

## A Call and Recall to Loyalty

I have lately been much contemplating the concept of loyalty. In our Ezekiel class we have been discussing this prophet's concept of repentance from sin, what makes it possible, and how it can avoid punishment. To a certain extent, the commuting of the sentence of the Israelite criminal through his repentance is blatantly unjust and unfair, Ezekiel admits. A criminal who has wronged his fellow in many instances has committed an objective evil, which ought to demand adequate recompense as a matter of fairness. And yet besides the objective evil committed, in a society governed by laws, when a criminal breaks those laws there has also been a disloyalty to the society and to those who made its laws. Now, the penitent criminal is one who simply vows to or shows his intentions to return to loyalty to the society's laws and to the Maker of its laws. It is interesting that the sentence of the criminal may be commuted just based upon this mere pledge to return to fealty to the law and, in turn, our trusting his loyalty. That's what "getting off for good behavior" really indicates, that the transgressor has "returned" to loyalty to society's laws and can be trusted not to violate them, and hence is "returned" or restored to society's good graces. We seem to somehow view the criminal's disloyalty to the society and its laws as more concerning than any particular objective evil committed. Perhaps we feel that getting a general vow of return to loyalty to the God-given laws of society will rule out any and all types of such criminality in the future, and hence commuting the punishment for any particular crime is worth it. Alternatively, one could explain that arousing patriotic loyalty and devotion to one's People and God and assuring the former criminal of his society's and his God's devotion and dedication to him will keep him from ever wanting to do violate laws and objectively harm others again. In Ezekiel's theological terms, "return" to God refers to the Jew's return to loyalty to the God of Israel. And that in turn evokes the God of Israel's loyalty to the Jewish People. Sin can be forgiven and its consequences commuted through Israel's avowal of its return to loyalty. If Israel would only return to loyalty to God, God is ready to renew His vow of loyalty to Israel.

I have been interpreting our Parasha's laws in that light, in terms of loyalty, as well. We must help the poor and downtrodden among us out of loyalty to our fellow-citizens and to God. Over and over our fellow Israelite citizen is referred to as our "brother," using the metaphor of family to invoke obligation out of loyalty. The law of the female wartime captive we have at the beginning of our Parasha can be seen as one of the most delicate issues of loyalty. A foreign woman has completely different societal, national and divine loyalties and endangers the Israelite's loyalty. Only after causing her to formally bewail and give up her former loyalties in favor of Israelite ones may the Israelite take her to wife. The inviolable primacy of the firstborn son in inheritance is also a matter of primacy of loyalty. The law of the rebellious son and other laws of family morality are also matters of loyalty. The laws of returning that which was lost by one's fellow, the prohibition of taking interest, making a parapet, same-day payment of workers, letting the poor glean in our field, and many other laws here require an Israelite's taking an extremely high degree of responsibility for his fellow, a degree which can only be justified by the especially-strong ties of loyalty among fellow Israelites which God's Torah expects. We even owe loyalty to our ox who threshes and plows for us, and hence may not muzzle him while he faithfully works for us! Our justice system and our system of weights and measures must be especially careful and exacting out of loyalty to our fellow countrymen and to God and His Laws. When Israel vows to be loyal to each other, to those among us, and to God and His Laws, then evil circumstances, as well as the evils of sin and its consequences can be averted. This return to loyalty is the most basic and simplest interpretation of the meaning of *Teshuba*, the "repentance" or "return" to God.



## Shabbat Ki Tetse

September 13-14, 2024 | 11 Elul, 5784

### SHABBAT SCHEDULE

Kaplan: p. 966 | Haftarah: p. 1238

Hertz: p. 840 | Haftarah: p. 857

**Candle Lighting** | 6:49 pm

**Evening Services** | 6:45 pm | Main Sanctuary

**Zemirot** | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary

**Shahrit** | 9:00 am | Main Sanctuary

**Tot Shabbat** | 10:00 am | Fidanque Youth Room

**Junior Congregation** | 10:30 am | Little Synagogue

**Kiddush** | following services | *Sponsored by the Hebra Hased Va'Amet*

**Family Fun Welcome Back Luncheon** | Elias Room | *For registered guests*

**Shabbat Afternoon Class** | 6:00 pm | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik

**Teen Shiur** | 6:00 pm | Baruch-Lev Kelman

**Evening Services** | 6:45 pm

**Habdala** | 7:41 pm

### Weekday Service Times

Sunday Morning: 8:05 am

Monday-Friday Mornings: 7:05 am

Sunday-Thursday Evenings\*: 6:30 pm

*\*includes Selihot prayers*

### Selihot at Shearith Israel

#### At Evening Services from September 4-October 9

The Sephardic custom is to prepare for Rosh HaShana by reciting *Selihot* during the entire month of Elul. Unlike other communities, however, the Spanish & Portuguese custom is to recite a very short form of *Selihot* following Arbat every evening. Our community is virtually the only one left in the entire world that still recites Selihot in the evening service after Arbat.

## HIGH HOLIDAYS AT SHEARITH ISRAEL

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### Your High Holiday Checklist

Complete it at [shearithisrael.org/high-holidays-5785](https://shearithisrael.org/high-holidays-5785)

*While the official deadline to reserve High Holiday seats has passed, seats are still available and we welcome reservations.*

- **Members:** Opt In/Opt out of High Holiday seats
- **Non-members:** Reserve your seats
- **Parents:** Make childcare reservations when you reserve seats
- Make your holiday offerings, sponsor Rabbi Soloveichik's Shabbat Teshuba Derasha, & order your lulab & etrog set through the synagogue

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### COMING UP

*If registration required, sign up at [shearithisrael.org](https://shearithisrael.org)*

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#### October 7 Community-Wide Commemoration

**Limited Tickets! Refer to our emails for the details and registration link**

On October 7, the worldwide Jewish community was forever changed. As the one-year anniversary approaches, we invite you to commemorate this tragic day and its impact on Israel and the global Jewish community.

Thousands will come together for a powerful and unforgettable evening featuring memorials to the heroes we lost, Nova Festival survivors, family members of victims, community leaders, musical performances, and more.

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#### New Member Tour with Rev. Edinger

**Thursday, September 19 | After evening services**

*For recent members & members who have always wanted to know our synagogue better*

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#### Young Professionals Shabbat Dinner

**Friday Evening, September 20 | After Evening Services | Ages 21-35**

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#### Elul Learning with Baruch-Lev Kelman

**Sunday Nights through Elul | September 15 & 22 | After Evening Services**

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#### High Holiday Sing-Along

**Sunday, September 22 | 10:00 am | Rev. Z. Edinger**

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#### Rabbi Soloveichik's Shabbat Teshuba Derasha

**Shabbat, October 5 | Following Morning Services**

Sponsorships welcome!

## COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

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We welcome new members, **Elana Gelman & Joshua Kramer**, to our growing Shearith Israel family.

Mazal tob to **Rose & Henry Edinger**, upon the birth of twin great-grandsons, Adir Malachi and Raanan Nissim, born to Chana (Edinger) & Jono Fuchs.

**Rachel Brody & Michael Lustig** are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter, **Helena**, to Ben Turner.

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### Of Interest to Our Community

#### In The Press

Rabbi Soloveichik writes about what he's learned about the Days of Awe from his years experiencing them at Shearith Israel in an article in Mosaic.

Read it on our press page at [shearithisrael.org/resources/press](https://shearithisrael.org/resources/press)

#### Landing Day

Congregation Shearith Israel sent a letter of support for the New York City Council Resolution to recognize the contribution of Jews to American life and culture by calling on the City Council to recognize Landing Day every September, to commemorate the 23 Sephardic Jews who arrived in Manhattan in 1654. The landing is marked by the Jewish Tercentenary Monument and Flagstaff in Peter Minuit Plaza in The Battery. As the spiritual descendants of that first group of Jews, Shearith Israel has been proud to uphold their legacy across generations. We commend the city council for recognizing the profound impact of the arrival of the first Jewish community in North America, and hope this resolution passes.

#### Synagogue Repair Work Update

With the summer behind us, our services officially return to the Main Sanctuary. Substantial progress has been made in restoring our pews by our master craftspeople.

Most of them have been repaired and strengthened by now and should last for generations. It's no coincidence that this messy work is being done before the new Sanctuary carpet arrives and gets installed. That will happen a few months from now.

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#### Free Public Synagogue Tours

**Monthly on the 2nd Wednesday of the month | 5:45 pm**

**Next Tour: October 9**