down on it. And the Lord was standing upon him/it” (Genesis 28:12-13).

Jacob’s dream of a stairway to heaven reveals a pathway from the human to the Divine and the possibility for us to gain some understanding of God. The difficulty, however, is that dreams are only as good as their interpretation. Two Jewish thinkers, Maimonides and Meir ibn Gabbai, have explained this dream in two opposite ways. Their argument focuses on the final words, – נִצָּב עָלָיו God was standing upon him/it.

Maimonides in the introduction to the Guide of the Perplexed points to Jacob’s dream as an example of a parable wherein every detail signifies something important. The first part of the Guide consists in a lexicon of biblical words that could imply corporeality when applied to God. He therefore provides various definitions for each word and specifies that only the figurative meaning can apply to God. In chapter 15, he says that נִצָּב literally means to stand, but can also mean to be stable and permanent. Maimonides explains the ladder as the path to prophecy, the rungs of the ladder as levels of prophecy, and the angels ascending and descending as prophets entering and exiting a prophetic trance. The last phrase, means that God remains permanent and unchanging at the top level. In this reading, the dream teaches that God is static and eternally constant while humans change as they grow in understanding of the Divine to whatever degree they are able.

A very different reading is offered by Rabbi Meir ibn Gabbai, a 16th century mystic living in the Ottoman empire. In his major work Avodat Haqodesh, ibn Gabbai also includes a lexicon of words that the Bible uses anthropomorphically in relation to God. However, rather than interpret these words towards a philosophical understanding of a remote unchanging conception God, ibn Gabbai provides each word with a mystical meaning. The word נִצָּב in Kabbalistic reading means to become unified. In Jacob’s dream, God was נִצָּב, that is, became unified, because of Jacob. Ibn Gabbai explains, “God is maintained by the righteous for they are the cause of preserving the Name and unifying it.” The deeds and thoughts of righteous human beings actually have the power to effect the Divine realm and thereby allow God’s Presence to connect with the earthly realm.

Both of these commentators reject a literal anthropomorphic reading of this verse and turn to figurative interpretation for a solution. Yet, the conclusions they reach could not be more different. In the formulation of James Diamond: “For Maimonides, God simply is and man is becoming, whereas for ibn Gabbai, man is becoming and God is becoming consequent to man’s becoming.” Maimonides philosophical God is a perpetual, perfect, static Existence; ibn Gabbai’s mystical God is a dynamic, immanent, ever-becoming Force. Perhaps one day, a new revelation or Quantum breakthrough will help us better reach for the apex of Jacob’s ladder. Until then, we must submit that the question still, well, stands.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL

The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

## Shabbat Vayetse

November 20-21, 2015

Hertz Pentateuch: p. 106; Haftarah p. 135  
Kaplan Living Torah: p. 130; Haftarah p. 1430

CANDLE LIGHTING | 4:16 pm

MINHAH | 4:15 pm

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS | following evening services | Rabbi Soloveichik gives a talk on “The Shabbat Nap: A Reflection”

*Sponsored by the Julis Family*

SHABBAT DINNER FOR SINGLES | Following Friday Night Lights | Elias Room | For Registered Guests

ZEMIROT | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary

SHAHARIT (NISHMAT) | 9:00 am | Following services, guest speaker, Eric Goldstein, in conversation with Rabbi Soloveichik on “Paris, Israel and a World in Crisis: The Future of Judaism and of Europe”

TOT SHABBAT | Ages 0-4 | 10:00 am | Levy Auditorium

YOUTH GROUPS | Ages 5-12 | 10:00 am | Children’s Library

ASSIGNED JR. CONGREGATION | Ages 5-12 | 10:30 am | Little Synagogue

KIDDUSH | Levy Auditorium | *Sponsored by Bernard Turiel and contributor Angela Salas in honor of Sam Cohen’s 88th birthday*

INTIMATE LUNCHEON WITH ERIC GOLDSTEIN | Following Kiddush | For Registered Guests | Thank you to the sponsors of our shabbat with Eric Goldstein (see inside)

TOPICS IN JEWISH PHILOSOPHY | Rabbi Hidary

3:30 pm | For high school students | Held at the Hidary home at 1 W 85th St Apartment 6A

SEUDAH SHELISHIT AND PIRKEI ABOT SHIUR | Rabbi Soloveichik on the topic “Rembrandt’s Rabbi: Menasseh ben Israel and the Artist Explain our Parasha” | 3:30 pm | *The fall semester is sponsored by Lewis Lipsey*

MINHAH/ARBIT | 4:10 pm

KETER SHEM TOB | Rabbi Hidary | Main Sanctuary

HABDALAH | 5:01 pm

### Weekday Service Times

Mornings: Sundays 8:00 AM, Mon-Thur. 7:15 AM;

Evenings: Sunday - Thursday: 6:30 PM (Arbit only)

UPCOMING EVENTS AND INITIATIVES

THANKSGIVING DAY ACTIVITIES AND REMINDERS

Start the day with morning services at 7:45 am followed by:

- THANKSGIVING ADDRESS
- CHILDREN’S HESED CRAFT ACTIVITY
- REFRESHMENTS
- PARADE VIEWING FOR YOUTH
- PACK-A-THON

Please cooperate with staff who will be working hard to ensure that all of our young members get an opportunity to view the parade.

Please also note, our office will be closed on Thursday and Friday. For funeral arrangements, contact Zachary Edinger at 917-584-3787.

Thanksgiving Pack-a-thon  
Over-subscribed!

We are expecting over 120 volunteers on Thursday to pack 1,200 boxes containing salmon, peanut butter, chickpeas, beans, rice, vegetables, applesauce and pears, yielding 10,800 meals. **We are actively seeking as much financial support as possible for this project.**

**To make a tax deductible donation, go to [shearithisrael.org/pack-a-thon](http://shearithisrael.org/pack-a-thon).**

Your gift goes directly to the Food Bank of New York City and will be credited to our project.

Winter Coat Drive  
November 22-December 20

Warm coats for men, women and children are needed. Please bring a coat to donate when you come for Thanksgiving Activities. Place in the box outside Levy Auditorium.

*Sponsored by the Shearith Israel League  
In cooperation with New York Cares.*

**British Invasion Shabbat Dinner**  
**Featuring Zaki Cooper and**  
**our resident Anglophile, Rabbi Meir Soloveichik**  
**Friday Night, December 4**  
**Following evening services and Friday Night Lights**  
Drawing on first-hand experience of working at Buckingham Palace, and using objects from his time working there, Zaki Cooper will provide his insider's insights into the real life of the royals and shed light on this magical institution. Who knows more about the British, Zaki Cooper or Rabbi Soloveichik? Find out at our British invasion Shabbat Dinner! British Menu will be served. Register at [shearithisrael.org/british-invasion](http://shearithisrael.org/british-invasion).

**Hanukkah Special Guest Lecture**  
**"Coloring the Arch of Titus Menorah:**  
**Recent Discoveries in Rome"**  
**Professor Steven Fine**  
**Monday, December 7 | 7:00 pm**  
Join us for a guest lecture during Rabbi Hidary’s Second Temple History class. Steven Fine is the Dean Pinkhos Churgin Professor of Jewish History at Yeshiva University and Director of the Arch of Titus Project. His “The Menorah: From the Bible to the Apocalypse” will be published by Harvard University Press in 2016. Free and open to the public.

*Thank you to our sponsors Karen and Jack Daar and Mildred Green Shinnar.*

**PTTS and CSI Youth Hanukkah Fest**  
**Sunday Morning, December 13 | 10:00 am -12:00 pm**  
While many Jews celebrate Hanukkah by eating potato pancakes, deep fried in oil in remembrance of the miracle of the oil, here at Shearith Israel we honor the tradition of Amsterdam by eating vaffele (waffles) because God made a "miracle and wonder" (Hebrew: "nes va-fe'le") during these days. And after all, everyone loves a good waffle! Join us for Hanukkah festivities, songs and of course, delicious waffles. Details to follow.

WEEKDAY JUDAIC EDUCATION

For schedule and class details go to:  
[shearithisrael.org/content/judaic-education-and-major-lectures](http://shearithisrael.org/content/judaic-education-and-major-lectures)

- Sunday*
- ◇ **The Book of Kings** | Rabbi Hidary | 8:40 am
  - ◇ **Saadia Gaon’s Book of Beliefs and Opinions** | Sjimon den Hollander | 9:30 am
- Monday*
- ◇ **Second Temple Jewish History** | Rabbi Hidary | 7:00 pm
  - ◇ **Bet Midrash** | Rabbi Hidary, Phil Getz, Dr. Josh Eisen, Rabbi Ira Rohde, Meira Wokenfeld | 8:00 pm
- Fall semester sponsored by Josh Eisen.*

- Tuesday*
- ◇ **Rambam’s Mishneh Torah** | Rabbi Hidary | 7:45 am
  - ◇ **Feasts and Fasts: The Festivals in Jewish Thought- A Class for Women** | Rabbi Soloveichik | 9:00 am
  - ◇ **Talmud Class: Tractate Rosh Hashana and the Philosophy of Jewish Time** | Rabbi Soloveichik | 8:00 pm

Please consider sponsoring a class. Go to:  
[shearithisrael.org/sponsoraaclass](http://shearithisrael.org/sponsoraaclass)

**Parnas Office Hours**  
Louis Solomon would be delighted to meet with you. Please schedule a visit at [parnas@shearithisrael.org](mailto:parnas@shearithisrael.org).

Our next public tour is:  
**Tuesday, December 8 at 11:00 am**