

## DEBAR TORAH *by* RABBI ROHDE

### A True Chieftain's Unmatched Loyalty, Solidarity, & Devotion

What was the spirit in which Moses first left Egypt, going to the Wilderness where he met Jethro's daughters? Moses killed the Egyptian out of a sense of loyalty and solidarity with the Israelites, whom he knew to be his true brethren. The Israelites were suffering under the burdens of slavery, and Moses apparently sees an Egyptian taskmaster beating an Israelite slave. Indignant over the slave's maltreatment, Moses carefully looks for a surreptitious opportunity to save and avenge him, by killing the taskmaster and readily disposing of the body. Then on a second day, Moses sees two Israelites fighting and is concerned with what seems to have been the unjust smiting of one by his fellow. When Moses reprimands the abuser, the offender replies by saying: "Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Do you profess to kill me, as you killed the Egyptian?" Moses feared after becoming aware thereby that the matter of his killing the Egyptian was known, and his fears were confirmed by Pharaoh's subsequent seeking of his death. Hence Moses hid and fled Egypt until his elder years.

What thinking and feelings drove Moses at these points? Two elements seem to have combined: both a solidarity with his fellow Israelites as well as a pursuit of justice for them and among them. Moses grew up in an Egypt in which slavery was well-established, and indeed Moses in his life never sought to utterly rid Egypt of slavery: It was above all Moses' solidarity with his people which made him see Israel's treatment in Egyptian slavery as particularly unjust. Moses shows no emotional ardor for justice. He seems rather circumspect, carefully looking to see that he wasn't observed, and then hiding the evidence quickly. It was also Moses' concern with his people which made him seek justice in their internal disputes to such an extent that he involves himself in what seems to have been a mere tussle. We don't see Moses as desiring to pursue injustice in general; he rather sought justice specifically for his people.

Moses goes into hiding to get away from the Egyptian authorities, but the answer of the Israelite assailant must have given him particular pause and kept him away longer. We are not told exactly how his killing of the Egyptian came to be known, after Moses' care to keep it secret. Likely it was the saved Israelite or those associated with him who could have originally spread word of the oppressor's disappearance. Even if not, Moses must not have appreciated the gossip among the Israelites which more widely spread the story. But far worse was this retort of the culprit, who shows no gratitude for Moses' solidarity and concern in seeking justice for his people but only rather accuses Moses of using his place in the Pharaonic court to make a power grab for leadership of Israel. Moses sees that his solidarity and concern with his people is not reciprocated, certainly not by fellows who can't keep a secret for their own good. Nor is it reciprocated by a felon whose abuse displays his utter lack of concern for his compatriots and who has the gall to suggest that Moses is the real unconcerned and self-seeking abuser of power.

The fact that in his later years, at God's call, Moses did go back to seek justice for his people indicates that the desire to do so was always in his heart at some level. However, his persistent reticence, hesitation, and even refusal to get involved for so long must have had a lot to do with his knowledge that his concern for his people would not be matched, but rather would be met by malevolent accusations of evildoers, who would instead accuse the court-raised Moses of self-serving elitism and a lack of solidarity with the common people. Before he can actually take the reins of leadership, a true chieftain (one who devotes himself solely to the welfare of his people, and not his own interests) has to fully come to terms with the reality that his solidarity, loyalty and devotion will never be matched by his people, but instead will just be constantly called into question. Moses has to come to terms with that and be O.K. with that. The Burning Bush, the Staff, and the backing of his brother Aaron are all at least partially for the sake of assuring Moses that the unmatched and often scorned and rejected loyalty required from a truly faithful leader of Israel will nonetheless be worthwhile.



## CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

### Shabbat Shemoth

January 9-10, 2026 | 21 Tebet, 5786

#### SCHEDULE

**Hertz:** Parasha: 206 | Haftarah: 229

**Kaplan:** Parasha: 258 | Haftarah: 1212

**Candle Lighting** | 4:29 pm

**Evening Services** | 4:30 pm | Main Sanctuary

**Friday Night Lights will return next week.**

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

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

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

**Jr. Congregation** | 10:30 am | Little Synagogue

**Kiddush** | following services | *Kiddush Supporter: Bob Tam, in honor of Ari Tam becoming a Bar Mitzvah in November 2025*

**Shabbat Afternoon Class** | 3:40 pm | Baruch-Lev Kelman

**Teen Shiur will return next week.**

**Evening Services** | 4:25 pm

**Habdala** | 5:15 pm

**Parent-Child Learning** | 6:15 pm | Led by Dalya & Jake

#### Weekday Service Times

##### **Mornings:**

Sunday: 8:05 am

Monday-Friday: 7:05 am

##### **Evenings:**

Sunday: 4:30 pm

Monday-Thursday (**Arbit only**): 6:30 pm

## IN CELEBRATION OF THE US SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL

*And 250 Years of Jewish Life in the United States*



### Rabbi Soloveichik's Major Lectures

Next Installment:

Next Shabbat, January 17

After Morning Services

These lectures highlight Shearith Israel's historic personalities central to the founding and formation of our American democracy.

Stay up to date at [shearithisrael.org/us-250](https://shearithisrael.org/us-250).

### A Musical Shabbat Shira Dinner

*Featuring Magevet, Yale's premier Jewish a capella group*

Friday night, Shabbat Shira, January 30

Following Evening Services & Friday Night Lights

*Preferred pricing for Families and Young Professionals*

Following our Friday evening services, registered guests will enjoy a festive Shabbat dinner enhanced by a musical performance by Magevet, Yale University's Jewish a capella group. This year, as part of our Squintennial celebrations, Magevet will include a selection of Americana.

Register and sponsor at [shearithisrael.org](https://shearithisrael.org).

### FAITH FOR FOOD

*Learn more at [shearithisrael.org/giving/faith-for-food](https://shearithisrael.org/giving/faith-for-food)*

### The Masbia UWS Food Annex at Congregation Shearith Israel

*Visit our website to view our list of early contributors and to support this cause*

This year-round weekly kosher food pantry provides ample and nutritious grocery staples to our neighbors each Tuesday.

### To Help Someone in Manhattan with Food Insecurity

If someone you know in Manhattan could benefit from this program, email [CSIAnnex@masbiarelieve.org](mailto:CSIAnnex@masbiarelieve.org) with a name and cell phone number. A trained Masbia representative will reach out regarding enrollment.

### NEW! BECOME A VOLUNTEER

Visit the [webpage](#) to submit your Tuesday afternoon availability, and Masbia will reach out to you when opportunities arise.

*Thank you to our faith partners: The Jewish Center, Masbia, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

## COMING UP

*Register at [shearithisrael.org](https://shearithisrael.org)*

*The Shearith Israel League is co-sponsoring with The American Sephardi Federation*

### Salud i Beraha: The 9th Annual NY Ladino Day

THIS Sunday, Jan 11 | 2 pm | Center for Jewish History, 15 West 16th St

Tickets can be purchased at [programs.cjb.org/event/ladino-day-2026-01-11](https://programs.cjb.org/event/ladino-day-2026-01-11)

### Sunday Matinee Virtual Film Festival with Sisterhood

Sunday, January 18 | 4:00 pm | Norman (2016)

Sunday, February 8 | 4:00 pm | The Testament (2017)

### Bedek HaBayit Day with Rev. Z. Edinger

Sun, Jan 25 | 10 am-12 pm | RSVP to Rev. Edinger: [zedinger@shearithisrael.org](mailto:zedinger@shearithisrael.org)

### Tu B'Shebat Seder with Baruch-Lev Kelman

Sunday, February 1 | Following 6:30 pm Evening Services

### Second Annual Sisterhood Culinary Continuity Event:

**BOUREKAS!**

Sunday, February 8 | 10:00 am-12:00 pm | At Shearith Israel

### Shearith Israel League Super Bowl Party

Sunday, February 8 | 6:00 pm | At Shearith Israel

### COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mazal tob to **Meredith Case & Aaron Nathan** (trustee) on the birth of a baby girl. Congratulations as well to the proud grandparents, **Becky Chaplan & David Nathan** (honorary Parnas) and great grandmother, **Ruth Nathan**.

Mazal tob to **Raquel & Aryeh Rubin**, upon the birth of a new granddaughter, Roey Sofia (Tzofia Paz Yaella), born to their daughter, Angelica, and her husband, Elichai.

Mazal tob to **Martine & Jack Schenker**, upon the birth of a great-granddaughter, born to their granddaughter, Bina.

Mazal tob to **Daniel & Katherine Vieyra** upon their granddaughter Maya Isabelle Frisch becoming a Bat Mitzvah.

We mourn the passing of our friend, **E. Sherry Miller**.

Early Bird Offer: **Pre-Pay Next Year's Dues at This Year's Rates!**  
**Members**, remember that **until January 15**, you can pre-pay your July 2026-June 2027 dues at this membership year's rates. Refer to our emails for instructions.