

DEBAR TORAH by RABBI ROHDE

One Must Always Court and Cultivate Goodwill

...והיה על מצחו תמיד לרצון להם לפני ה'... (Ex. 28:39)

ותהי לרצון תמיד עבודת ישראל עמך (Daily Amidah, Retse blessing)

Our Parasha in Chapter 28 beginning with verse 27 gives a description of the components in the headdress of the High Priest as well as headdresses of the other priests serving in the Tabernacle Sanctuary. Many different terms are used. The description's order is interesting, first describing an ornament to the High Priest's mitre rather than the headdress itself: The ציץ described first is a golden metal plate in the shape of a "flower bud," or tied in a bud-like section, attached to the High-Priest's מצנפת, his mitre. This golden "bud" plate is plainly inscribed with the words "קדש ליה" – holy (or dedicated/consecrated) unto the LORD." The "mitre" seems to have been a turban-like length of cloth, but wrapped in such a way that the higher parts of the wrapping were broad and had a cylindrical or chef's-hat look. By contrast, the simpler מנבעות "hats" for the other priests were turbans which seem to have been more form-fitted to the head or wrapped more conically so there was no wide top section. The Italian commentator Umberto Cassuto writes that the "bud" inscribed dedication plate was attached to or hung towards the bottom of the wrappings of the mitre. He compares its placement to that of our head tefillin, which we wear in conjunction with the four-fringed garment with bud-like knots hanging below called "ציצית". The fastening of the "bud" plate to the mitre is also by means of some "פתיל" or "cord," making it further like ציצית. The verse says that Aaron is to wear this consecratory head-plate upon his "forehead," but as we know with tefillin, this description often is to be understood as indicating a bit higher up on the crown of the head. And indeed in Lev. 8:9 the "bud" upon of the mitre is called a "נוֹר", a diadem or crown. The inscription may have to do with reminding the High Priest of his weighty responsibilities and that he only wields authority and wears his crown as a vassal of Almighty God. It also reminds Israel to have the proper awe and respect for the Service of God.

What is meant by "...it shall be on his forehead always, to gain them favor before ה'?" Rashi notes that it cannot mean that the High Priest literally wore the headdress and plate all the time. However, the High Priest's job was indeed a never-ending one, like a slave bound at all times to be at the ready to render service to his Liege and Lord. For that reason, the High Priest was largely banned from leaving the sacred precincts - he was never really off-duty. But I note with interest the explanation given here, that the headdress and especially the bud-plate should be there always to curry God's Favor. I note that in the Retse Blessing of the Amida, the blessing beseeching Divine Favor, we have a reversed but similar juxtaposition which asks that Israel's Divine Service should always find Favor with God. In a similar sense, the Daily Sacrifices are called קרבן תמיד because they must be offered every day always, without fail, to seek God's continual Goodwill. Of course, in the Megillah which we read this week, a major feature of the story and its plot is the way Esther is continually solicitous of her lord the king's goodwill, and her exceedingly pleasing ways are her greatest asset, the trump card by which she wins over all others.

Of course, the great splendor and beauty of the High Priest's mitre and its gold ornament must have made for an especially pleasing and glorious sight (like Esther's beauty). To make things artful, beautiful, and appealing so that it is pleasurable to see and pleases the eye of the beholder is an important way of obtaining favor and goodwill. Sweet savors of barbecues, meals, and perfumes also attract goodwill. And even more so does the showing of great dedication and devotion. The High Priest must always be ready to be in splendid uniform and show himself available to Serve. If we sincerely and honestly seek to return to His Good Graces, our sin and iniquity can be overcome and put behind us. We must dress appropriately and attractively, be loyal servants, and attract Good Graces by seeking to always say please and thank you. Although there are times when goodwill may be impossible among people, with God, and most of the time with Man also, we must always strive to please, to court the LORD's Goodwill.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL
The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

Shabbat Tetsavveh-Zachor

March 7-8, 2025 | 8 Adar, 5785

SCHEDULE

Hertz: Parasha: 339 | Zachor: 856 | Haftarah: 995

Kaplan: Parasha: 414 | Zachor: 988 | Haftarah: 1274

Join us on Shabbat Zachor to fulfill the Torah's command: "**Remember what Amalek did to you...do not forget!**" We also recite the fantastic poem *Mi Kamokha* by Yehuda haLevy, in which he re-tells the story of Esther using biblical verses and allusions from all over the entire Bible.

Candle Lighting | 5:36 pm

Evening Services | 5:45 pm | Main Sanctuary

Friday Night Lights will return next week.

Zemirot | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary

Shahrit | 9:00 am | Main Sanctuary

Tot Shabbat | 10:00 am | Fidanque Youth Room

Youth Groups & Jr. Congregation | 10:30 am | Little Synagogue

Kiddush | following services | Levy Auditorium

Shabbat Afternoon Class & Teen Class will return next week.

Evening Services | 5:30 pm

Habdala | 6:28 pm

Purim begins on Thursday night. See full schedule inside.

Weekday Service Times

Remember to turn your clocks forward one hour on Saturday night!

Mornings:

Sunday: 8:05 am

Monday-Thursday: 7:05 am | Friday (Purim): 7:15 am

Evenings:

Sunday-Thursday (Minha & Arbit): 6:30 pm

PURIM AT SHEARITH ISRAEL

View the full schedule & offerings at shearithisrael.org/purim5785

Your Purim Checklist

- Sign up for our Purim Dinner & Mini Show - **Deadline MONDAY!**
- Give Matanot L'Ebyonim
- Sponsor Purim Breakfast
- Get your kids excited for the Purim Night Kids' PurimPalooza!

Purim Dinner — and A Mini Show!

Thursday Evening, March 13 - Registration Deadline: **THIS Monday!**

Following 7:15 pm Megillah | Levy Auditorium

This Purim, we journey back to 16th-century Mantua, city of love, intrigue, and...rabbis! All while enjoying a relaxed dairy dinner.

Shearith Israel's own theater troupe Los Bilbilicos – led by Baruch-Lev Kelman, Adams Kornblum, and Shearith Israel League President Laurent Nahon – will offer a sneak peak of their upcoming production of *A Wedding Comedy*, adapted from Leone de Sommi Portaleone's hit play *Tsahot Bedibuta de Kiddushin* (c.1550).

This unique Jewish twist on the classic Romeo & Juliet starcrossed lovers' tale definitely won't be like anything you've seen before!

Kids' PurimPalooza!

Featuring Froggle!

Thursday Evening, March 13 | During 7:15 pm Megillah Reading

Dropoff in Fidanque Youth Room at 7:00 pm

Our action-packed kids' entertainment extravaganza for kids aged 2-12 will feature comedy magic, puppetry, party games, music, and dancing!

Children under the age of 5 must be accompanied by an adult.

PLUS: Families who sign up for the Purim Dinner (see above) will enjoy an exclusive balloon twisting session while they eat!

COMING UP AFTER PURIM

Sponsorships available at shearithisrael.org



Scholar-in-Residence Shabbat:

Miriam Zami

Friday, March 28-Shabbat, March 29

PURIM SCHEDULE

Fast of Esther - Thursday, March 13

Dawn (Fast Begins) | 5:59 am

Morning Service (Shahrit) | 7:05 am

Eve of Purim Night - Thursday, March 13

Minha (men wear tefillin) | 6:30 pm

Arbit (Evening) Service | 7:00 pm

Reading of Megillah | 7:15 pm

End of Fast of Esther | 7:23 pm

Purim Dinner for Registered Guests | Following Megillah Reading

Late Evening Reading of Megillah | 8:45 pm

Purim Day - Friday, March 14

Shahrit | 7:15 am

Morning Megillah Reading | 7:50 am

Women's Morning Megillah Reading | 7:50 am

Late Morning Megillah Reading | 11:00 am

Shabbat Candle Lighting | 6:44 pm

Friday Evening Service | 6:45 pm

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mazal tob to **Carol & Alan Schechter** upon the marriage of their granddaughter, Ita Schechter, to Aharon Teigman.

Condolences to **James Kahn (Janegail Orringer)**, upon the passing of his mother, Ruth Kahn.

In the Press:

In his article, "Jewish Identity vs. Identity Politics: How can we be supportive of one and not the other?" in the Winter edition of *Sapir*, Rabbi Soloveichik uses the story of colonial era Jew, Jonas Phillips, as springboard to discuss the uniqueness of the American conception of—and protection of—identity. You can read it at shearithisrael.org/press.

Of Interest to our Community

Janet Kirchheimer's documentary, "AFTER: Poetry Destroys Silence" will be playing at the Socially Relevant Film Festival at Cinema Village, 22 E12th Street, on Sunday, March 16, at 10:30 AM. To learn and for tickets, visit ratedsrfilms.org.