

## PURIM AT SHEARITH ISRAEL

### Sisterhood Mishloah Manot Project

If you participated in the Sisterhood's Mishloah Manot Project and requested a package (not a card) your package will be available for pickup at the Synagogue on Wednesday, March 23rd and Thursday, March 24th. For questions, please contact Mrs. Lisa Rohde at [lirohde-csi@yahoo.com](mailto:lirohde-csi@yahoo.com) or Mrs. Carla Schein at [scheinc6@gmail.com](mailto: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 at [shearithisrael.org/purimdinner](http://shearithisrael.org/purimdinner) by Sunday, March 20.

### Women's Megillah Reading

Thursday, March 24 | 8:00 am

Celebrate 26 years of women reading the Megillah on Purim morning at Shearith Israel. Participants will be meeting this Sunday for their first rehearsal at 7:00 pm. Contact Mrs. Lisa Rohde at [lirohde-csi@yahoo.com](mailto:lirohde-csi@yahoo.com) for more information.

### Purim Breakfast

Thursday, March 24 | Following 8:00 am  
Megillah Readings

Immediately following the 8:00 am readings of the Megillah, congregants are welcome to enjoy a festive breakfast. Childcare will be provided throughout the morning. The breakfast is free of charge but sponsors and supporters are highly appreciated. Support this event at [shearithisrael.org/purim-breakfast](http://shearithisrael.org/purim-breakfast).

### Matanot L'Ebyonim

It is one of the core mitzvot of Purim to give charity to the poor, Matanot L'Ebyonim. Your online gift or check made out to the "Rabbi's Discretionary Fund," (memo: "Matanot L'ebyonim") will be distributed by Rabbi Soloveichik on Purim to those in need. Go to [shearithisrael.org/matanot](http://shearithisrael.org/matanot) to donate.

### Facing Many Directions at Once

Rabbi Ira Rohde

The description of the cherubim in the Bible is vague and perhaps even contradictory, as opposed to the many exacting details given in the descriptions of other parts of the Mishkan and the Temple. One of the most obvious contradictions, which the Talmud in Baba Batra 99a noticed, is the direction which the cherubim faced. The Torah in our Parashah seems to say that the cherubim faced each other, as well as saying that they faced the "Kapporet," the "Atonement (or Mercy) Seat," which is the top cover of the Ark of the Covenant, over which they are placed. So that would seem to indicate that they faced downwards. Certainly their wings spread over the Kapporet. And while other sources in the Bible are referring to cherubs which were in Solomon's Temple, which may have been quite different from the cherubs in the Mishkan, they give yet other orientations, which may either mean simply facing "inward," or facing the "front of the Temple." The Talmud suggests two famous reconciliations: that the cherubim's position actually (magically) changed, depending upon whether it was a time when "Israel obeyed the will of the Omnipresent," or a time when "Israel did not obey the will of the Omnipresent." The other reconciliation was that the cherubim didn't move, and that their position was a compromise someplace in between, generally facing each other and yet partially turned "sideways."

We can imagine, of course, plenty of good reasons why the Bible and our Sages deliberately preferred to keep the description of the cherubim vague, leaving them to our own imaginations. But the contradictions in the facing direction seems to open up a real ambivalence. Perhaps it depended upon the particular arrangement at the time, and left room for artistic interpretation. But it's also probable that there is a real irreconcilable problem which the Talmud is trying wrestle with and find a compromise: The cherubim must in some way be facing in all of these directions at once.

Many interpretations have been given to this problem, and to the meaning of the cherubim in general, to the extent it could or should be discussed, but to add my own homiletic interpretation, I'd say that there is a fundamental tension in the direction we Jews should face. Perhaps nowhere is that tension more apparent than here in our sanctuary at Shearith Israel: After all, the pews face each other. So when we stand, we face inwards, towards each other, right? Then there's the place at the front of the room where the Sifrei Torah are kept, the Hekhal, the "Palace," what the Ashkenazim call the "Aron" or "Ark." Often people face that direction for important parts of the service. Then there's the Reader's Desk, the Tebah, towards the back of the center of the synagogue, from which the Torah is read and from which the service is conducted. These days, many congregants are used to facing the eastern, front Hekhal for much of the service, but if you look at the Shulhan Arukh, there is considerable ambiguity and the answer is far from clear.

That ambiguity is deliberate. We must reconcile the need to face our fellow man, to join each other as one community, with the need to each face God both individually and collectively. We must also face the demands of justice and law and truth and the Divine commands of the Torah. There are highly significant and apparent contradictions in reconciling all of these orientations, and the task of reconciling them is more of an art than a science, so there must be left significant room to the discretion and expression of the individual. There is communal politics involved here, there is Divine sovereignty involved here, there is friendship and support, love and awe, harmony and tension. We cannot simply choose one direction to face; we must each rather find a way of making our own reconciliation of the need to face all of these directions at once.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL

The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

Shabbat Vayakhel-Shekalim

March 4-5, 2016

Hertz Pentateuch: Torah Reading: p. 373, Maftir p. 352;  
Haftarah: p. 992

Kaplan Living Torah: Torah Reading: p. 464, Maftir p. 440;  
Haftarah: p. 1270

CANDLE LIGHTING | 5:33 pm

MINHAH | 5:30pm

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS | following evening services | Rabbi Soloveichik gives a talk on "The Miraculous Tale of the Temple Stone" | *2015-2016 Season*  
*Sponsored by the Julis Family*

ZEMIROT | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary

SHAHARIT (NISHMAT) | 9:00 am | Rabbi Soloveichik will deliver a sermon on "The British Prime Minister's Question About Our Parasha"

TOT SHABBAT | Ages 0-4 | 10:00 am | Fidanque Office

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

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

KIDDUSH LUNCHEON | Elias Room and Levy Auditorium | *Kiddush Luncheon sponsored by Nicole and David Cohen in honor of Avi and Jake becoming Benei Mitzvah*

TOPICS IN JEWISH PHILOSOPHY | Rabbi Hidary | 4:25 pm | For high school students | Held at the Hidary home, 1 W 85th St Apt. 6A

SEUDAH SHELISHIT AND SHABBAT AFTERNOON SHIUR | Rabbi Soloveichik on the topic "The Greatest Biblical Heroine You Never Heard of: A Shabbat Shekalim Shiur" | 4:25 pm  
*Spring semester sponsored by Lewis Lipsey*

MINHAH/ARBIT | 5:25 pm

KETER SHEM TOB | Rabbi Hidary | Main Sanctuary

HABDALAH | 6:25 pm

### Weekday Service Times

Morning: Sunday: 8:00 AM; Mon-Fri.: 7:15 AM  
Evenings: Sunday – Thursday: 5:45 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](http://ujafedny.org/uja-david-brooks).

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 *hehal*, carrying a *sefer*, *Levantar* or *Ac-companian*) please contact our sexton, Zachary Edinger at [zedinger@shearithisrael.org](mailto: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 with a preview of special photography exhibit by Beit Hatfutsot  
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, view a selection from Beit Hatfutsot's photography exhibit, "Operation Moses: 30 Years After," and enjoy a 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. Hear from our speakers, former MK Pnina Tamano-Shata, Professor Ephraim Isaac and Shearith Israel's Segan, Michael Lustig. To learn more and to register, go to [shearithisrael.org/ethiopianshabbat](http://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  
Learn 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, his trip to Uganda, and his close cooperation with rabbis Shlomo Riskin, Ari Greenspan, Ari Zivitosky and others. 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.

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 Hana-div/Beracha Foundations.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS  
  
Mazal *Tob* to Avi and Jake Cohen on becoming Benei Mitzvah. Congratulations to their parents, Nicole and David Cohen and to their grandparents, Naomi and Bentsi Cohen.  
  
Hazak *U'barukh* to Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm who will be honored at the MJE annual dinner on March 8.  
  
Welcome Rabbi Jeffrey Berger, rabbi of the Rambam Sephardi Congregation in Borehamwood, UK. Jeff is a former member of Shearith Israel who, with his wife Michie, left NY to become a Rabbi in London.  
  
Yoetzet Halakha Update  
For the next few weeks while Ilana Gadish is on maternity leave, Julia Baruch will serve as our Yoetzet. To contact Julia email [jb.yoetzet@gmail.com](mailto:jb.yoetzet@gmail.com) or call (929) 274-0628.

WEEKDAY JUDAIC EDUCATION  
For details go to: [shearithisrael.org/judaic-education](http://shearithisrael.org/judaic-education)  
  
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  
NO CLASS THIS WEEK  
◇ Bet Midrash | Rabbi Hidary, Phil Getz, Dr. Josh Eisen, Rabbi Ira Rohde, Meira Wokenfeld | 8:00 pm  
NO CLASS THIS WEEK  
  
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 | Spring semester sponsored by Gregory Bell. NO CLASS THIS WEEK  
  
Don't let our stock run out.  
Be a scotch or arak sponsor. To sponsor or contribute go to [shearithisrael.org/scotch-and-arak-sponsorships](http://shearithisrael.org/scotch-and-arak-sponsorships)  
  
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:  
Wednesday, March 9 at 11:00 am