

(continued from back panel)

It wasn't easy for the other nations of the world to witness a fledgling tribe enjoying the bold and affectionate attention of G-d. It meant that G-d did care, that things mattered and that there were values in the world that could not be ignored.

The nations heard — they shuddered! (Ex., 15:14)

There was one particular nation, however, that was set on demeaning the preciousness that G-d's relationship with Israel displayed to the world. They sought to instill doubt into it knowing the incredible havoc that doubt causes to the vulnerable participants in a loving relationship.

All that was needed was to damage perception by attacking the seemingly impenetrable people. They ambushed and took out the weak and fledgling members. The aura of the relationship's uniqueness and exclusivity had been damaged. We read of this episode in a special additional portion this week. It begins by imploring us to Remember! - זכור!

When such confusion develops as to the meaning of the relationship, memory helps to heal it. Recalling the warmth, attention and tenderness helps to recalibrate and rebuild the destruction that doubt causes. G-d tells us in perashat Zakhor to remember how they tried to debase our relationship by taking advantage of our vulnerabilities and brazenly attacking.

You were weary and faint... They did not stand in awe of G-d! (Deut., 25:18)

For this reason, creating such moments of endearment is essential even if they are small, punctuated reminders. As long as they are genuine and filled with love, they stand as protections against the cold, harsh and cutting effects of uncertainty.

G-d used Vayikra — the special call to Moshe — to punctuate His bond with warmth and care. In doing so, the Almighty set an example for our other relationships. The 'minor' statements of real affection are not minor at all. They are the ironclad pins that hold the vulnerable edifice of love intact.

A Note About Our Weekly Dibrei Torah

Our Debar Torah this week is written by **Joseph Dweck**. In addition to our Shearith Israel cast of writers, we like to expose you to guest Debar Torah contributors from other Spanish and Portuguese communities around the world. Thank you Rabbi Dweck for this week's Debar Torah!

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, May 10 at 11:00 am
No tour in April due to Pesah

Punctuated Affection

Rabbi Joseph Dweck,

Senior Rabbi of the S&P Sephardi Community of the UK

Caresses, expressions of one sort or another, are necessary to the life of the affections as leaves are to the life of a tree. If they are wholly restrained, love will die at the roots.— Nathaniel Hawthorn

The book of Shemot ended with a suspenseful cliffhanger. After constructing the Mishkan all had come together as planned and G-d's Glory filled its entire space. But what should have happened next did not. Moshe was meant to enter the Mishkan and begin service but we are told instead that:

Moshe was not able to come into the Tent of Appointment, for the...Glory of G-d filled the dwelling. (Ex., 40:34)

For some reason G-d kept Moshe out. Would he eventually be allowed in? We don't find out until the opening words of the next book which tell us that Moshe was indeed personally invited in by G-d and room was made for his entry.

And He called to Moshe...(1:1)

Moshe was of course welcomed into G-d's space as was expected but he was first held at bay so that G-d could personally invite him; setting a warm and affectionate tone to the event that would continue every time that G-d spoke to Moshe. Every piece of dialogue and engagement between them opened with warmth.

Vayikra teaches us that a personal invitation to Moshe preceded every declaration, every statement, and every commandment [of G-d]. 'Vayikra' is the language of affection and care. (Rashi, ibid.)

More important than Moshe doing the service was that he first know that he, and the nation, were precious to G-d and that the commandments were not simply logistical orders but actions occurring within a loving relationship.

With this consistent, caring address G-d maintained the awareness of the underlying affection that framed His entire relationship with Moshe and Israel. It began every interaction. This was particularly important considering that at some points the commandments and comments that would follow would be severe and strong in nature which could have cast doubt on the love. It was essential that, especially when certain statements might sound inconsistent with the overall tenor of the relationship, the assertion and validation of its true condition were there.

Relationships suffer when doubt seeps in concerning their integrity. When actions and words seem unreliable or insincere, or when little or nothing is said that validates the feelings between the people involved, the foundation of care upon which a relationship must be built falters.

The regular care that G-d showed to Moshe with the personal call to dialogue kept the awareness of the relationship's warmth ever-present. There was no doubt as to the feelings and commitment G-d had towards Moshe.

There was a point on the journey out of Egypt, however, where the solidarity of the relationship was at risk.

(Continued on back panel)



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL

The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

Shabbat Vayikra

March 31– April 1, 2017

Hertz Pentateuch: Vayikra p. 410 ; Haftarah p. 424
Kaplan Living Torah: Vayikra p. 496 ; Haftarah p. 1142

CANDLE LIGHTING | 7:02 pm

MINHAH | 6:45 pm

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS: HAGGADAH EDITION | Following evening services | Rabbi Soloveichik gives a talk on the topic "Menachem Begin's Prison Pesah" | 2016-2017 season sponsored by the Julis Family | This session is sponsored in honor of Marvin Sussman's 70th birthday by his loving family

ZEMIROT | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary

SHAHARIT (NISHMAT) | 9:00 am | Rabbi Soloveichik delivers a Shabbat Hagadol Derasha on the topic "The IDF's First Pesah: A 1948 Seder Story" | Sponsored by Debbie and David Sable in memory of Ambassador Yehuda Avner, author of The Prime Ministers: An Intimate Narrative of Israeli Leadership and The Ambassador, a novel, on the occasion of his second nahala.

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 Doina and Dr. Lawrence Bryskin in memory of Doina's mother, Hermina Levi, on the occasion of her yahrzeit and in honor of Rabbi Meir Soloveichik

SEUDAH SHELISHIT AND PRE-PESAH AFTERNOON SHIUR |

Rabbi Soloveichik on the topic "Who is the Mysterious Aramean?" | 5:55 pm | Levy Auditorium | Spring semester is sponsored anonymously in memory of Irma Cardozo

MINHAH/ARBIT | 6:55 pm

HABDALAH | 7:57 pm

Weekday Service Times

Mornings: Sunday: 8:00 AM, Monday-Friday: 7:15 AM
Evenings (Minhah & Arbit): Sunday– Thursday: 6:30 PM

PESAH 5777

Help Us go 100% *Hametz* Free

Please remove all hametz from your drawers in the synagogue before Passover. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sale of *Hametz*

If you would like to appoint Rabbi Meir Soloveichik as agent to sell your *Hametz* before Pesah, please fill out the form at shearithisrael.org/hametz before Sunday, April 9 at 9 am.

Maot Hittim

In the opening paragraph of the Haggadah, we read: "All who are hungry, let them come and eat." As part of experiencing freedom ourselves, we must also ensure that our fellow Jews have the means to celebrate freedom too. *Maot Hittim* is a special Passover fund, originally intended to provide the poor with matzah. Make an online donation by filling out the form at shearithisrael.org/maothittm or by making out a check exactly to "Congregation Shearith Israel—Rabbi's Discretionary Fund" with "Maot Hittim" in the memo.

Pre-Pesah Dinner

Friday, April 7 | Following Evening Services

Deadline: This Monday, April 3

Ease your Pesah preparations and join us for a lovely buffet dinner. Preferred pricing for members. Register at shearithisrael.org/pre-pesah-shabbat-dinner.

Teen Girls Shir Hashirim Reading

Saturday, April 15 | Fifth Day of Pesah

After musaf, the teen girls of our synagogue take part in our unique tradition as they read The Song of Songs for the congregation in the Main Sanctuary after services. To sponsor the Kiddush in the girls' honor go to shearithisrael.org/teen-girls-shir-hashirim-2017

Pesah Kiddush Sponsors Wanted

We are still seeking sponsors and contributors for our kiddushim over Pesah. Please contact Barbara Reiss at breiss@shearithisrael.org if you are interested.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND INITIATIVES

Learn History. Celebrate History. MAKE History

A Very Special Shabbaton

in Washington DC and Monticello

Friday, May 5 - Sunday, May 7

Join this truly once in a lifetime opportunity to make history with Rabbi Soloveichik as we conduct the first ever *hashcabah* (memorial service) for Rachel Phillips Levy, Shearith Israel forebear, and the only Jew buried on the grounds of Monticello.

Spaces are highly limited. For details, terms, and registration go to shearithisrael.org/Monticello.



Shearith Israel is a Proud Sponsor of
American Sephardi Federation's
New York Sephardic Jewish Film Festival
March 30– April 6, 2017
Nysephardifilmfestival.org



NEW: Pick Up a Copy of *CSI's Guide for the Perplexed*

Ever find yourself sitting in our services and wondering about one of our unique customs? Check out our attractive and user-friendly new "Guide for the Perplexed: A Newcomer's Primer for Congregation Shearith Israel." Hard copies available at the synagogue.

Mark Your Calendars for Great Events this Spring

- **Monday, May 1, 7:00 pm**—Yom Haatzmaut Lecture
- **Wednesday, May 3, 7:00 pm**—*Treasures of the Caribbean* Book Launch Event
- **Wednesday, May 17, 7:00 pm**— *Carvalho's Journey* Film Screening
- **Sunday, May 21, 10:30 am**—Chatham Square Memorial Service
- **Wednesday, May 24, 7:00 pm**—Achdut in Action Fleet Week Event

WEEKDAY JUDAIC EDUCATION

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

Sunday

- ◇ **Saadia Gaon's Book of Beliefs and Opinions** | Sjimon den Hollander | 8:45 am

Monday, Wednesday, & Thursday

- ◇ ***Habruta* (Paired) Learning** | 5:15 pm - 7:15 pm | Before and after evening services, Rabbi Chaim Yanetz and rabbinical students from YU are available in the Elias Room to study in *habruta* with congregants of all ages.

Tuesday

- ◇ **Minyan Class and Breakfast** | Following Morning Services | *Sponsored by Chaim Katzap*
- ◇ **Feasts and Fasts: The Festivals in Jewish Thought - A Class for Women** | Rabbi Soloveichik | 9:00 am | *Spring semester is sponsored anonymously in memory of Debby Neumark* | **NO CLASS THIS WEEK**
- ◇ **Talmud Class: Tractate Sanhedrin** | Rabbi Soloveichik | 7pm | **NO CLASS THIS WEEK**

Wednesday

- ◇ **Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Shearith Israel: A Monthly Q & A** | Z. Edinger | 7:00 pm | On select Wednesdays | Email questions to zedinger@shearithisrael.org. | Next Class April 26

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

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 Mindy Lamm on the passing of her sister, Jean Kelman.

Condolences to David Sarfati on the passing of his mother, Tova Sarfati.

Condolences to Avi Yohanano on the passing of his mother, Bella Yohanano.