

October 19, 2023

Dear Shearith Israel family,

Our Year of Hope. Over the Summer, we announced that 2023-24/5784 would be our Congregation's **Year of Hope**. We were coming out of the effects that Covid-19 had wrought on attendance. With 500 people attending this year on Tisha B'Ab and 300+/- on Kippur, our **Year of Hope** was going to continue to encourage in-person attendance both for services and for programs and lectures. Additionally, our **Year of Hope** was to usher in a relatively small campaign to fund a few important capital repairs and improvements: we **MUST** fix several of our old rooves, which are leaking; we **SHOULD** replace our carpet and shore-up parts of our flooring; and we absolutely **NEED** to fund and build a way for our elderly or infirm to get up the steps to our main Sanctuary. We are busy, but there is nothing to be alarmed about; we have a glorious building that we can, and will, maintain.

We were on our way, to getting started, anyway. We had collected songs on the theme of **hope** (attached). Rabbi Soloveichik was hard at work on an ambitious, 10-lecture series that will span our fundraising efforts. We planned to use this coming Shabbat, with the hope and promise of Parashat Noah's rainbow, to showcase our three pairs of Myer Myers *rimonim* (which have all been in ritual use throughout this season) and launch our **Year of Hope Capital Campaign**.

The senseless, tragic terrorist attacks in Israel on October 7 and their aftermath have given our **Year of Hope** a new and different emphasis. We still need to raise the funds for the CapEx; but we — as individuals and as a *kehilla* — now have other calls on our resources that must be met, too. And we will continue to plan a full year of programming, yet each program needs to be conceived and presented with sensitivity and a purpose consistent with our Congregation's role in the larger picture.

We intend to do all this as best we can. We plan to devote a small section of this weekly email to announcing or reminding us of some of what we will be doing (**Year of Hope Doings** is the working title – all suggestions to improve that clunker of a title are most welcome).

For all of this, there are few things clearer than that we need your help. We need your financial support. Crucially, as important, we need your emotional support. We need to show up and be counted – in person if you are in the area or via email or other ways if you are farther away. Now is a time of community urgency. Now is a time for each of us to go a little further than we might otherwise to help keep our community and the J-Continuum strong. After all, if Israel can find a way to have a unity government, we can find ways to unify our efforts here.

Year of Hope Doings. This coming Shabbat, Rabbi Soloveichik will be giving two special talks on the theme of hope. Tomorrow night he will be commencing this year's season of *Friday Night Lights* with a talk entitled, "The Handwritten HaTikvah & the American Musician: A New York Story for our Time". On Shabbat morning, after morning services, he will give a talk, "The Lamp of Life: A Story of Hope and Endurance". You will be able to view, up close and personal, the Myer Myers *rimonim*, which we have been regularly using during services over the past few weeks. And no less special

than the above, we will all be invited to join our Choir in singing the Hatikvah at the end of Friday evening and Shabbat morning services. Finally, if you were at services this past Shabbat, you heard an amazing and deeply stirring prayer naming aloud a long list of our Congregation's young who are in Israel in harm's way or helping the defense effort. If you have any names to add to our *Misheberach* list, you can do so by going to [this page](#) and clicking on the link provided.

Eliza de Sola Mendes is doing yeoman's work in the Special Projects Department for the Soroka Medical Center. Soroka is the largest hospital center in Israel's south and has many years of experience of treating people affected by the many missile attacks launched in that region by Hamas. In the aftermath of this most recent act of barbarism, Soroka is now treating 900 wounded and 160 severely wounded. [Here is a link](#) to learn more and to donate. You can also find the Soroka link and a few others on our new [Stand with Israel Giving page](#). So that others can be inspired and find ways to help, send in your story of how you are helping or what others might do. Kol hakavod Eliza.

Kiddushin (63-69):

How our Sages Solved Implication Elimination. Many have suggested that the ancient Greeks had worked out basic systems of logic long before our Sages did. Not so far as I can tell. Pre-Mishna Greece had syllogisms of "all" and "none", as in Aristotle's *Organon*. But they had not rigorously worked out "if, then" logic and surely didn't solve the challenge of eliminating implications – that is, if you have any statement with more than one assertion, and you negate the whole thing, how do you tell which part of the statement is now false? It's the plague of the compound question, which leaves trier of fact no better off hearing that the statement is false, since it would be false if any part of it were untrue, and the (rooky) examiner's asking the compound question is a perfect example of GiGo. It wasn't until modernity that formal systems of symbolic logic gave us *modus ponens* and *modus tollens*, which do permit if/then propositions. But there the systems rest on formal, artificial definitions that exist only in well-defined systems of logic and not in common parlance.

Look at the simplicity, and power, of Kiddushin 61a (which was actually part of last week's fare, but the discussion continues into this week). There, in a Mishna (so it is early in the development of the Talmudic corpus), R' Meir uses a Biblical reference to the tribes of Gad and Reuven to make the compelling point that, if you want to avoid unclarity in making a conditional statement, you need not just repetition but repetition that explicitly negates implications. The Talmud calls it "***the double stipulation***". The text is interesting:

מתני' רבי מאיר אומר: כל תנאי שאינו כתנאי בני גד ובני ראובן – אינו תנאי. שנאמר: "ויאמר אלהים אם יעברו בני גד ובני ראובן". וכתוב: "ואם לא יעברו חלוצים".

MISHNA: Rabbi Meir says: Any condition that is not doubled, i.e., which does not specify both the result of fulfilling the condition and the result of the condition remaining unfulfilled, like the condition Moses stipulated with the children of Gad and the children of Reuben who sought to settle

on the eastern side of the Jordan, is not a valid condition and is not taken into account at all. As it is stated: "And Moses said to them, if the children of Gad and the children of Reuben pass over the Jordan with you, every man armed for battle before the Lord, and the land shall be subdued before you, then you shall give them the land of Gilead for a possession" (Numbers 32:29). And it is written afterward: "But if they will not pass over armed with you, they shall receive a possession among you in the land of Canaan" (Numbers 32:30).

Powerful arguments are levelled at the double stipulation, especially by R' Chanina ben Gamliel. I have it on good authority, however (from Joseph, our son), that R' Meir's "double stipulation" formulation carried the day – even until today. If you want to use regular words and not artificial systems of symbolic logic, you need to state a condition and negate its opposite to be clear and unequivocal. It's not being repetitive; it's just being clear.

When Silence Distinctly Is NOT Golden. Double-speak is not the only important lesson on these Talmudic pages. Study pages 65b-66a. There you will be treated to a discussion of when you need to speak and not just remain silent in the face of an accusation or charge. The concept is called "shtika k'hodaah", or when silence is the equivalent of acquiesce. We, in common law/constitutionally based environments of innocent until proven guilty, are fond of putting the burden of proof on the accuser, sitting there smugly and silently, putting the prosecutor to its proof. That is a bad strategy when the circumstances themselves cast some suspicion on the accused. The Talmud here discusses several examples, including three that are Torah-based, including when a wife is found in private with a man whom her husband had warned her not to be alone with. In these contexts, a single witness is often enough to shift the burden of doing something to the other party. And it is also when, as several examples show, it is best *not* to remain silent. Get up and defend yourself. That is very often the most credible and persuasive thing to do.

Built Back Better.

Library Corner. Thank you to Arthur Tenenholtz and Perry Davis for independently spotting and sending in this sympathetic (if long and a bit diffuse) [homage](#) to our congregant, Mrs. Els Salomon-Prins Bendheim, who died earlier this year.

And a Sweet Post-script. One post-script from my candy man homage to young Abe Sherizen. Thank you to David Vorchheimer for sending the suite of [Viennese Sweets](#).

Word and Phrase of the Year: A Futher Pause: We are extending the voting for yet another week. The Word of the Year candidates are as follows, though I'm **hoping** that someone will suggest one or two additional words:

Awakenings
Matter
Gratitude, or hakarat hatov

For **Phrase of the Year**, we are voting on the following (here again might another phrase be suggested based on current events?):

- **Be kind**
- **Con alegria y permanencia; with joy and permanence** [Thank you to our Hatan Bereshit, Guy Reiss, for publicly voting for this one.]
- **Con el pie derecho; with the right foot, or right foot first.**
- **Mi Zenen Du; We are here!**
- **Yehiyeh tov; T'will be good**
- **Yeshua[t] HaShem Keheref Ayin (God's help/salvation comes in the blink of an eye).**
- **Chazak Ve-Ematz! (be strong and courageous)** [Thank you to our Hatan Torah, Ben Suckewer, for publicly voting for this one.]

Covid-19 Update.



Thank you all. Bless us all. Shabbat shalom. Here! *Kaminando kon Buenos.* And may the Almighty bring the fighting to a swift and successful end.

Louis Solomon, Parnas