

## DEBAR TORAH *by* RABBI ROHDE

### The Generous Heart and the Wise Heart

For a fairly technical Torah Portion, our Parasha sure has a lot of heart! I mean, of course, the *word* for “heart,” “*leb*,” in Hebrew, which is used many times in this Parasha. The word for “heart” is used in two contexts, one having to do with generosity and volunteering, and the other having to do with wisdom, understanding, and skill. There is beneficence of the heart and there is wisdom of the heart, and the two senses are used in close proximity: Ex. 35:5 speaks of “all whose heart is generous,” and 35:10 speaks of “all among you who is wise of heart.” 35:21 speaks of everyone whose generous desire carried him away and moved him to bear gifts, and then 35:25 & 26 speak of every woman wise and skilled of heart, whose hearts bore them wisdom, who spun and fashioned fine [presumably woolen] fabric and goat hair.

While people get credit for this generosity of heart and spirit and wisdom of heart and spirit, it seems to be God who is ultimately responsible for filling people with wisdom and generosity and moves and uplifts their hearts to be generous and wise. The language of God’s inspiration of peoples’ hearts to be generous and wise sounds akin to what is said about God’s inspiration of people to prophecy, actually.

In verse 36:2, the senses of generosity and wisdom of heart seem to be mixed: “And Moses called to Betzalel and to Aholiab and to every man of wisdom to whose heart the Lord gave wisdom, to everyone whose heart bore him towards service to the task to carry it out.” It seems like the verse is saying that everyone who voluntarily took it upon himself to undertake the task was given the wisdom to carry out the task. And indeed, if both the generosity of heart and the wisdom of heart come from God, like prophesy, then He who bestows the one can bestow the other. And even in the sense that one or both come from man, then true beneficence and generosity which leads a person to dedicate so much of himself towards a task will in time grant him the wisdom and skill to do it well. Goodwill, Ratson, is the first of the Kabbalistic effulgent Emanations, leading to Hokhmah and Binah, Wisdom and Understanding, as well as Da’at, Knowledge, as expressed here in 35:31.

There is, of course, an alternative Kabbalistic view which sees Wisdom as primary. But the mainstream view is that the heart’s love of wisdom, philosophia, as Plato says and Rabbenu Jonah of Gerona repeats, is what leads to true wisdom. Maybe that Divine gift of wisdom is God’s recompense for man’s willing generosity of spirit. Or else, perhaps, a willing, generous, sharing and loving spirit is the first gift of God, as the first stage on the way to acquiring True Wisdom and the hallmark of one upon whom it has been bestowed.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL  
The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

## Shabbat Vayakhel-Pekude-HaHodesh

March 13-14, 2026 | 25 Adar, 5786

### SCHEDULE

**Hertz:** Parasha: 373 | HaHodesh: 253 | Haftarah: 1002  
**Kaplan:** Parasha: 464 | HaHodesh: 308 | Haftarah: 1284

**Candle Lighting** | 6:43 pm

**Evening Services** | 6:45 pm | Main Sanctuary

**Friday Night Lights** | following services | Rabbi Soloveichik | *5786 Season sponsored by the Julis-Romo-Rabinowitz family*

**Zemirot** | 8:10 am | Main Sanctuary

**Shahrit** | 9:00 am | Main Sanctuary

At the conclusion of the last word of the parasha, the congregation says:

**תָּזַק וְנִתְחַזַּק - תָּזַקוּ וְיִצְמַח לְבַבְכֶם כָּל הַיְּהוּדִים לֵאמֹר**

*Be Strong and let us be Strengthened - Be strong, and let your heart take courage,*

*All ye that hope for the LORD.*

**Tot Shabbat** | 10:00 am | Fidanque Youth Room

**Jr. Congregation** | 10:30 am | Little Synagogue

**Kiddush** | following services | *Sponsored by Gillian & Simon Salama-Caro, in memory of her mother, Joan Halpern | Pies sponsored by Karen & Jack Daar and Raquel & Steven Herz, in honor of Pi Day | Arak sponsored by Aura Bijou-Plotkin, in memory of Samuel Israel Goldberg*

**Shabbat Afternoon Class** | 5:55 pm | Rabbi Soloveichik

**Teen Shiur** | 5:55 pm | Baruch-Lev Kelman

**Evening Services** | 6:40 pm

**Habdala** | 7:35 pm

*Rosh Hodesh Nisan begins on Wednesday night.*

### Weekday Service Times

**Mornings:** Sunday: 8:05 am | Monday-Friday: 7:05 am

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

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## PESAH PREVIEW

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### Bedek HaBayit Day

**Sunday, March 22 | 10:30 am-12:00 pm (note updated start time)**

Join us for a special hands-on volunteer opportunity to help care for our Synagogue in advance of the Spring holidays. Together, we'll polish ritual silver, reattach bells to Rimonim, sort and inspect talitot for repair, mend Humashim and prayerbooks, and inventory synagogue textiles. No experience needed – just bring your enthusiasm and a willingness to help.

For questions and to RSVP, contact Rev. Z. Edinger at  
[zedinger@shearithisrael.org](mailto:zedinger@shearithisrael.org).

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### Shabbat HaGadol Derasha

**Rabbi Meir Soloveichik**

**Shabbat Morning, March 28**

*Sponsorships available at [shearithisrael.org](http://shearithisrael.org).*

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### READERS WELCOME: Women's Reading of Shir HaShirim

**Shabbat of Pesah, April 4**

Open to women and girls of all ages! If you're interested in learning parts, email Mrs. Lisa Rohde at [lrohde-csi@yahoo.com](mailto:lrohde-csi@yahoo.com). With the audio available on the Synagogue's website, learning a part is made very mobile and accessible.

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### KIDS KORNER

To win a raffle ticket at kiddush, find Dalya & Jake with the answer to this riddle:

*This new month begins when spring is near,  
A special time comes once a year.  
The Mishkan stood, its work all done,  
Which month was it?*

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### CSI Youth Matza-Making Factory

**Sunday, March 22 | 3:00 pm**

*Signup is open at [shearithisrael.org/matza-making](http://shearithisrael.org/matza-making).*

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### Experience Ancient Egypt – Hol HaMoed Trip to the Met

**Monday, April 6 | 11:00 am | Metropolitan Museum of Art**

*With Jake and Baruch-Lev*

Registration coming soon!

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## FAITH FOR FOOD + MAOT HITTIM

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### *Faith for Food* is Gearing Up for Pesah!

This year, in addition to collecting Maot Hittim to benefit members of our own *kehilla* (and beyond), **we are collecting funds to support our substantial Maot Hittim effort through *Faith for Food***. *Faith for Food* is Shearith Israel and Masbia's new UWS food annex on Paved Paradise. Every Tuesday, Masbia supplies our neighbors in need with weekly groceries.

For Pesah, Masbia will be supplying ample Kosher for Passover food packages including chicken and other items that will feed a family for 8 days of Pesah. Please help us raise \$18,000 to fund these packages (\$216 each) for about 80 families so that everyone in need in our community can celebrate Passover with dignity.

Donate at [www.shearithisrael.org/maot-hittim-5786](http://www.shearithisrael.org/maot-hittim-5786).

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### To Help Someone in Manhattan with Food Insecurity

Email [CSIAnnex@masbiarelief.org](mailto:CSIAnnex@masbiarelief.org) with a name and cell phone number.

A trained Masbia representative will reach out regarding enrollment.

Learn more about *Faith for Food* & contribute at [shearithisrael.org/faith-for-food](http://shearithisrael.org/faith-for-food).

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## ONGOING AT SHEARITH ISRAEL

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TUESDAY NIGHT SERIES

### Reading Outside the Box: An Exploration of the Apocrypha

*Led by Baruch-Lev Kelman*

Tuesdays, 7:00 pm (after 6:30 pm Evening Services)

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### Stitch & Fix with Sisterhood

Tuesday, March 24 | 1:00-3:00 pm | RSVP to Rose at [rgedinger@gmail.com](mailto:rgedinger@gmail.com)

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## COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

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We welcome new member, **Larry Marks**, to our growing Shearith Israel family.

Mazal tob to **Rabbi & Layaliza Soloveichik** upon the birth of a first grandchild, a granddaughter.

Congratulations to **Dr. Yael Cycowicz**, upon the publication of her recent Psychology Today article, *When Everything Becomes "Trauma."*

We mourn the loss of our long-time member and Honorary Trustee, **Paul Beispel**.  
Condolences to our Hatan Torah, **Steven (& Ina) Beispel**.

We mourn the passing of our friend and former member Randall Belinfante.  
Condolences to his wife Anne Marie and the entire family.