

MELROSE B'NAI ISRAEL EMANU-EL



shofar



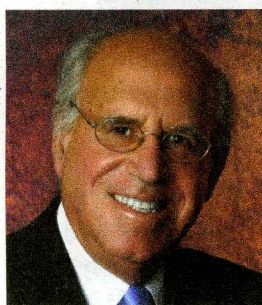
A Conservative congregation, traditional and egalitarian, dedicated to perpetuating Judaism by supporting the religious, spiritual, educational, social and cultural life of our community.

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As I See It, A Fresh Perspective by Rabbi Charles S. Sherman



Out of the blue I received an email from a pastor from a large Baptist church in Texas. He was preparing to preach on the Joseph story. Of course in our tradition, the Joseph narrative is read in early/late Fall. Apparently in his faith community, the stories are not tied to the "Sedra" – the portion of the week.

He told me each week the church produces a lovely worship brochure, with artwork representing the Bible story from that week. He was searching online for an image of Joseph's coat and somehow came across a painting of the coat that my son Eyal had created many years ago. Many of you know that Eyal is profoundly challenged and limited. He paints using a mouthstick. Painting is a way for him to express his artistic side and communicate with the world. The pastor asked permission to reproduce the painting for his brochure, and of course, we agreed. A week or so later, he sent me the brochure. The description next to Eyal's painting made me stop and think.

The vibrant colors of Joseph's coat remind me of the various colors that make up our beautiful world.

I have read the Joseph story many, many times. I heard it as a child, I have taught it to children, to the adult community. I have even seen the musical a few times.

What the pastor emphasized was the fact that Joseph's coat had "many colors." Why is that description included? I had never really thought about that. I always felt the story was about paternal favoritism, about jealousy, about family discord and finally, healing. But in front of me was an element that brought a newness to the story. The fact that the coat was of many colors speaks to the diversity in our community, the diversity in our country, the diversity in our very selves.

We come together for the High Holydays because we want to be together. We remember being at the synagogue with our grandparents, with our parents. We are soothed by the ancient words, the familiarity of the service, the way the Holy Days connect us with the generations before us. So I wish you this year this comfort and this peace, but I also hope you have an open mind to see new meaning and interpretations in an ancient text, to learn something fresh, to grow in your faith and understanding.



Study Mishnah With Rabbi Sherman

Beginning on Monday, October 16th through June 18th, Rabbi Sherman will be teaching a course on *The Mishnah* -every third Monday between 1:00 and 2:00 p.m. This will be a text based course and knowledge of Hebrew is not required. (The class is open both to congregants and to the larger community)

In the first through the sixth centuries of the common era, successive circles of rabbis in the Holy Land and Babylonia developed Rabbinic Judaism. Transforming the biblical Temple-oriented form of Judaism, they shaped a vision of Judaism centered around the piety of following and studying the Torah to achieve a sense of Divine in this world. This piety entailed both an intellectual and emotional dimension that spoke to individuals and affected the developing synagogues and local communities of Jews.

The Mishna does not offer clear cut decisions but invites the reader into the text to join in a chorus of voices and alternatives pursuing a discussion on the meaning of Torah and what the Divine demands of women and men in their everyday world. This version of Judaism soon became "classical" and would remain formative until today.

We will study actual texts with the purpose to absorb as much Mishna as time allows.

Reservations are requested to prepare enough source material. Call the MBIEE office at 215.635.1505 or email office@mibee.org.

