

Woman Claims Synagogue Fired Her For Having Pre-Marital Sex

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Via Failed [Messiah](#)

A 36-year-old woman claims in a lawsuit that the synagogue she worked at for over a decade fired her this summer after finding out that she had pre-marital sex. Apparently her employers found out because she had the nerve to get pregnant with her fiancé.

Alana Shultz worked as program director at the Modern Sephardic Orthodox Congregation Shearith Israel on the Upper West Side since 2004. [The Post reports that](#) before leaving for her honeymoon, she confided to supervisor Barbara Reiss that she was 19 weeks pregnant when she married her husband on June 28th.

Upon returning on July 21st, she was told her position had been suddenly eliminated and her last day would be August 15th. She claims that Rabbi Meir Soloveichik and Reiss broke the news to her while not looking her in the eye, treating her like a pariah: "When Ms. Shultz entered Rabbi Soloveichik's office, he had his head turned to the side, looking away from her," [the suit claims](#). "Callously, Rabbi Soloveichik thereafter intentionally refused to look at, speak to or acknowledge in any way Ms. Shultz throughout the entire meeting."

Congregation Shearith Israel, founded in 1654 and one of the oldest in the country, has a congregation "made up primarily of wealthy legacy memberships paid for by families who have not been Orthodox for decades, and sometimes for several generations," [according to Failed Messiah](#).

Even though her position was "eliminated," Shultz was allegedly asked to train her replacement. The synagogue also offered her a severance package, with no medical benefits, for her assurance that she wouldn't take any legal action.

That obviously didn't work for her, and after she hired a lawyer, they tried to rehire her in a "thinly-veiled attempt to mitigate defendant's exposure for their blatant discriminatory and unlawful conduct," the suit says.

"After working tirelessly at the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue [Shearith Israel] for the last 11 years, I am beyond saddened they've forced me to file this lawsuit, which I hope will help other women avoid what they did to me during what should be a time for celebration and joy," Shultz said in a statement.

Her lawyer noted that the lawsuit was filed just before the High Holy Days: "Filing this case on the eve of Yom Kippur will hopefully give the defendants some time to reflect on their atrocious conduct toward a pregnant loyal former employee," attorney Doug Wigdor [told the Daily News](#).