

**Debar Torah CONT.** different tendencies, that most personalities don't fit the same mold, and, more importantly, that all family constellations and dynamics don't fit the same mold. And love relationships within the family also don't follow the same mold. And yet the family itself is very important to the astrologer, for that indeed constitutes the person's very sign under which he was born and his own stellar constellation and his fate is tied to it, for better or for worse. So I found that the astrologers I talked to were more motivated to keep families of many types intact and working, even when they may have been less than ideal from the perspective of the psychological health of individual partners. We are all fated, naturally as well as supernaturally, for trials, tribulations, and hardships beyond our control. And then there is our own ugly sin, for the consequences of which we bear responsibility. But we must not lose hope, nor should we stop following our own constellation: The paths of the Heavens are many, and ultimately known to no one but God. Marriage and family constellations, in particular, can be the source of much bitterness and travail, but they also ensure survival on earth and bring deliverance, through their hidden partner, God: *"So it was not you who sent me here, but God."*

### **Tenth of Tebeth ('Asarah BeTebet) Fast 5776**

Tuesday, December 22, 2015

Dawn [Fast Begins] - 5:48 am

Fast Day Morning Services [Shahrit] - 7:15 am

Minhah [men wear tefillin] & Arbit - 3:45 pm

Sunset - 4:32 pm

End of Fast - 4:52 pm

### **Make your 2015 tax deductible donation**

By now you should have received our year-end letter requesting that you close out your open balances and make your additional contributions that we so deeply rely on. We urge you to send in your payments and gifts as soon as possible and in advance of December 31 so we can credit your gifts to your 2015 tax-deductible giving. Go to [shearithisrael.org/content/general-donations](http://shearithisrael.org/content/general-donations) to donate.

### **COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

***Mazal Tob*** to Shana and Louis Alexandre Berg on the birth of a son. Mazal Tob to the grandparents, Esme and Roger Berg

***Mazal Tob*** to Gabriela Yohananoff on becoming a Bat Mitzvah. Gabriela is the daughter of Daniela Weiss and Avi Yohananoff

***Condolences*** to Danielle Lahmani on the passing of her sister, Evelyne Sahar.

### **The "Family Constellation:" In Praise of Joseph, the Astrologer Rabbi Ira Rohde, Hazzan**

*"Now, do not be distressed or reproach yourselves because you sold me hither; it was to save life that God sent me ahead of you. It is now two years that there has been famine in the land, and there are still five years to come in which there shall be no yield from tilling. God has sent me ahead of you to ensure your survival on earth and to save your lives in an extraordinary deliverance. So, it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, lord of all his household, and ruler over the whole land of Egypt (Gen. 45:5-8)."*

God does "work in strange ways." That does seem to be the lesson which Joseph draws from the story of what has happened and will continue to happen to him and his family. Joseph's mention of the seven years of famine in the middle of his address to his brothers not to reproach themselves with guilt over their sale of him reminds us once again that Joseph is kind of prophet/astrologer, a diviner of the paths and fates of people and events. And in this fate, the family constellation plays a huge role. Astrologers, like their later successors the psychoanalysts, emphasize the importance of basic family structures in understanding the course one's own and one's family's life will take. It is not surprising, then, that we first learn in the Bible of the importance of birthdates in the story of Joseph and the Pharaoh. The outsized importance of birth order, birth mother, basic family dynamics, including especially as it manifests in dysfunction, are all emphasized in our Bible story. Indeed, compared to what we know of the rest of the occupations of Joseph, Jacob, and his brothers, the story of their family dynamics and intrigues is really out of proportion. Of course, this kind of intrigue makes for good interest in a story (much more than telling us how or where they plowed their fields or grazed their goats), and it features largely in other political/historical narrative, as well. But it sure makes a great psychoanalytical case study!

But there is one major difference in the way many psychoanalysts and psychologists understand the effect of the family "constellation." Many psychologists claim to "know," "study," and "analyze" the effect of these family constellations "scientifically," and take it upon themselves to judge what is a good or bad configuration, what its effects, good or bad, will be, and assign a psychological form of guilt (which they often fail to acknowledge as guilt) accordingly. There are exceptions, such as psychoanalysts who admit the old Freudian and Jungian connection of their theory with mythology, and psychologists who want their clients to understand the importance of their family past, but want them to eventually be able to do so non-judgmentally. However, many "mental health" practitioners, like the medical doctors upon whom they have modeled their profession, end up narrowly categorizing family behavior as "healthy," and "unhealthy." The Bible itself and the religious tradition condemn a lot of what goes on in families as "sinful," but sin is often redeemable.

Astrologers have a reputation for a fatalistic determinism of multiple impersonal supernal forces, which would seem to be at odds with a concept of human free will or God's caring Providence and Reward. But by and large, the sheer number of influences they can take into account often leads to a multiplicity of ways the general "tendencies" they discern could work out.

Over the years I've had contact with a number of counseling professionals, both psychotherapeutic as well as "alternative," including coaches of various kinds, some with backgrounds in astrology. I was struck by the variation in types of personality types which the astrologer was ready to recognize, without the need to categorize them as "healthy" or "unhealthy." Moreover, the astrologer was able to recognize that there are many CONT.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL

The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

**Shabbat Vayiggash**  
*December 18-19, 2015*

Hertz Pentateuch:  
Torah Reading: p. 169; Haftarah: p.178

Kaplan Living Torah:  
Torah Reading: p. 222; Haftarah: p. 1086

**CANDLE LIGHTING** | 4:12 pm

**MINHAH** | 4:15 pm

**FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS** | following evening services | Rabbi Hidary gives a talk on "The Religious Humanism of Hakham Yisrael Moshe Hazzan" *Sponsored by the Julis Family*

**ZEMIROT** | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary

**SHAHARIT (NISHMAT)** | 9:00 am | Following services Rabbi Hidary will deliver a seminar on "Three Steps to Sanctity"

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

**YOUTH GROUPS** | Ages 5-12 | 10:00 am | Elias Room

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

**KIDDUSH** | Levy Auditorium

**TOPICS IN JEWISH PHILOSOPHY** | Esther Hidary | 3:30 pm | For high school students | Held at the Hidary home, 1 W 85th St Apt. 6A

**SEUDAH SHELISHIT AND PIRKEI ABOT SHIUR** | Rabbi Hidary on the topic "The Cutting Edge of Jewish Studies: Highlights from the AJS 2015 Conference" | 3:30 pm *The fall semester is sponsored by Lewis Lipsey*

**MINHAH/ARBIT** | 4:05 pm

**KETER SHEM TOB** | Rabbi Hidary | Main Sanctuary

**HABDALAH** | 4:57 pm

### **Weekday Service Times**

Mornings: Sun. 8:00 AM, Mon-Thur. 7:15 AM, Fri. Dec. 25, 8:00 AM

Evenings: Sun., Mon., Wed., Thurs.: 6:30 PM (Arbit only)

Tuesday: 3:45 PM (Minhah and Arbit—Men wear Tefillin)

# UPCOMING EVENTS AND INITIATIVES

## Tu B'Shebat Seder

**Sunday Night, January 24 | 7:00 pm**

Adults and teens, join Rabbi Meir Soloveichik for an evening of toasting, eating and learning Torah. Special singing contribution by Rabbi Ira Rohde. Meanwhile, our younger members will enjoy their own holiday repast and activities led by Yona Glass and a special appearance by our in-house fruit juggler, Rabbi Soloveichik. Register here: [shearithisrael.org/tu-b'shebat-seder](http://shearithisrael.org/tu-b'shebat-seder)

## Women's Service

**Saturday, January 30 | 9:00 am**

By and for women, these services are an opportunity for women to lead prayer, read from the Torah and perform the mitzvot associated with our services. We welcome the opportunity to celebrate momentous occasions - such as a girl becoming bat mitzvah or a bride before her wedding - in the context of our service. To participate contact [lirohde-csi@yahoo.com](mailto:lirohde-csi@yahoo.com).

## Save the Date: Young Families Shabbat Luncheon Saturday, February 6 | Following Morning Services

We've got a great group of young couples and families who enjoy getting together and inviting their friends to experience the best of Shearith Israel. Stay tuned for registration details for our next Young Families Shabbat Luncheon.

## Winter Coat Drive

**Through this Sunday, December 20**

Warm coats for men, women and children are needed. Place in the box outside Levy Auditorium.  
*Sponsored by the Shearith Israel League  
In cooperation with New York Cares.*

## Enroll in CSI's Text Messaging Notification Service

Many of our members and friends enjoy attending our special programs and events such as community meals, public lectures, etc. However, we know how busy you are and how easy it is to overlook an email or registration deadline; we want to help make it easier for you. We have set up a special text message service that can remind you when RSVP deadlines are approaching. We can also alert you of synagogue schedule changes, weather emergencies, security incidents or last minute class cancellations. To subscribe to our service, check our weekly emails for specific instructions. Please be assured, we will only text you for those alerts you have selected and will only use this on an as-needed basis.

## Sign up for the Shearith Israel Toddler Program Spring Semester Begins January 4

**Mondays & Wednesdays 9:30-11:30am**

**For ages 16 - 34 months**

**Caregiver attendance required**

Led by our veteran early childhood specialist, Liz Rios, toddlers learn colors and shapes, create arts and crafts, sing songs, explore Jewish holidays, music and enjoy special visits by Rabbi Ira Rohde. Spaces are limited. 1 or 2 day options. Register now at [shearithisrael.org/toddlerprogram](http://shearithisrael.org/toddlerprogram).

## Celebrate Pesah with Shearith Israel in New York or in Israel

Once again, Shearith Israel members will have the opportunity to celebrate Pesah at the Inbal Hotel in Jerusalem. Rabbi Soloveichik will lead our unique Rambam Haggadah (Seder), deliver shiurim, and lead us on special tiyulim. We look forward to getting together with our many Shearith Israel members and alumni who make Israel their home. Registration and pricing 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.*

Fall semester ends Dec 21. Spring Semester begins Feb 8.

## 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 CLASS RESUMES IN JANUARY
- ◇ **Talmud Class: Tractate Rosh Hashana and the Philosophy of Jewish Time** | Rabbi Soloveichik | 8:00 pm CLASS RESUMES IN JANUARY

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

## 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, January 12 at 11:00 am**