

The People's Responsibility for Their Leaders

The first Parasha of Sefer Vayikra, the Book of Leviticus, the Parasha called "Vayikra," encompassing Chapters 1-5, consists of instructions addressed (through Moses) to all of the Children of Israel. This is in contradistinction to the second Parasha of Leviticus, Parashat Tsav, which are instructions specifically addressed (again through Moses) to Aaron and his sons, the Priests. Our Parasha gives instructions about sacrifices which were, by and large, necessary for Israelites in general to know, whereas Tsav, the following Parasha, discusses procedural details, often about the same sacrifices, which were necessary for priests who were involved in offering them to follow. Ordinary Israelites were the ones who brought the animals, so they obviously needed to know the types of animals needed. And as the types of animals varied with the types of sacrifices, they required instruction as to the different types of sacrifices, as well, and the occasions or purposes which required them. Details such as how to cook the eaten parts of sacrifices, how long to leave uneaten parts to burn, and what clothes the priest had to wear when officiating: those procedural intricacies about these same sacrifices are communicated to the Priests in next week's section.

Of course, sections of even this First Parasha speak about procedures which only the Priests carry out. But most of these procedures had some relevance to the average Israelite, as well, such as which parts of which sacrifices an Israelite got to eat and what had to be burnt or given to Priests. General knowledge about the constitution of sacrifices and how they worked was also relevant to the average Israelite. The sprinkling of the blood, the division of the carcass, the burning of various parts and fats, the offering of a handful of flour, etc., constituted the basics of the sacrifices which every Israelite saw and was familiar with. They were integral parts of the way sacrifice worked, seeking favor from God and making up for sin. And even the ordinary Israelite was responsible to know the types of sacrifices, the occasions on which certain types of sacrifices were required, to make sure in general that the officiating priest carried out the sacrifice in a manner appropriate to each particular type of sacrifice.

Now, this entire Book is known as Leviticus, because of the focus on laws appropriate to the Priests and their assisting brethren, the Levites. But the question arises: If Leviticus' laws are largely needed by the Kohanim, the Levitical Priests, why were they made such a central part of the Torah addressed to all Israel? Why should the ordinary Israelite be occupied with studying and knowing all these directives about and to the Priests? The answer seems to be what I just suggested above: Although the ordinary Israelite is not directed to follow these laws, the ordinary Israelite has a general responsibility to see to it that regular Priestly procedures are followed. Our First Parasha of Leviticus has Moses address the Children of Israel, and not the Priests, to teach us that the People are responsible for their leaders. The People are responsible to have leaders who will follow the recognized proper and customary procedures. Congregants don't have to know all the intricacies of law and custom that their rabbi or cantor knows. But congregants have to be knowledgeable enough and responsible enough to appoint rabbis and cantors who familiarize themselves with those intricacies of law and custom. Israel in its history did not always appoint Priests and leaders who were responsible, and the Prophets hold all of Israel responsible for not correcting the sins of those leaders and installing a more proper leadership. Even the Noahide Laws require every nation to form governments that will execute judgment and enforce laws. A society that will not do so is considered gravely negligent. Perhaps that was exactly the problem with Amalek. Israelites respected some nomadic tribes, but perhaps Amalek's issue was that it existed chiefly by raiding. Although Amalek at times had a "king," their tribes seem to have mostly acted like a band of bandits and vagabonds. That might have been why the entire tribe had to be wiped out, people along with leaders, for when a society takes no responsibility to have proper laws and leadership, the whole society becomes liable to the penalties. And even Saul, too, had to be deposed by Samuel in the name of all Israel. Although Saul had done much to his credit, Samuel felt Saul had not followed proper procedures. Feeling that the burden of responsibility for Saul's failure lay with the People, Samuel in the name of the people dramatically took matters into his own hands.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL

The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

Shabbat Vayikra-Zachor

March 11-12, 2022 | 9 Adar II, 5782

SCHEDULE

Hertz: p. 409 | Haftarah: p. 995 | Zachor: p. 856
Kaplan: p. 498 | Haftarah: p. 1274 | Zachor: p. 988

Candle Lighting | 5:40 pm

Friday Evening Services | 5:45 pm

Friday Night Lights | Rabbi Soloveichik | Following services | *2021-22 season sponsored by the Julis-Rabinowitz family*

Zemirot | 8:30 am

Shahrit | 9:00 am |

Jr. Congregation with a Torah Reading | 10:30 am | Small Synagogue
Torah read by Rafe Sasson

Kiddush | Levy | following services | *Sponsored by Karen & Jack Daar*

Shabbat Afternoon Class | Rabbi Soloveichik | 4:55 pm

Shabbat Afternoon Services | 5:40 pm

Habdala | 6:33 pm

Virtual Habdala | 6:45 pm | Rev. Z. Edinger

Parent-Child Learning & S'mores | 7:00 pm | *Led by our Parnas, Lou Solomon*

Daylight Savings Reminder: *Don't forget to turn your clocks forward 1 hour on Saturday night!*

Weekday Service Times

Morning Services

Sunday: 8:05 am | Monday-Wednesday & Friday: 7:05 am

Evening Services

Sunday-Thursday (Minha/Arbit): **6:30 pm**

For the complete Purim schedule, including Megillah readings and the Fast of Esther, visit shearithisrael.org/purim5782.

THIS SHABBAT

Shabbat Zakhor - A Once-A-Year Opportunity!

Join us on Shabbat Zakhor to fulfill the Torah's command: *"Remember what Amalek did to you...do not forget!"* We also recite the fantastic poem *Mi Kamobka* by Yehuda haLevy, in which he re-tells the story of Esther using biblical verses and allusions from all over the entire Bible.

He's LIVE FROM SHEARITH ISRAEL...

Friday Night Lights

This Friday | IN PERSON with Rabbi Meir Soloveichik

Following 5:45 pm Evening Services with the Shearith Israel Choir

2021-2022 Season of Friday Night Lights is sponsored by the Julis-Rabinowitz family

Shabbat Afternoon Class

Rabbi Meir Soloveichik

This Shabbat | IN PERSON | 4:55 pm | 45 minutes before Evening Services

THANK YOU!!

Ukraine Relief Fund

In just one week, our Emergency Relief Campaign for the Jewish Community of Ukraine **raised over \$70,000**. Along with an unlimited matching donor, we were able to collectively contribute **over \$140,000**, which is being used for basic needs like food and medical supplies, as well as for transport to evacuate individuals and families to safer places.

We thank our community for your swift generosity. We received over 130 contributions with gift sizes ranging from \$5 to \$10,000. We also know that the needs in Ukraine are immense and will not be going away any time soon. We will continue to accept donations earmarked for this purpose.

To contribute, visit shearithisrael.org/rdf.

Matanot L'Ebyonim Reminder: Your gift to this campaign - no matter how generous - does not fulfill the Purim requirement of ***Matanot L'Ebyonim***, which are funds that the rabbi will distribute to Jews in need on Purim day itself. *To fulfill your mitzvah of Matanot L'Ebyonim, visit shearithisrael.org/matanot.*

Rivka Wiznia and Sharon Sasson, Shearith Israel's ambassadors to the West Side Mikvah, encourage our community to support the upcoming West Side Mikvah Fundraiser Launch Event, THIS Sunday, March 13:
rayze.it/westsidemikvah/SpanishPortuguese

THIS SATURDAY NIGHT

Parent-Child Learning - Torah & S'mores!

Led by our Parnas, Louis Solomon

Saturday Night, March 12 | 7:00 pm

For elementary school children and their parents or grandparents

To register, visit shearithisrael.org/csiyouth5782.

PURIM

Are You Ready For Purim?

Wednesday evening, March 16-Thursday, March 17

- **Purim Dinner!**
- **For Kids: "The Story of Purim: As Told by YOU!" - remember to RSVP!**
- ***Matanot L'Ebyonim!***
- **Megillah Readings!** - including Women's Reading and a Family-Friendly Outdoor Reading on Purim Morning!

Visit shearithisrael.org/purim5782 to submit our simple Vaccine Status form to attend Megillah, RSVP your kids for their activity, and sign up for our herring-tacular dinner!

LAST CHANCE — SIGN UP NOW!

Rabbi Soloveichik wants to share a l'chaim with YOU at Our Festive Purim Dinner!

Catered by Sherry Herring

with a spirited conversation between

Shearith Israel's herring aficionado, Rabbi Meir Soloveichik, and Sherry Herring's New York rep, Alejandro Benchimol

Purim Evening, March 16 | After Megillah Reading & Children's Activity

We are delighted to be offering this relaxed, in-person, communal meal. And what better time than Purim to finally see each other's *punim*? This year's Purim Dinner will be catered by Sherry Herring, the hot new kosher Upper West Side outpost of the famed Tel Aviv hotspot.

Register at shearithisrael.org/purimdinner5782.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mazal tob to **Karen & Roy Simon**, upon the birth of a boy, born to their children, Nicole & Dotan.

Condolences to **Salomon vaz Dias**, upon the passing of his aunt, Rosetta Stouwer Brilleman, in Amsterdam.