

The Roslyn Synagogue Newsletter

P.O. Box 218
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Purim 5770

Message From Rabbi Block

Schedule of Services

Monday to Friday
morning
Shacharit: 6:30am
(except Rosh Chodesh
6:20am)

Sunday morning
Shacharit: 8:30am

Sunday evening
Mincha/Ma'ariv at the
previous Friday's candle
lighting time.

Erev Shabbat
Mincha and Kabbalat
Shabbat at candle
lighting time.

Shabbat morning
Shacharit: 9:00am
Mincha follows
immediately after
kiddush.

Saturday evening
Ma'ariv and Havdalah:
10 minutes after the end
of Shabbat.

Check the shul website
and online calendar for
news, schedules and
davening times.

Purim: The Haman in our Midst

The main thrust of the Purim experience is the rejoicing and frolicking enjoyed by all. Costumes, exchange of edible gifts and family feasts are the order of the day. Even the mention of Haman's name evokes playfulness, where we each try to outdo the other in constructive noisemaking.

The fact is, however, that a focal point of Purim is the message of the recurrence of anti-semitism. The Megillah identifies Haman as the Aggagite, a descendant of Amalek, the arch-enemy of Israel. In our tradition Amalek represents evil incarnate, a force seeking to wipe out the Jews. Rabbi Joseph Soloveichik described it as follows:

Suddenly, the Persian Jew discovered that he is hated. No one hates the United States or France, though particular policies may be vehemently decried. The mere existence of a Jew, however, irritates Amalek and his hatred can erupt suddenly and violently and be translated into mass murder. The very presence of Mordechai arouses... Haman; he just can't bear him. As Haman clearly declared: "Yet all this [honor] is worth nothing to me, as long as I see Mordechai the Jew sitting at the King's gate". (Esther 5:13)

This is the tenth year since the tragedy of 9/11. Just this week I read in the press where a member of the UK's House of Lords, serving as the health spokeswoman of the Liberal Party, challenged the State of Israel to provide proof its representatives did not harvest organs during the IDF's valiant recent humanitarian effort in Haiti (a great kiddush Hashem).

Rabbi Soloveichik, who passed away in 1993, did not live to see the events of the last few years and the apparent targeting of the United States and Israel as objects of persecution. Withal, whether Amalek is Fascist, Communist, or Radical Islamist, the Jew has too often become the target of his irrational and absolute hatred. Although Jews as liberals are uncomfortable with this idea, the tradition has insisted that as long as there is an Amalek, the Jews are unsafe.

The closing message of Purim, though, is the triumph of the Jew over evil and anti-semitism. Let us hope and pray that once again this recurring result comes true in our day, and let us hope against hope that the Amalek in our midst will once and for all be obliterated for all time. Happy Purim!



Rabbi Robert D. Block

Message From the President

The celebration of Purim is observed by several specific mitzvot which are unique to this holiday. As we all know, there are four observances required on Purim. They are: the hearing of the Megillah, both evening and morning; the giving of gifts to the poor, Matanot l'evyonim; Mishloach manot, giving gifts of food; and the Purim seudah, the special Purim meal.

These diverse mitzvot contain a common characteristic. These commandments make Purim different from all our other holidays. Each of these observances requires the interaction of people. We cannot fulfill them by ourselves. Ideally, the Megillah is heard in public, preferably in the synagogue. Although one can fulfill the mitzvah reading it in private this clearly is not ideal. The other commandments too require interaction with other members of the community. We are commanded to give charity to at least two people, and to give two foods to at least one other person. Finally, we must have a seudah, a feast, to celebrate the holiday. Just as we invite guests for weddings, bar or bat mitzvas, birthdays and so on, we too are commanded to sit down and eat with family and friends on Purim day.

Purim, I like to think, is the holiday of the community. It's a chance to celebrate with our own community in the Roslyn Synagogue hearing the Megillah, exchanging Mishloach manot, and with the greater community through the giving of Matanot l'evyonim, the giving of charity. Finally it's the chance to join together with family and friends to celebrate at the seudah until we can't tell the difference between cursed be Haman and blessed be Mordechai.

I want to urge all of you to join our community by supporting the shul in all its activities. We need the support of our community to assure the continued success and growth of the Roslyn Synagogue. We need your financial support as well as your participation in all our functions from the reading of the Megillah, daily minyanim, to our social events and classes. Please join us! I look forward to celebrating Purim with you all again this year!

Purim sameach,
Marc Yunis

Shul News

Mazel tov to Lewis J. Katz on the engagement of his son, Evan H. Katz, to Ruth Weintraub.

Mazel tov to Rabbi Robert and Beile Block and the entire Block family on the birth of twin sons, Amos Zechariah and Alexander Zev, to Shoshana and Noah Bender.

Mazel tov to Rabbi Robert and Beile Block and the entire Block family on the birth of a son, Micha Eliezer, to Akiva and Debbie Block.

Mazal tov to Yvette Edidin for being honored by Hineni.

Mazel Tov to Janet and Yosef Berookhim on the engagement of their son, Bobby Berookhim to Lauren Yeager.

*New and Improved!!
Keep up with news and events at
The Roslyn Synagogue.*

- *Schedule of Prayer Services*
 - *Calendar of Events*
 - *Judaic Web Resources*
 - *Words of Torah (D'var Torah)*
- And much, much more!*

*Visit our website at:
www.RoslynSynagogue.org
or look for us on Facebook and Twitter*

"A Divinity That Shapes Our Ends": Hashem in Esther

When compared to the other Biblical books, several features of Megillat Esther appear strange. Supreme among these discrepancies is the shocking silence surrounding God's actions: Hashem's name is never mentioned in the megillah; no miracles or saving are explicitly attributed to His Hand. God's presence remains firmly in the background, pulling invisible strings, but unacknowledged in Esther. While we celebrate Purim as a holiday where Hashem (once again) saved His people, the book makes no mention of this element.

Ibn Ezra suggests a rather interesting solution: this was an intentional decision, as Esther was submitted to the Persian annals, which glossed over all deities with the names of their own gods. Therefore, Ibn Ezra argues, it would be inappropriate to submit God's name to such a treatment. More fundamentally, it is possible to suggest that Hashem's absence plays a more thematic role. Esther's events occur outside the Land of Israel and post-prophecy. The inhabitants of Shushan were not fortunate enough to perceive Hashem's Hand miraculously controlling events. They saw Hashem only through faith and/or hindsight; they didn't know His intentions or His plans until they had reached fruition. It is not only Hashem's name that is hidden from Esther, but His very presence remains behind the scenes.

In this way, Esther is one of the most appropriate books for our current situation. While we express faith in Hashem, we are not privy to His plans. We know He is out there, watching over us, but we can not see His miraculous interference until all the pieces fall into place.

Ari J. Schwab, *Rabbinic Intern*

2009 Journal Dinner

The Roslyn Synagogue held its 2009 Journal Dinner on December 17, 2009 at the Great Neck Synagogue, where we joined together to honor Georgeanne & Moshe Polatov for all of their contributions to the shul. Well over 100 members, friends of the shul, and family of Moshe and Georgeanne, enjoyed a wonderful evening with great food, great dancing, drink and music. We heard inspiring and humble words from our honorees, and, of course, we had the privilege of hearing words of Torah for the occasion from Rabbi Block. To make the evening even more special, the rousing musical entertainment was provided by none other than Roslyn's own Yaakov Block and his band. It was a wonderful evening, highlighting the friendly, warm, generous, close-knit community that The Roslyn Synagogue has become known for.



A Book Group Grows in Roslyn



ast June at shul, sometime between the kiddush and the cholent, the idea of a book club for the members of the Roslyn Synagogue was born. As we chatted among ourselves, many of us realized that we like to read and to recommend books to each other. A book club seemed like the perfect place for us to do this on a regular basis. Every 4-6 weeks, from July until the present, a group of members and many of their invited friends, have been getting together to talk about a

variety of books. Here is what we have read so far: *The Gravedigger's Daughter*, *Sarah's Key*, *People of the Book*, *The Help*, and *The 19th Wife*.



We gather in someone's home, where we sit around a table, partake of some delicious desserts and fruit, and say what we think about the book that we have read. In the past, we have had a leader, but most recently each one presented her own views or questions to the group. The format is very informal and extremely enjoyable. For one hour, we don't discuss anything but the book. All kinds of ideas come out, literary, historical and personal. The conversations are lively and intelligent, because as thoughtful and experienced women, we bring many insights to the table. We also decide as a group what the next book will be. People get to make recommendations, and then we decide what we want to read.

After the discussion of the book, we have some light refreshments and socialize. I hope more of you will check us out. Susan Cooper sends out an e-mail about the selection for each gathering so let her know if you want to be on the e-mail list (susanicooper7@gmail.com). The next meeting is March 2 at Shari Reisner's house. We will be reading *The Middle Place* by Kelly Corrigan. Even if you haven't read the book, you can still participate in the discussion. Please join us! All are welcome!

Eddie Tolins

PURIM

S C H E D U L E

Friday, Feb 26, Mincha-Kabbalat Shabbat 5:25pm

Shabbat Morning, Feb 27 9:00am

Shabbat ends 6:25pm, Maariv 6:40pm

Saturday night, Megillah reading 7:00pm

Pizza Party at 8 pm!

Bring your children to be entertained by Phil the Magician!

Sunday morning Feb 28, Shacharit with Megillah reading 8:30am

Sunday Mincha-Ma'ariv 5:25pm