

PURIM AT SHEARITH ISRAEL

Jews Among Persians and Greeks:

Reading Esther in Context

Monday, March 21 | 7:00 pm

Bet Midrash Special Guest Speaker: Professor Joseph Angel

Joseph Angel is a scholar of ancient Judaism with a focus on religion and history in the Second Temple Period. He is the recipient of research fellowships from the Alexander von Humboldt and Yad Hanadiv/Beracha Foundations.

Sisterhood Mishloah Manot Project

Want to send Mishloah Manot to your fellow congregants? 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. Members, please check your email for more information about how to participate. For questions, please contact Mrs. Lisa Rohde at lrohde-csi@yahoo.com or Mrs. Carla Schein at scheinc6@gmail.com.

Purim Dinner

Wednesday, March 23

Following 7:30 pm Megillah reading

Immediately following the *Megillah* reading, registered guests are invited to a festive family-style meal in Levy Auditorium. In addition to a tasty dinner, guests will enjoy our annual children's costume parade. Register for our Purim celebration at shearithisrael.org/purimdinner.

Women's Megillah Reading

Thursday, March 24 | 8:00 am

Celebrate 26 years of women reading the Megillah on Purim morning at Shearith Israel. Contact Mrs. Lisa Rohde at lrohde-csi@yahoo.com for more information.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mazal Tob to Anne and Natalio Fridman on the birth of a granddaughter to their children Gabby and David Fridman.

Mazal Tob to Judith and Joel Schreiber on the birth of a great-grandson to their grandchildren, Blima and Ben Weintraub.

ORACLES, VESTMENTS, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT: DID THE *URIM v'TUMIM* EXIST IN THE SECOND TEMPLE?

Z. Edinger

This week's Parasha describes the making of the priestly garments. Of particular interest are the *Ephod*, *Hoshen*, and, the *Urim veTumim*. These items are closely related to one another, being a vest (or apron) upon which a breastplate with precious stones was attached. The *Urim v'Tumim* was an object of great mystery and served as an oracle through which the High Priest could seek answers directly from God. After describing in great detail how the *Ephod* and the *Hoshen* were made the Torah then says (Ex. 28:30):

וְנָתַתְּ אֶל־חֹשֶׁן הַמִּשְׁפָּט אֶת־הָאֲוִרִים וְאֶת־הַתְּמִיּוֹם וְהָיוּ עַל־לֵב אֶהְרֹן בְּבֹאוֹ לִפְנֵי יְקֹוֹק וְנִשָּׂא אֶהְרֹן אֶת־מִשְׁפָּט בְּנִי־יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־לִבּוֹ לִפְנֵי יְקֹוֹק תָּמִיד:

And thou shalt put in the Hoshen of Judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the LORD; and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually.

In stark contrast to the *Ephod* and the Breastplate, there is no description of what the *Urim v'Tumim* was, how it was made, or how it was used. From a few other Biblical sources we learn that the *Urim v'Tumim* were used as an Oracle to inquire of God (Num. 27:21; I Samuel Chapter 23 -where the *Ephod* appears to be synonymous with the *Urim v'Tumim*; and, I Samuel 28:6.) Finally, in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, the *Urim v'Tumim* are mentioned as being an oracle that could be used to help determine the genealogical status of questionable priestly families. (Ezra 2:61-63, also Neh. 7:63-65)

...of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Hakkoz, the children of Barzillai...These sought their register, that is, the genealogy, but it was not found; and they were exempted from the priesthood. And the Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, until there stood up a priest with Urim and with Thummim.

From this verse it appears that by the time that Ezra and Nehemiah returned from Babylonia the whereabouts of the *Urim v'Tumim* were unknown. Based on this verse, the Tosefta in Sota (13:3) states:

משחרב בית המקדש בטלה מלוכה מבית דוד ובטלו אורים ותומים.

When the [first] Temple was destroyed, the reign of the Davidic line ceased and the Urim v'Tumim ceased.

Similarly, the Talmud (Yoma 21b) states that:

R. Samuel b. Inia said:...**in five things the first temple differed from the second:** the Ark [with its] cover and Cherubim; the Fire; the Shechinah; the Holy Spirit [of Prophecy]; and the **Urim v'Tumim** — I will tell you, [the Fire] was present, but was not useful (i.e. did not devour the sacrifices.)

From these and other statements, Talmudic literature is clear - just like the Ark - the *Urim v'Tumim* was lost with the destruction of the First Temple. Or was it?

Josephus indicates that the *Urim v'Tumim* was present in the Second Temple until the days of John Hyrcanus (~100 BCE.) “Now this breastplate, and this sardonyx [Urim], stopped shining two hundred years before I composed this book, God having been displeased at the transgressions of his law.” (Ant. 3: 163, 216-218). Many other extra-Biblical works of the Second Temple period seem to indicate that the High Priest wore the *Urim v'Tumim*, chief among these are the *Letter of Aristaeas*, the *Temple Scroll*, and, *Ben Sirah*. These and similar non-canonical sources are at odds with Talmudic (i.e. Rabbinic) literature.

Despite the Talmudic sources to the contrary, a unique understanding of the *Urim v'Tumim* was held by Maimonides. Maimonides believed that the *Urim v'Tumim* did exist in the Second Temple, but like the Holy Fire, it was ineffectual and was not used as an oracle (See *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of the Temple 4:1; Laws of the Temple Vessels 10:10.) (continued on inside panel)



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL

The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

Shabbat Tetsavveh

February 19-20, 2016

Hertz Pentateuch: Torah Reading: p. 339; Haftarah: p. 350
Kaplan Living Torah: Torah Reading: p. 414; Haftarah: p. 1124

CANDLE LIGHTING | 5:17 pm

MINHAH | 5:15 pm

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS | following evening services | Rabbi Soloveichik gives a talk on “Shabbat, The Sanhedrin, and the Supreme Court” | 2015-2016 Season Sponsored by the Julis Family

ZEMIROT | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary

SHAHARIT (NISHMAT) | 9:00 am | Rabbi Soloveichik will deliver a lecture on “How Did Our Parasha End Up On Yale's Seal? A Reflection on Education in America”

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 | Seth Haberman on the topic “What are the origins of BDS and what can we do about it?” | 4:10 pm | For high school students | Held at the Haberman home, 1 W 85th St Apt. 11C

SEUDAH SHELISHIT AND SPECIAL SHABBAT AFTERNOON SHIUR | Rabbi Soloveichik on the topic “A Mishkan in Manhattan: Learning from an Architect's Imagination” | 4:10 pm | Spring semester sponsored by Lewis Lipsey

MINHAH/ARBIT | 5:10 pm

HABDALAH | 6:07 pm

Weekday Service Times

Morning: Sunday: 8:00 AM; Mon-Fri.: 7:15 AM
Evenings: Sunday – Thursday: 5:30 PM (Minhah & Arbit)

UPCOMING EVENTS AND INITIATIVES

Communities of Character:
A Conversation with David Brooks
Monday, March 7 | 7:00 pm
Temple Emanu-El's Skirball Center: 1 E. 65th St.
Join UJA-Federation of New York, Shearith Israel and Manhattan synagogues for a community-wide conversation about the bonds that unite us in an increasingly divisive time. David Brooks will share his reflections on character, gratitude, and how we can magnify the best in ourselves and in each other. Mr. Brooks will also engage in dialogue with UJA-Federation CEO Eric Goldstein about finding common ground and fostering collective purpose.
\$18 per person (Your gift represents a charitable contribution to UJA-Federation of New York.) To register, visit ujafedny.org/uja-david-brooks.

HerringFest!
With Rabbi Meir Soloveichik
Tuesday, March 8 | 7:00 pm
Co-Sponsored by the Consulate General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
HerringFest! will take place during Adar, the joyous month associated by our sages with the constellation of "dagim," or fish. Participants will be able to sample a dazzling variety of ways in which the herring can be enjoyed. Featuring a short shiur by Rabbi Soloveichik, HerringFest! is sure to be an unforgettable culinary experience of Shearith Israel's Dutch and Jewish heritage. Go to shearithisrael.org/herringfest to register by February 23.
Please consider sponsoring this unique event.

Want to participate in the service?
If you are interested in learning to lead the *Zemirot* on Shabbat Morning, or, to perform any of the *Mitzvot* (honors) of the Torah Service (opening the *behal*, carrying a *sefer*, *Levantar* or *Ac-companian*) please contact our sexton, Zachary Edinger at zedinger@shearithisrael.org We welcome your interest and participation!

The Future Face of Israel: Ethiopian Shabbat Dinner
Friday Night, March 11 | Following Evening Services
Co-sponsored by Chassida Shmella
Ethiopian Jewish Community
and by Beit Hatfutsot - The Museum of the Jewish People
Operation Moses and Operation Solomon were two massive and miraculous emigrations of Ethiopian Jews to Israel in our time. Learn more about the adaptation and achievements of this last remnant of the Jewish people during this traditional Ethiopian meal, as the generations of Ethiopian Jews celebrate and share stories of their own personal miracles as productive citizens of the Jewish state. Dinner is followed by lectures and Q + A with our speakers, former MK Deputy Speaker Pnina Tamano-Shata and Professor Ephraim Isaac. To learn more and to register, go to shearithisrael.org/ethiopianshabbat.

The Other Shearith Israel, South of the Sahara
Saturday, March 12 | 8:00 pm | Levy Auditorium
Sponsored by the Shearith Israel League
Join us for an interesting and festive evening about Shearith Israel's least known secret: A "daughter congregation" in the village of Putti, Uganda. Members of this African Jewish community call themselves Kahal Kadosh She'erit Yisra'el and use our prayer books. Shearith Israel member, Sjimon Den Hollander, will talk about his involvement with this unusual group of people, his trip to Uganda, and his close cooperation with rabbis like Shlomo Riskin, Ari Green-span, Ari Zivitosky. We expect to host two members of the community who are currently in the United States, and to hear a few of their special melodies, straight from Putti's unique liturgical tradition. Finally, we hope to hear a Jewish Ugandan musician, Rachman Nachman, perform his reggae style songs with a Jewish twist. Admission: \$10 per person (cash or check at the door). All proceeds go to Putti Village Assistance Organization. Light refreshments served.

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

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

(continued from back panel)
Maimonides view was a matter of great debate among the *Rishonim*, *Rambam* was strongly opposed to by *Raabad* and others. The debate among the *Rishonim* seems directly related to whether the *Urim v'Tumim* were among the eight holy vestments required to be worn by the High Priest (even in the Second Temple) or whether they were distinct objects separate from the Breastplate.
Rashi (and *Raabad* among others) believed that the *Urim v'Tumim* were special objects engraved with the Holy Name of God and placed inside the Breastplate behind its stones. Maimonides, however, believed that the *Urim v'Tumim* refer to the stones of the Breastplate itself. For Maimonides, the *Urim v'Tumim* was an integral part of the Breastplate and therefore **MUST** have existed in the Second Temple period, even if it no longer functioned as an oracle.
Already in the Second Temple (extra Biblical) literature (and even in the Book of Samuel) there is much confusion between the terms *Ephod*, *Hoshen*, and *Urim v'Tumim*, all of these terms are used in various sources to refer to the a divine Oracle. This confusion of terminology may have led directly to the debates among the *Rishonim* whether or not the *Urim v'Tumim* existed in the Second Temple.
Tantalizingly, the Book of Maccabees seems to indicate that the last time the Priests attempted to make use of an oracle was after the Greeks defiled the Temple, however, by that time the Priestly Vestments could no longer be used for this purpose. After Judah Maccabee flees Jerusalem, "*They opened the Book of the Law to inquire into matters [just as] the Gentiles consult their [oracles.] Then they brought out the vestments of the priesthood, and the tithes, ...and they cried aloud to Heaven, saying, What shall we do with these?*" (I Maccabees 3:48-49)
For Millennia now, we have lost the ability to consult directly with God through the means of an Oracle. Today, we might take comfort in the ancient wisdom of Ben Sirah (33:3) that: *The prudent trust in the Word of the LORD, and the Torah is as reliable for them as the Urim v'Tumim.*

WEEKDAY JUDAIC EDUCATION
For details go to: shearithisrael.org/judaic-education

Sunday
◇ **The Book of Kings** | Rabbi Hidary | 8:40 am NO CLASS THIS WEEK
◇ **Saadia Gaon's Book of Beliefs and Opinions** | Sjimon den Hollander | 9:30 am

Monday
◇ **Second Temple Jewish History** | Rabbi Hidary | 7:00 pm | TAUGHT BY SETH HABERMAN THIS WEEK
◇ **Bet Midrash** | Rabbi Hidary (NOT HERE THIS WEEK), Phil Getz, Dr. Josh Eisen, Rabbi Ira Rohde, Meira Wokenfeld | 8:00 pm

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
Sponsored by Cindy Trop in memory of her father, Melech Ben Zion on the occasion of his 12th Yartzheit
◇ **Talmud Class: Tractate Rosh Hashana and the Philosophy of Jewish Time** | Rabbi Soloveichik | 8:00 pm | *Spring semester sponsored by Gregory Bell.*
NO CLASS THIS WEEK