

(continued from back panel) Josephus, Philo, and several other ancient authors omit this episode entirely, presumably because they found it difficult or obscure.

Most rabbinic interpretations followed the targumim explaining that the reason for the attack was Moses' failure to circumcise his son. Some commentators however offered other possible reasons for the attack. Ibn Ezra and Luzzatto suggest that God was angry because Moses had taken his wife and sons with him knowing they would slow him down and thus was not showing complete dedication to his mission. The attack showed Moses that he was doing wrong in taking his family back to Egypt with him, and so he had to send them back to Midian.

Overall, the interpretations of this passage focus on trying to find a reason for the sudden attack on "him," who was generally assumed to be Moses; the reason was usually understood to be the fact that Moses had not circumcised his son, a fact which was explained in various ways. Most of the early interpretations largely ignored the phrase, - חתן דמים either by omitting it or by not seeking to explain what is meant by "bridegroom."

Shabbat Tu B'Shebat Seder and Public Discussion
Featuring New York Times Best Selling Author:
Seth (Yossi) Siegel

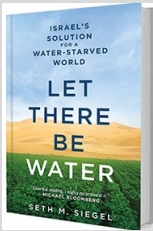
Friday Night, February 10

Following Friday Night Lights

Join Rabbi Meir Soloveichik and Yossi Siegel for a special evening featuring both the seder as well as a public discussion of Yossi Siegel's New York Times bestselling book,

Let There Be Water: Israel's Solution for a Water-Starved World.

Register at shearithisrael.org/tu-b'shebat-seder



Join UJA and Manhattan synagogues for
A CommUnity Conversation With Malcolm Gladwell
Monday, February 13 | 7:30 pm

Held at Park Avenue Synagogue (50 East 87th Street)

Join Congregation Shearith Israel, UJA-Federation and Manhattan synagogues for a conversation between UJA CEO Eric Goldstein and Malcolm Gladwell, writer at The New Yorker and best-selling author of The Tipping Point and David and Goliath. Together we'll explore theories of human behavior and the power of change within us all. Couvert: \$18.

Your gift represents a charitable contribution. To register, visit ujafedny.org/Malcolm-gladwell.

Parnas Office Hours

Louis Solomon would be delighted to meet with you.
Please schedule a visit at parnas@shearithisrael.org.

Our next public tour is:
Wednesday, February 8 at 11:00 am

The Bloody Husband: A Most Difficult Biblical Passage
Z. Edinger

24 And it came to pass on the way at the lodging-place, that the LORD met him, and sought to kill him. 25 And Zipporah took a flint, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and touched his legs with it; and she said: 'Surely a bridegroom of blood art thou to me.' 26 And He let him alone. Then she said: 'A bridegroom of blood in regard of the circumcision.' Exodus 4:24-26;

The difficulties of this passage are many: (1) Who does God attack?—Moses or his son (or which son)—and - why does God seek to kill him?; (2) the narrative does not specify which of her sons Zipporah circumcises; (3) we are not told whose רגלים Zipporah touches with the foreskin—Moses', her son's, or perhaps God's "legs"; (4) it is uncertain how רגלים should be translated in the passage (it can have the meaning of feet, legs, or even genitals); (5) it is unclear what חתן דמים means in this context, since the phrase חתן דמים occurs only here and its meaning is far from clear; (6) we are not told whom Zipporah is addressing as חתן דמים (Moses? her son? God?); (7) מולת (circumcisions?) is a *hapax legomenon* and it is not clear how it should be interpreted or what function the preposition ל has in the phrase למולת It (8) is strange that Zipporah, rather than Moses, is circumcising her son; (9) we are not told why Zipporah thought that circumcising her son would stop the attack or why the circumcision (or was it the application of blood, or was it the phrase Zipporah said?) caused God to withdraw from attacking.

Translations and Interpretations

The early biblical translations offer the earliest interpretations of the passage that we have; their variations from and insertions to the Masoretic text reflect early Jewish attempts to make sense of the episode. The later Targumim offer similar but usually more expansive interpolations.

The Septuagint identifies the attacker as an angel of the Lord instead of the Lord himself. The Septuagint also has Zipporah fall at the feet of the angel and say, "The blood of the circumcision of my son has staunched,"- חתם -rather than a statement about a bridegroom of blood - חתן It is unclear whether this variant is interpretive or a result of transmission error. v. 26 specifies that it was because she said this phrase that the angel left.

Targum Onkelos (and Rabbinic tradition) agrees with the Septuagint that it was an angel and not the Lord himself who attacks Moses. In v. 25, Zipporah says, "May my husband be given to us by the blood of this circumcision," which is a similar interpretation to that of the Septuagint. Then, in v. 26, she says, "Were it not for the blood of this circumcision, my husband had merited execution."

In Codex Neofiti, the attacker is identified as the "Destroyer," the "Angel of Death," and the reason for Zipporah's son's state of uncircumcision is that Jethro did not allow Moses to circumcise him. Zipporah realizes that Moses is being attacked because he is guilty of not circumcising his son, so she quickly solves the problem and Moses is saved by the blood of his son's circumcision.

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan adds that Jethro and Moses had agreed that the eldest son, Gershom, would not be circumcised, but the younger son, Eliezer, would be.

Thus, the Septuagint and all the Targums agree that Moses was the victim of the attack, that the attacker was an angel rather than the Lord himself, that the reason for the attack was the uncircumcised state of his son, that Zipporah spoke to the angel rather than to Moses or her son, and that it was the blood of the circumcision that saved Moses' life. They generally deal with the problem of the phrase חתן דמים by focusing on the blood and ignoring חתן (continued on side panel)



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL

The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

Shabbat Shemoth

January 19-20, 2017

Hertz Pentateuch: p. 206; Haftarah p. 229
Kaplan Living Torah: p. 258 ; Haftarah: 1212

CANDLE LIGHTING | 4:41 pm

MINHAH | 4:45 pm

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS | Following evening services | Rabbi Soloveichik gives a talk on the topic "Shabbat on Mount Everest" | *2016-2017 season sponsored by the Julis Family*

INAUGURATION SHABBAT DINNER FOR TEENS AND THEIR FAMILIES | For registered guests | Following Friday Night Lights | Levy Auditorium

ZEMIROT | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary

SHAHARIT (NISHMAT) | 9:00 am | Rabbi Soloveichik delivers a lecture on the topic "The First Jewish Ruler of Jerusalem in 2000 Years: The Remarkable Story of Viscount Herbert Samuel"

TOT SHABBAT WITH LIZ AND SHANADE | Ages 0-4 | 10:00 am | Levy Auditorium

YOUTH GROUPS WITH RACHEL | Ages 5-12 | 10:00 am | Elias Room

JR. CONGREGATION | Ages 5-12 | 10:30 am | Little Synagogue

KIDDUSH | Levy Auditorium | *Sponsored by Joel and Judy Schreiber in honor of the 18th anniversary of the passing of Joel's father, Aaron M. Schreiber z'l*

SEUDAH SHELISHIT AND PIRKEI ABOT AFTERNOON SHIUR | Rabbi Soloveichik on the topic "Don Abarbanel's Approach to Abot" | 3:55 pm | Levy Auditorium | *Fall semester sponsored by Lewis Lipsey*

MINHAH/ARBIT | 4:35 pm

HABDALAH | 5:28 pm

UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Shabbat Dinner For Teens and Their Entire Families
with Rabbi Soloveichik
This Shabbat | Following Friday Night Lights
For Registered Guests

Teens and their families are invited to a special Shabbat dinner with Rabbi Soloveichik and his family. In light of the events to be held on this date, we have decided to pivot with the more relevant American Inauguration Day theme.



Thank you to our sponsors:
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The Lustig Family
The Solomon Family

Jerusalem's Jubilee: A Three Part Lecture Series
Join us this Shabbat for part 3 of this three-part lecture series marking the calendar year in which we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the unification of this holiest city.

Part 3:
This Shabbat Morning:
Rabbi Soloveichik

The First Jewish Ruler of Jerusalem in 2000 Years:
The Remarkable Story of Viscount Herbert Samuel

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Exclusive Tour of “The First Jewish Americans:
Freedom and Culture In The New World” Exhibit
Rabbi Meir Soloveichik
The New-York Historical Society
170 Central Park West (At 77th street)
Sunday, February 5 | 11:45 am
ONLY A FEW SPOTS LEFT!



Again, Rabbi Soloveichik will lead a tour of this fascinating exhibit, which is directly connected to the history of our community and congregation and showcases several important objects from our collection as well as extensive loans from the private collection of our newest member, Leonard Milberg.

Register at shearithisrael.org/The-First-Jewish-Americans.

Incredible Kids Mega Challah Bake
Super (Challah) Bowl Sunday, February 5 | 10:30 am
At the New York Grand Hyatt in Midtown
Shearith Israel is a proud sponsor of the upcoming Incredible Kids Mega Challah Bake. CSI Youth are invited to join Jewish children from all over New York City to get together for the Incredible Kids Mega Challah Bake. The event is the brain-child of a diverse group of Jewish moms of every style, observance, and denomination, all with one common goal: unity. The event will host approximately 1,000 Jewish children, all ready to roll up their sleeves and make their very own challah loaves. Last year, the Guinness Book of World Records was on hand to declare it the world's largest baking event. Want to help be a part of trying to break a new record? Register at kidschallahbake.com/rsvp.



WEEKDAY JUDAIC EDUCATION

For details go to: shearithisrael.org/judaic-education

- Sunday
- ◊ Saadiah Gaon's Book of Beliefs and Opinions | Sjimon den Hollander | 8:45 am
- Monday
- ◊ Monday Night Learning: A Series on Early America and The Jews | Rabbi Soloveichik | 7:00 pm | on select Mondays
- Tuesday
- ◊ Katzap Class and Breakfast | Following Morning Services
 - ◊ Feasts and Fasts: The Festivals in Jewish Thought - A Class for Women | Rabbi Soloveichik | 9:00 am
 - ◊ Talmud Class: Tractate Sanhedrin | Rabbi Soloveichik | 7:00 pm
- Wednesday
- ◊ NEW: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Shearith Israel: A Monthly Q & A | Z. Edinger | 7:00 pm | On select Wednesdays | Next class on January 25 | Email questions to zedinger@shearithisrael.org.

To sponsor a single class or an entire semester,
go to shearithisrael.org/sponsoraclass

To find out when your favorite class is held, canceled or for special topics, go to shearithisrael.org/join-our-mailing-lists to select which emails you'd like to receive.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Condolences to **Avi Toledo** and **Moshe Toledo** on the passing of their father, Refael Toledo. The funeral was held in Israel.

Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Shearith Israel: A Monthly Q & A
A New Class by Z. Edinger
This Wednesday, January 25| 7:00 pm
Intended for both new members and "old-timers," beginners and advanced students, this class will be based on topics suggested by you! If you've ever had a question about our congregation's history, liturgy, music, or, customs - this is the class for you. Please submit your questions to zedinger@shearithisrael.org and he will prepare a class to satisfy you!