



The Importance of Declaration/Affirmation in Words

Parashat Ki-Tabo begins with three declarations or affirmations. The first declaration or “telling” is made over the basket of first-fruits, testifying to God’s having brought the Israelite into the Promised Land and given that fertile and productive land to Israel, in token recompense for which the Israelite offers the first-fruits of the Land’s produce back as a gift to God. In rabbinic parlance, this declaration is called “the First Fruits Confessional.” The second declaration is made at the end of each tithing cycle (which according to the verse to falls every three years, excluding the Sabbatical Year), whereby the Israelite declares or testifies that all tithes have been paid and allocated properly, and that none of the taxes were diverted to illicit or inappropriate use. It asks in recompense that God continue to bestow His bountiful blessings upon the yield of the Land out of which such tithes are paid. This second declaration is called “the Tithing Confessional.” The third declaration is a joint affirmation by Israel and God, whereby Israel affirms that the LORD is our God, that we will walk in His ways, keep His laws and commandments, and obey Him, and the LORD affirms that Israel is His treasure, exalted among the peoples, specially dedicated to God to keep God’s charge.

The First-Fruits Confessional acknowledges God for having given the Israelite territory of land for the Israelite to cultivate or otherwise gain benefit from. The Tithing Confessional acknowledges God for the blessings of fruitfulness which God has bestowed upon that Land. It’s kind of like our tax-return, which we sign at the end, indicating that we have declared what we owe and paid it appropriately. I note that one does not usually file income taxes unless one has had sufficient income, so the mere filing of taxes is an acknowledging declaration that the years have been bountiful. The third declaration is not a recurring one made from time to time, but it is a kind of exclusive declaration of mutual loyalty, fealty and obligation of Israel to the LORD and of the LORD to Israel.

What I find particularly striking about all three is the importance the Torah places upon making these “declarations,” using terms meaning to “tell,” to “say,” to “affirm.” All three are forms of spoken acknowledgement, thanksgiving, confessions of obligation. Our tradition is one which has always placed great emphasis upon verbal expression and articulation, upon making verbal declarations. Creation is made through God’s Utterance, through His Articulation. Until one articulates thanks one might only have some feeling of gratefulness or sense of obligation. But until that is communicated to the giver there has really been no thanksgiving and the obligation is not clear, lacking fulfilment or repayment in any way. Until a confession is articulated, one may have a feeling of guilt or regret, but only by showing and expressing those feelings to the other has one made himself truly sorry. Praise too must be expressed to actually be praise. One may think something or someone good, great, beautiful, or in other ways praiseworthy, but until they are acknowledged as such and the acknowledgement articulated and communicated, they have not been praised. As I approach the massive liturgy of the High Holiday season, it is with particular appreciation of the special emphasis our tradition has placed upon the important power and magic of making verbal declarations, of articulating things in words.

Shabbat Ki Tabo

September 20-21, 2024 | 18 Elul, 5784

SHABBAT SCHEDULE

Kaplan: p. 988 | Haftarah: p. 1240

Hertz: p. 859 | Haftarah: p. 874

Candle Lighting | 6:38 pm

Evening Services | 6:45 pm | Main Sanctuary

Young Professionals Shabbat Dinner | Elias Room | *For registered guests*

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 | after services | *Sponsored by Elana & Zachary Gorden in honor of Mendel recently becoming a Bar Mitzvah, and on his finishing of Seder Moed in Gemara*

Shabbat Afternoon Class | 5:50 pm | Baruch-Lev Kelman

Teen Shiur will return next week.

Evening Services | 6:35 pm

Habdala | 7:28 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 Arbit every evening. Our community is virtually the only one left in the entire world that still recites Selihot in the evening service after Arbit.

HIGH HOLIDAYS AT SHEARITH ISRAEL

Your High Holiday Checklist

Complete it at shearithisrael.org/high-holidays-5785

- Reserve seats & childcare
 - Make your holiday offerings
 - Sponsor Rabbi Soloveichik's Shabbat Teshuba Derasha
 - Order your lulab & etrog set through the synagogue
 - Reserve self-catered meals in the Succah
 - Honor our 5785 Hatanim
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COMING UP

If registration required, sign up at shearithisrael.org

Elul Learning with Baruch-Lev Kelman

Final Session: **THIS Sunday, September 22 | After Evening Services**

High Holiday Sing-Along

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

Stitch & Fix

Next Session: **Wednesday, September 25 | 1:00-3:30 pm**

RSVP to Rose at rgedinger@gmail.com

October 7 Community-Wide Commemoration

Livestream at Temple Emanu-El (Rumsey Playfield SOLD OUT)

Refer to our emails for the details and ticket link

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.

Hatanim Celebration 5785

Luncheon on Shabbat, November 2 | after Shabbat Morning Services

We are delighted to announce this year's Hatanim:

Adam Hurwich, Hatan Torah

Aaron E. Nathan, Hatan Bereshit

Please join us on Shabbat Noah as we bring our community together to honor these two special Congregants, Adam Hurwich and Aaron E. Nathan, at a Shabbat luncheon, an annual event that also serves as a critical fundraiser.

RABBI SOLOVEICHIK'S UPCOMING MAJOR ADDRESSES

Registration & sponsorships at shearithisrael.org

Rabbi Soloveichik's Pre-Rosh HaShana Online Address

September 30 | 11:30 am | On Zoom

A Beacon in Darkness:

The Most Inspiring Moments of the Past Year,
and Their Lessons for the Year Ahead

Registration is required to receive the Zoom link.

Sponsorship opportunities are available upon registration.

Rabbi Soloveichik's Special Pre-October 7

Shabbat Teshuba Derasha

Shabbat, October 5 | Following Morning Services

To Life, The Book of Life, and the People of Israel Live:
The Fascinating Origin, and the Poignant Relevance,
of Three Famous Phrases

We invite the community to come together on this special Shabbat preceding
October 7, to hear words of wisdom and inspiration by Rabbi Soloveichik.

Sponsorships welcome!

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

We welcome the following new members to our growing Shearith Israel family:

A. Murray Gross

Diane Sandoval

Mazal tob to **Elana Gelman & Josh Kramer** upon the birth of a baby boy,
Matan Joseph.

Of Interest to Our Community

This Sunday evening at the Center for Jewish History, the Academy of Jewish Music presents: *Music in Our Time 2024 - A Bouquet of Jewish Choral Music*. Performed by the acclaimed *New York Virtuoso Singers*, and led by conductor Harold Rosenbaum; the program includes compositions by Pulitzer Prize-winning composers and exciting new works, including the 23rd Psalm, composed by our late choirmaster, **Leon Hyman**, and a *Yehi Hasdekha* composed by our tenor, **Alex Guerrero**. For more details (or to purchase tickets) visit cjb.org.