

**Shiur By UWS Yoatzot Halakha
Followed by a Pre-Pesah Hat Sale
Sunday, April 10 | Held at Congregation Ramath Orah**

The Ramath Orah Women's Circle and the Manhattan Yoetzet Halacha Initiative present Ilana Gadish and Julia Baruch speaking on the topic of: "What We Talk About When We Talk About Talking: Talmudic Themes of Communication and Sexuality." The speaking event will be followed by a hat sale with a wide selection of hats and fasciators by Hedy's Hats. Breakfast will be served.

10:00am- Breakfast Opens

10:30am- Yoatzot Speaking

11:15am-1:00pm- Hat Sale by Hedy's Hats

Co-sponsored by KJ, 5th Avenue, West Side Institutional, Congregation Shearith Israel, The Jewish Center, Lincoln Square, KRA, Downtown Synagogue Vaad, Ramath Orah

(continued from back) Leviticus 12:3 interrupts the impurity laws to mention circumcision in order to teach that a boy's entering into the covenant through this powerful ritual releases the mother from her impurity. Rabbi David Zvi Hoffman further explains that the rite of circumcision cuts the time of impurity for the mother of a boy to be half that of a girl. That leaves the mother of a girl with a two-week impurity period while, as Rabbi Moshe Shamah suggests, her eighty-day waiting period may symbolically parallel to the boy's eighth day circumcision and thus represents the girl's entrance into the *berit*.

In contrast to Jubilees, this explanation takes the Torah's law as particular to Bnei Yisrael, rooted in historical circumstances, malleable according to human activity such as circumcision, and addressing human psychological needs. Although the etiology in Jubilees may lend the law a sense of pristine perfection, it also removes the ritual from this world to a different primordial realm. With the rabbinic and anthropological understanding, however, we can appreciate the human application of these laws to our own lives and societies. Even though we no longer have sacrifices or keep these laws of impurity, the lessons that we should deny irrational fears, pursue psychological health and perform covenant affirming rituals remain as relevant as ever, especially during cycles of transition and new beginnings.

Shabbat Shalom and Hodesh Tob!

**Perashat Tazria': Postpartum Impurity
Rabbi Dr. Richard Hidary**

Across ancient cultures, a mother who just gave birth is considered impure, likely because of the life that just parted from her, the bodily fluids that she lost, and the danger involved in childbearing. Modern medicine calls this state postpartum depression, which usually subsides within a couple of weeks. It is therefore not surprising that the Torah (Leviticus 12) prescribes rituals for when and how to purify the new mother. What does require explanation, however, is the length of the waiting period. After giving birth to a boy, the mother is impure for only seven days and is then pure for all purposes except that she may not enter the sanctuary until the fortieth day. If she has a girl, then the mother is impure for 14 days but must wait until the eightieth day to enter the sanctuary. What is the source for these numbers and why should the number of days for a girl be double those for a boy?

The earliest extant interpretation is found in the Book of Jubilees 3:8-12, which connects this set of laws with the beginning of Genesis. It calculates that Adam was created during the first week of creation while Eve was created during the second week. It further adds, with slight scriptural support, that Adam was kept in the land where he was created for forty days before being brought to the Garden of Eden, while Eve waited for eighty days before entering the Garden of Eden. This interpretation models the birth of every human to the creation of primeval man and woman and further parallels the Tabernacle to the Garden of Eden thus creating a cosmic bond between divine and human creations. Jubilees concludes: "And for this reason the commandment is written on the heavenly tablets in regard to her that gives birth." For the author of Jubilees, the Torah's laws are embedded in nature from the beginning of creation and are therefore universal, eternal, immutable and absolute.

The Rabbis, who reject the book of Jubilees, sought various psychological explanations for the different impurity periods for boys and girls (Bavli Niddah 31b) and relate it to the joy in performing circumcision. A little anthropology can help shed light on the details. Other ancient cultures also had a longer period of impurity for a girl than for a boy. The Hittites, for example, required the mother to offer a sacrifice one week after giving birth. They also deemed a male child impure for three months and a female child impure for four months. Interestingly, Aristotle as well as Rabbi Ishmael (Mishnah Niddah 3:7) wrote that it takes forty-one days for a male fetus to form completely and eighty-one days for a female.

The similarities to the Torah are striking, but the differences are even more important. Unlike the Hittites, the Torah places no impurity on the child but only on the mother, perhaps focusing on her psychological state rather than seeing the child as a source of irrational fear. Second, the Torah delays her sacrifice until long after her impure state is completed in order to render impossible any magical fertility rites that were common in the ancient Near East during that period. Lastly, the Torah transforms the waiting periods into covenantally significant numbers that are multiples of 7 and 8.

(continued on side panel)



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL

The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

Shabbat Tazaria-Rosh Hodesh-HaHodesh

April 8-9, 2016

Hertz Pentateuch: Torah Reading:

Tazria p. 460, Rosh Hodesh p. 695, HaHodesh p. 235 ; Haftarah: 1002

Kaplan Living Torah: Torah Reading:

Tazria p. 556, Rosh Hodesh p. 814, HaHodesh p. 308 ; Haftarah: 1284

CANDLE LIGHTING | 7:11 pm

MINHAH | 6:45 pm

ZEMIROT | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary

SHAHARIT (NISHMAT) | 9:00 am | Rabbi Hidary will deliver a seminar on the topic "Eternal Sun vs. Renewing Moon: Greek and Hebrew Conceptions of Divine Law"

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 | 6:05 pm | For high school students | Held at the Hidary home, 1 W 85th St Apt. 6A

SEUDAH SHELISHIT AND SHABBAT AFTERNOON SHIUR | Rabbi Hidary on the topic "The Myth of Theuth and the Primordial Torah" | 6:05 pm | *Spring semester sponsored by Lewis Lipsey*

MINHAH/ARBIT | 7:05 pm

KETER SHEM TOB | Rabbi Hidary | Main Sanctuary

HABDALAH | 8:07 pm

Weekday Service Times

Morning: Sunday: 8:00 AM; Mon-Fri.: 7:15 AM

Evenings: Sunday – Thursday: 6:30 PM (Minhah & Arbit)

UPCOMING EVENTS AND INITIATIVES

Everything You Never Knew About
Beth Olam Cemetery

Part 1 of a 3 Part Experiential Cemetery Series
Wednesday, April 13 | 7:00 pm

Join us and our Beth Olam Partners, Bnai Jeshurun and Shaaray Tefila, for an informative and moving event. Marena Wisniewski will describe what she learned and uncovered during her time as our Beth Olam Cemetery intern. You will learn about the history of this unique partnership between three prominent synagogues who share an interesting history, Shearith Israel, Bnai Jeshurun and Shaaray Tefila. She will also show us some of the architectural and historical gems and will describe efforts on our behalf to lay the groundwork for some much needed restoration work. The event will be punctuated with a remembrance of those members of our three communities who died this past year.

Baseball Game with Rabbi Hidary

Sunday, April 17 | 1:05 pm | Yankee Stadium

This event is generously subsidized by John Lewin

Take me out to the ball game! Take me out to the crowd! Join Rabbi Hidary at the Yankees vs. Seattle Mariners game at Yankee Stadium. This event's sure to be a home run! All ages are welcome. Great seats in section 217. Members of CSI, KRA, The Jewish Center and West Side Institutional Synagogue are all welcome to preferred member pricing. \$65 members/\$80 non-members. Register at shearithisrael.org/baseball

PREPARE FOR PESAH 5776

A Shabbat Hagadol Derasha by Rabbi Soloveichik
The Most Misunderstood Morsel:
A New Approach to Haroset
Saturday, April 16, 2016
Following Morning Services

Donate for Maot Hittim

In the opening paragraph of the Haggadah, we read: "All who are hungry, let them come and eat." As part of experiencing freedom ourselves, we must also ensure that our fellow Jews have the means to celebrate freedom too. *Maot Hittim* is a special Passover fund, originally intended to provide the poor with matzah. Donate online at shearithisrael.org/maothittim or send a check made out to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund (indicate "maot hittim" in the memo field) to help those in need in a discreet, dignified way.

Sale of Hametz

If you would like to appoint Rabbi Richard Hidary as agent to sell your Hametz before Pesah, please fill out the online form at shearithisrael.org/hametz before Thursday, April 21 at 5:00 pm. Please contact Rabbi Hidary at rhidary@shearithisrael.org if you have specific questions

Pre-Pesah Shabbat Dinner
Friday Night | April 15, 2016
Deadline: This Sunday, April 10

Following evening services ease your Pesah preparations and join us for a lovely buffet dinner. Preferred pricing for members. Register at shearithisrael.org/pre-pesah-shabbat-dinner.

Looking for a Communal Seder?

As we will not be hosting our communal haggadot (seders) this year, if you are looking to find a seder, please go to ujafederation.org/passover/find-a-seder or contact J-1-1, UJA-Federation of New York's Information and Referral Center, at 877.852.6951 or j11@ujafedny.org.

Please remember to remove *hametz* from your drawers in the synagogue. Thank you.

WEEKDAY JUDAIC EDUCATION

For details go to: 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
- ◇ Bet Midrash | Rabbi Hidary, 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
- ◇ Talmud Class: Tractate Rosh Hashana and the Philosophy of Jewish Time | Rabbi Soloveichik | 8:00 pm | *Spring semester sponsored by Gregory Bell.*

Don't let us go dry.

Be a scotch or arak sponsor. To sponsor or contribute go to shearithisrael.org/scotch-and-arak-sponsorships

Please consider sponsoring a class. Go to:
shearithisrael.org/sponsoraaclass

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:
Wednesday, April 13 at 11:00 am