

Ha Shavuah B' Sha'arey Israel

June 18 – June 25, 2009

26 Sivan – 3 Tammuz 5769



Candle lighting time 8:27 pm
Friday June 19

Friday Evening Kabbalat Shabbat Services begin at 6:15 pm
Saturday morning Shabbat Services begin at 9:30 am

PARASHAT SHELAH-LEKHA - BIRKAT HAHODESH (Commentary on Page 2)

Annual: Numbers 13:1 – 15:41 (Etz Hayim, p. 840)

Triennial: Numbers 14:8 – 15:7 (Etz Hayim, p. 845)

Haftarah: Joshua 2:1 – 24 (Etz Hayim, p. 857)



We wish a Happy Birthday this week to:

Doug Katz, Stuart Schwartz, Anslie Perkel, David Elkon, Shannon Hirsh, Marc Rosengart, Benjamin Gribbins, Matthew Schwartz, Paul Adler, Lillie Anne Brody, Richard Singer and Irit Ullman

And Happy Anniversary to:

Ina Chanin & Louis Schlesinger, Barbara & Ian Altman, Nathalie & Harold Goodrich and Carole & Stuart Karlins

This week we remember the Yahrzeit of:

Samuel Pollock, Alfred Marvin Weiss, Louis Elliott Goldman, Maymie T. Schwartz, Simon Bolnick, Edward Arthur Stern, Paul Stein, Morris Besser, Oscar Dreizin, Leni Wertheimer, Aaron Backer, Simon Moore

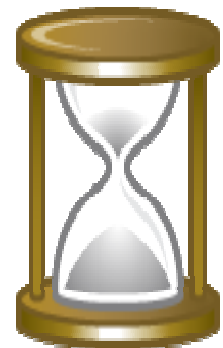
It's CSI Yearbook Time!

**Do we need to update YOUR ad?
Do you want your personal ad to be the same
as last year? How about your business ad?
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Have you changed your email address?**

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Do you want to add a new family member's
birthday or anniversary?**

**To make any changes for the 2009-2010 Directory
you must call Beth Cohen at 474-1221 by July 13.**

Thank you for your support and cooperation.





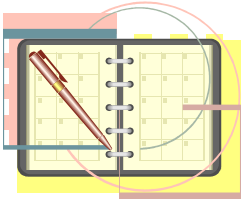
We are missing quite a few books from the Library.



So check around your homes to see if you have any
and then please return them. Thank you!!



**Please continue to send in your surveys, and remember
each adult member of the congregation can send one in.**



**Mark your calendars ~
Tisha B'Av Service
Wednesday - July 29 – 8:00 PM**



PARASHAT SHELAH

Commentary this week is by Rabbi Lisa Gelber who is the associate dean of The Rabbinical School at The Jewish Theological Seminary.

Fringe Story - A reminder to participate in, and not just observe, the world around us.

When I close my eyes to picture my grandfather, he is standing beside a long olive green bookcase, swaying and *shokeling* [swaying in prayer], his slight frame enfolded within his *tallit*, *tefillin* protruding from his forehead and wrapped about his arm, deeply engaged in conversation with God. At those moments, it always seemed that he had been transported to a different place and time. Perhaps it was that magic cape, I thought, the one with the strings attached.

As a little girl, I yearned to wear a tallit, and so it is no surprise that some of my fondest childhood memories are of sitting with my grandfather in shul on Shabbat and sharing his tallit. Throughout the service, I would play with the *tzitzit*, enjoying the feel of the fringes as they slipped between my fingers, methodically adding new knots and removing them again before the conclusion of the service, each knot a blessing for myself or my family. My grandfather was a humble man, dedicated to his store, his family, and his God. He embodied a love for education and humanity. I knew that those cornerstones of his existence were somehow bound up within those carefully constructed knots.

It was not until some years after my grandfather's death that I learned the third paragraph of the Shema, recited twice each day, morning and evening, and found in this week's parashah, Shlah, commanding us to wear the tzitzit.

"Adonai said to Moses as follows: Speak to the people of Israel and tell them to make for themselves fringes, tzitzit, on the corners of their garments throughout their generations; let them attach a cord of blue to the fringe at each corner. That shall be your fringe; look at it and recall all of Adonai's commandments and observe them so that you do not follow your heart and eyes and be seduced or led astray. Thus you shall be reminded to observe all My commandments and to be holy to your God. I, Adonai, am your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God: I, Adonai your God" (Numbers 15:37-41).

God is clear, the tzitzit are not an adornment set aside for special occasions. They are a necessary part of our daily existence throughout time. Designed to help us remember, to keep us connected, the tzitzit challenge us to actively engage in our story as Jews so that we might become holy. One of the first steps towards that sense of *kedushah*, holiness, is a willingness to set ourselves apart, to distinguish ourselves as Jews.

In the most obvious way, the tallit is an external sign of our place within a larger history. It is a marker of our commitment as individuals to the needs of our community. Each morning, as we recite the *berakhah* [blessing] which introduces the Shema, we physically gather the tzitzit from the four corners of our tallit, demonstrating our hope that God bring us in peace, safety, and wholeness from the four corners of the earth, and lead us with uprightness, and dignity, to our land. Here, we not only articulate our prayers for the future, we engage with our symbols, reminding us of our role in reaching out to others, in defining the boundaries of community, and in moving forward with respect for ourselves as individuals and as a people. While our knowledge and level of practice may differ, the tallit reminds us of the potential within each of us to connect to a past that can strengthen our sense of self within a larger history.

By utilizing the tzitzit, either intentionally, as has become the custom for morning recitation of the Shema, or for meditation throughout the service, they become an educational tool, integrating thought and action. They are the means by which we demonstrate our commitment to the *mitzvot* [commandments]. We don't merely think about the tzitzit, God instructs us to look at them, to examine their composition, to remember God's mitzvot, and to do them. With regard to this verse, our rabbis tell us, "Seeing leads to remembering, remembering to doing" (Babylonian Talmud, *Menahot*, 43b).

The tallit calls us to attention. It is a physical reminder of our responsibilities and our commitments, a signal of the actions incumbent upon us as Jews (Babylonian Talmud, *Menahot*, 43b).

Perhaps that is why we must wear the tallit, placing the tzitzit on our person, making them part of our identity, using them to define who we are, for ourselves, and for those around us. In the bracha designated for putting on the tallit, we acknowledge the opportunity given by God to create holiness in our lives, with the attending responsibility and expectation that we will wrap ourselves in the mitzvot.

No wonder the rabbis held that the mitzvah of tzitzit is equally important as the commandments. By enclosing ourselves in the tallit, we are making a statement that we have, or are in search of, a relationship with God. As one of my former students wrote, "Wearing a tallit is a way to set myself apart from distractions and focus on my time with God. When I put on my tallit, I feel as if I am in a separate place surrounded by the presence of God. It makes my time in prayer more intimate ... and gives me a feeling of protection and the embrace of God."

A sign of safety and a symbol of God's presence, the tallit reminds us that struggle with and adherence to the commandments is an expression of our evolving conversation and dialogue with God--a dialogue that, in turn, enhances both our world and our place in the world.

It is our responsibility to that world that helps explain the meaning of these verses within the context of this week's parashah. The parashah opens with instructions to the 12 spies, leaders in the community, "*la-tur et ha'aretz*," to check out, spy, or tour the land. The men return after visiting a land flowing with milk and honey. Ten of the spies then share their fear and determination that the people of the land, who are giants, mitigate the success of future missions. The spies are presented as fulfilling their assignment; they spied out the land. Observers, tourists, they returned with snapshots and souvenirs, photos for their albums, but no confidence in their ability to take ownership of that space, no commitment to making a future in that land.

At the conclusion of the parashah, we are commanded to look at the tzitzit, and to remember and observe God's commandments, "*v'lo ta-tu-ru*," so as not to become tourists, passively engaged in Jewish life. Rashi reminds us that the heart and the eyes are the body's spies (Numbers 15:39). We constantly scout out our surroundings, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally. When faced with challenges, it is tempting to ignore the potential the future holds, falling back instead, on what is comfortable and familiar, and focusing on the fear of the unknown. It is up to us to use the tzitzit to point us in the direction of the future.

In one Talmudic discussion, our rabbis teach that all Jews are obligated to fulfill the mitzvah of tzitzit, including those who have chosen Judaism, women, household workers, etc. (Babylonian Talmud *Menahot* 43a). From this perspective, tzitzit become a symbol of community participation. In addition, a mathematical rendering of the word tzitzit reveals the number 613, making the fringes a visual reminder of the mitzvot. This suggests that one who dons a tallit proclaims, "I am a Jew. I understand and embrace the values and traditions of our people and commit to carrying those blessings with me as I move forward in life."

The tallit encourages us to involve ourselves in Jewish life through every action--seeing, feeling, and doing. The tzitzit provide the means for us to face our world as participants, setting an example, making a difference, and becoming part of our history.

For other commentaries on this week's Torah portion check out these sites:

Aish.com

[ISJL Taste of Torah](http://ISJL_Taste_of_Torah)

JTS

MyJewishLearning.com

[USCJ Torah Sparks](http://USCJ_Torah_Sparks)

Here is a link for the summer issue of the Next Step Newsletter from the USCJ. http://www.uscj.org/images/4957_NextStep_SU09_3.pdf

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Chant the Haftarah

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Congregation Sha'arey Israel can make a little extra money...

1. visit www.goodsearch.com for your online searches. This won't cost you anything but CSI makes a penny each time you search.

every time you



CSI earns



2. for all your online shopping needs go to csimacon.org and click on our Amazon.com link.

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[CSI Macon Online](#)  
[United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism \(USCJ\)](#)  
[JTS Podcast - this week's Parsha](#)  
[Audio Siddur](#)  
[Jewish Telegraphic Agency \(JTA\)](#)  
[Israeli News Broadcast – in English](#)  
[The Jewish Ethicist](#)  
[Synagogue 3000](#)  
[Learn through USCJ online](#)  
[The William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum](#)  
[United Jewish Communities \(UJC\)](#)  
[American Jewish University](#)

**For the children (or the young at heart):**

[Torah Portion Coloring Pages](#)  
[Babaganews Torah Parasha of the week movie](#)