

PURIM 5774

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 6:45pm

Shabbat morning:
Shacharit: 9:00am

Saturday evening:
Shiur 40 minutes
before the
previous Friday's
candle lighting time.

Mincha: Ten
minutes before
previous Friday's
candle lighting time,
followed by Seudat
Shlishit, Ma'ariv and
Havdalah.

Message from our Rabbinic Intern

Very soon we will be celebrating Purim, which involves a number of special mitzvot. We read the Megillah both morning and night, we give gifts to the needy, we give mishloach manot (two edible foods or drinks) and we eat a festive meal — seudat Purim.

As a rule, when we perform a mitzvah, we need to be attentive and have a respectful mindset. Furthermore, we need to have *kavanah* — intent to fulfill the mitzvah (Shulchan Aruch 589:10). Yet, the Talmud (Megillah 7B) seems to ignore these rules and principles when it comes to Purim. The Talmud states, “On Purim, one has an obligation to become intoxicated to the point that he does not know the difference between Blessed is Mordechai and Cursed is Haman.” For centuries, commentators have been trying to explicate this unusual and enigmatic halakhic obligation. How could there be an obligation to become so intoxicated that you lose your ability to distinguish between good and evil, between two opposites — Mordechai and Haman?

Does Judaism support drinking and intoxication as a way of serving G-d?

While there are many ways of explaining this halakha, I will offer an explanation given by Rabbi Yaakov of Lisa, (1760 – 1832) author of numerous halakhik works (most famously the *Netivot* and the *Chavot Da'at*). One of the most difficult passages in the Talmud (Berakhot 54a) explains that “One must bless for the bad just as one blesses for the good,” because essentially, “everything that G-d does is for the best.” Based on this Talmudic dictum, we can explain the obligation to become intoxicated on Purim.

We said that one has to drink until he reaches the point where he does not know the difference between “Blessed is Mordechai and Cursed is Haman.” Rabbi Yaakov of Lisa posits that this is referring to the difference between good and evil. On Purim one has to let down all barriers, until he reaches a spiritual level where he does not see any difference between good and evil. We recognize that even what seems to be bad is really a blessing in disguise. Of course, we are incapable of understanding this throughout the year just through study and analysis.

In this world, we will never fully understand why bad things happen. Sometimes we get glimpses of answers, sometimes it's all questions, but we must always work to have the faith that indeed everything is for the best.

The Purim story is the ultimate example of the most terrible decree against the Jewish people completely turning around, *v'nahahfoch hu*. Therefore, on Purim, with the help of some wine, we work on internalizing the idea that everything that happens is for the best.

Rivky, Chayala and I wish you a spiritually uplifting and happy Purim!
Avi Anderson



Message From the President

Many of the mitzvot which we do require preparation, which although not the mitzvah per se is an integral part of the mitzvah. The first verse of Vayikra, “And He called to Moshe” is noted by Rashi to mean, “Calling” preceded every utterance, every speech, and every commandment. It is an expression of love, the expression used by the heavenly angels. To the gentile prophets, by contrast, He reveals Himself in expressions of transience and impurity, as it says, ‘God Chanced upon Bilam.’

In fact, if we look carefully we see that most of our mitzvot are done only after preparation. For example, we start studying the laws of Pesach a month before in preparation for the Yom Tov, not to mention the all the actual preparations for Pesach which have become a minhag Yisrael. Preparations for Shabbat begin well before the onset of Shabbat so we enter Shabbat in a joyous and holy state of mind. There is custom amongst many Jews to recite the phrase, “Hineni mukhan u mezuman” (“Behold, I am prepared and ready”) before the performance of mitzvot. In fact, the Gemorra, Berakhot 30b, tells us that the “the pious ones of old” would wait an entire hour before beginning to pray (Shemoneh Esreh) so as to properly prepare for their encounter with the almighty.

Purim too has its preparation. We read Parshat Zachor on the Shabbat before Purim and we fast as a community the day before Purim.

There are some mitzvot, especially related to Purim which are quite spontaneous and do not require preparation. The giving of gifts to the poor is one of them. Acts of kindness and charity are meant to be spontaneous. They stem from our love of our fellow man. There is no bracha to be recited before giving charity on Purim or any other day. No preparation is required because our giving of charity should stem from desire to help a person in need, immediately, without hesitation.

The well known obligation, stated in the Gemorra, Megilla 7b, that one is obligated to get intoxicated on Purim until he cannot differentiate between ‘Blessed be Mordechai’ and cursed be Haman’ is another example of acting without preparation. Did our sages really encourage us to arrive at this state of uncertainty? Perhaps they did, but another explanation is that occasionally we need to act directly, without too much analysis, without complex thought, without doubts. This is what Jews do when we celebrate Purim and when we worship G-d with a sense great joy and happiness with spontaneity and pleasure like a drunkard. It takes a year of preparation to arrive at Purim so that we might not be able to tell the difference between Mordechai and Haman. Purim sameach,

Marc Yunis

Sisterhood News

Our next Book Club meeting will take place on Monday night March 17th at Susan Cooper’s house, 38 Shadetree Lane, Roslyn Heights (484-8375), at 8pm. This month’s book will be **This is the Story of a Happy Marriage by Ann Patchett**. Blending literature and memoir, Ann Patchett, author of State of Wonder, and Bel Canto, examines her deepest commitments—to writing, family, friends, dogs, books, and her husband—creating a resonant portrait of a life in this absorbing read. Please join us for a lively discussion and fun evening, even if you haven’t read the book!

We will be meeting in the synagogue Wednesday, March 12th at 7:00 pm to assemble the Misloach Manot. Please join us!



Scholar-In-Residence



On February 28-March 1, Shabbat *Vayakhel*, The Roslyn Synagogue held our annual Scholar-In-Residence Shabbat. This year, we were honored to host Rabbi Ozer Glickman, a Rosh Yeshivah at Yeshiva University's Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary. In his three shiurim over the course of Shabbat, Rabbi Glickman addressed interesting and thought provoking issues relating to the development and interpretation of Halacha, and the role and meaning Aggadah in Rabbinic Literature. On Friday night, over 60 members of our community enjoyed a fun and delicious Shabbat dinner to kick-off the weekend. And on Saturday evening, we had a great turnout for a Melaveh Malkah which followed Rabbi Glickman's final lecture. For all those who attended one or more of the weekend's events, this year's Scholar in Residence program once again showed what makes The Roslyn Synagogue such a special place — a place that combines learning, social events, and davening, and weaves them into a warm and vibrant community. With the continued support of all of our members, we continue to look forward to hosting many more learning/social programs in this and the coming years.



On Shabbat Parashat *Vayikra*, March 7-8, The Roslyn Synagogue hosted Rabbi Kenneth Brander, the Dean of Yeshiva University's Center for the Jewish Future. Rabbi Brander visited our community, on behalf of Yeshiva University, for the purpose of celebrating the Rabbinic Ordination of Rabbi Avi Block, Rabbi and Rebbitzin Block's 39 year tenure as our spiritual and community leaders, and the wonderful impact that the Block family has had on Roslyn and the broader Jewish community throughout the country. Rabbi Brander spoke during the course of Shabbat about the mutually supporting roles of "the Priest and the Prophet" in Jewish life, and the role and importance of the synagogue. In these lectures, Rabbi Brander highlighted how lucky The Roslyn Synagogue has been, and continues to be, to have a Rabbi who embodies, for our synagogue and its members, the best of the educational role of the priest and the inspirational role of the prophet. Many thanks to Yeshiva University for recognizing what we here in Roslyn have known for so many years, and may we all be blessed to benefit from the leadership of Rabbi and Rebbitzin Block, and the Block family, for many, many years to come.

Lox & Learn

"What Does Torah Umadda Mean Anyway? Classic and Contemporary Perspectives for a Meaningful Modern Orthodoxy" was presented by Rabbi Gershon Albert, a rabbinic intern at Young Israel of Scarsdale.

No surprise that there are conflicting opinions. These range from Rabbi Akiva's strict view that, "even one who reads the non-canonized (external) books, has no portion in the world to come, (Mishna Sanh. 90a)" to Maimonides' view that "Knowledge of nature is the way to love and fear the Lord." Indeed the Torah itself commands us to calculate the calendar cycles; as it is written: "For this is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the peoples. (Deut. 4:6, BT Shabbat 75a)" How can such be accomplished without knowledge of the science of astronomy? (Maimonides also held that all forms of wisdom are "perfumers, cooks and bakers" for Torah.)

Thanks to Rabbi Avi Anderson for arranging the program and Yigal Harel for getting the food and the cake in honor of my 82nd birthday.

Len Mansky



Purim Schedule

Taanit Esther

Thursday March 13th, 2014, Taanit Esther
Fast Begins 5:48am
Shacharit 6:30am
Mincha 6:20pm
Maariv to follow Mincha
Fast ends 7:43pm

Reading of Megillat Esther

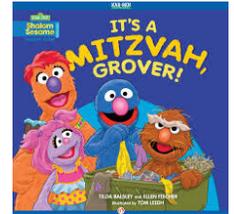
March 15, 2014: Shabbat ends 7:42pm
Megillah Reading 8:15pm
Followed by parve snacks and children's entertainment

Sunday morning, March 16th, 2014

Shacharit 8:30am
Megillah reading 9:10am
Mincha 2:00pm

PJ Library: Jewish books for kids

PJ Library is a program that mails free, high-quality Jewish children's literature and music to families across North America on a monthly basis to help families stay engaged with their kids through reading. Books sent are based on the reading level of your child. All families raising Jewish children from age six months of age through five, six, seven or eight years (depending on the community) are welcome to sign up. Go to: <https://pjlibrary.org/Communities.aspx> to find the program nearest you.



PJ Library is a program of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation and is made possible through partnerships with philanthropists and local Jewish organizations. Today, families in hundreds of communities across the United States and Canada are able to explore the timeless core values of Judaism through books and music. There's no cost! Questions? Call PJ Library at 413-276-0800 or email pjlibrary@hgf.org.

Shul News

Mazel tov to Heather and Seth Ostrow and family on the birth of a daughter, Lailah Judith (Yehudis Lailah).

Mazel tov to Rabbi and Beile Block and the entire Block family on the birth of a daughter, Daphna Ruth (Daphna Rivka) to Rochel and Elisha Block.

Mazel tov to Edith and Paul Tolins on the birth of a son, Zachary Michael (Moshe Mordechai), to Ilana and Jeff Lax.

Mazel tov to Edith and Sam Levy on the birth of a daughter to their grandchildren Blima and Hanan Blumenblatt.

Mazel tov to Michele and Harvey Rand on the birth of a daughter, Chloe Alexa (Aviva Rachel) to Lauren and Jordan Rand.

Mazel tov to the Baradaran family on the bat mitzvah of Shira.

Mazel tov to the Solaimanzadeh family on the marriage of Johnathan and Sharon.

We welcome new members Jonathan, Pamela, Max & Sophie Goldman.



Our sincere condolences to Alan Kaplan and family on the loss of his mother, Harriet Kaplan.
Our sincere condolences to Ellen Kaplan and family on the loss of her mother, Harriet Zelnick.
Our sincere condolences to Beile Block on the loss of her mother, Shirley Ganz.
Our sincere condolences to Jack Wertenteil on the loss of his sister, Chana Ringel.
Our sincere condolences to Cyrus Youssefzadeh on the loss of his mother, Mehry Youssefzadeh.

May the family be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.