From Generation to Generation
Rabbi Jeff Berger
Rabbi of the Sephardi Synagogue of Elstree and Boreham in London

‘Every true thing has already been said, but each new generation must find a way to say it in their own words.’

Marvy Rubin (Author of Boiled Frog Syndrome)

Anyone who’s attended a Passover Seder and stayed through the last song, will know the number 53 in Ehad Mi Yode’a which represents Five Books of the Torah. But few are aware of a perplexing piece of Babylonian Talmud (Shabbat 116a) which suggests there are actually seven. The source of this discrepancy depends on how we read the Book of Bemidbar.

Were we to describe broadly the plot and drama of the Torah up to this point, we might say that central to Bereishith is G-d’s two-fold promise to Abraham; that his descendants will be chosen as a holy people and that they will eventually inherit the Land of Canaan.

Shemot and Vayikra demonstrate the fulfillment of that first promise; the Children of Israel were redeemed from Egypt, brought to Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments and taught to build a Tabernacle (Mishkan). The priesthood was appointed to maintain spiritual purity in and around the camp and laws of social justice were given, as a prerequisite to living within close proximity of the Divine Presence (Shekhina). Bemidbar begins a new book in which the focus turns to the fulfillment of G-d’s second covenantal promise, the journey to inherit the Land of Canaan – bringing us back to our Talmudic dilemma.

The Talmud’s view is that the initial instructions for encampment and movement (Chap 1-10) comprise a book on its own, verses 10:35-36 describing the first steps forward are a separate book, and all the complaining and drama that occurs thereafter marks the third (Chaps 11-36). Bemidbar is the struggle between ideal and reality.

Dr. David Elavizh in the 2005 book Professors on the Parasha, offers an alternate view based on generational change. He sees the second and third parts divided more evenly. The march from Sinai to Kadesh Barnea including the spies’s failure, G-d’s decree against the adult males and the eventual deaths of Miriam & Aharon (Chap 11-20) is followed by the march from Kadesh Barnea to the Plains of Moab and their children’s conquest of the east bank of the Jordan River (Chap 20-36).

This view sees Bemidbar as a transitional narrative - from the generation raised in Egyptian captivity to their offspring, born into freedom. The legacy of Sinai was first conveyed from parent to child via the strength of Moses’s leadership. Subsequent generations would face that challenge anew.

(continued on inside panel)
**SHABUOT AT SHEARITH ISRAEL**

**TUESDAY, MAY 30th**
- **CANDLE LIGHTING**: 8:01 PM
- **EVENING SERVICES**: 8:00 PM

**RABBI SOLOVEICHIK’S MISHMARAH/TIKKUN** | Rabbi Soloveichik delivers a lecture on the topic “Time to Eat Swordfish? A Deep Dive into a Fishy Halakhic Story” | 11:30 PM followed by cheesecake reception in Levit Auditorium

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 31st**
- **1834 Crosby St. Building Consecration Anniversary**
- **MORNING SERVICES**: 8:15 AM
- **TORAH READING (THE TEN COMMANDMENTS)** | 10:00 AM
- **GIRLS READING BOOK OF RUTH**: 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

**KIDDUSH** | Sponsored by the Tabor Family in honor of Flora’s Bat Mitzvah.
- **AZHAROT**: 7:15 PM
- **EVENING SERVICES**: 8:00 PM
- **CANDLE LIGHTING** | after 8:47 PM

**THURSDAY, JUNE 1st**
- **MORNING SERVICES**: 8:15 AM
- **SERMON** | Rabbi Soloveichik

**KIDDUSH** | Sponsored by Arthur Tenenholts in memory of his brother, Perry Tenenholts z’l
- **AZHAROT**: 7:15 PM
- **EVENING SERVICES**: 8:00 PM
- **HABDalah**: 8:48 PM

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**Upcoming Events and Initiatives**

**Weekday Toddler Summer ‘Camp’**
- **June 20-August 17**
- **Tuesdays and Thursdays**: 9:30-11:30 AM
- **For children aged 16-33 months.**
- Includes outdoor play and a wading pool. Adult caregiver presence is required. Register online at shearithisrael.org/summer-toddler-camp.

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**Film Screening: Trezoros, The Lost Jews of Kastoria**
- **Followed by a Talk-Back Session**
- **With Directors Lawrence Russo and Larry Confino**
- **Wednesday, June 7**: 7:15 pm

Trezoros (Ladino term of endearment meaning “treasures”), an emotionally compelling first person documentary, chronicles —through never-before-seen footage—one of many former Sephardic communities which had existed in Greece before World War II. Kastoria, an idyllic lakeside village, saw Jews and Christians living in harmony for over two millennia. October of 1940 saw Axis forces break through Greek defenses, eventually dooming the Jewish community that had existed since the time of the Roman Empire. Register at shearithisrael.org/trezoros. $5 members/$8 non-members.

**Don’t Let Your Graduate Go Unnoticed!**
- **Graduation Kiddush and Scroll of Honor Shabbat, June 17**
- **Following Morning Services**

Let’s spread the good news and celebrate the success and accomplishments of all our graduates from preschool to PhDs! Go to shearithisrael.org/graduation to ensure your graduate is listed on our scroll of honor that will be distributed on that shabbat. But even if you cannot attend, consider co-sponsoring our graduation kiddush for $180 or just $36.

**Morning Minyan Just Got Even Better!**
- Morning minyan participants are treated to a breakfast of champions (cereal and milk). Jumpstart your day by nourishing your body and soul and help make this minyan strengthening initiative a success. To sponsor, go to shearithisrael.org/cereal.

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**COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Mazel Tov to Judy and Joel Schreiber** on the birth of granddaughter to their children, Seth and Miriam Fein.

**Contribute to the PTTS scholarship fund at shearithisrael.org/hebrew-school-scholarship-fund**

**Sisterhood’s Elsie Adlman Camp Fund**
- For many years the Sisterhood’s Elsie Adlman Camp Fund has helped children and senior citizens, who could otherwise not do so, enjoy a Jewish summer experience outside the City. In this time of great economic need, it is more important than ever to be able to help change their lives for a month... a week... or even a day. Please help us by responding as generously as you can. Go to shearithisrael.org/sisterhood-elsie-adlman-camp-fund to donate.

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**SUMMER WEEKDAY JUDAIC EDUCATION**
- For details go to: shearithisrael.org/judaic-education

**Sunday**
- **Saadiah Gaon’s Book of Beliefs and Opinions** | 8:45 am

**Monday, Wednesday, & Thursday**
- **Habrua (Paired) Learning**: 5:15 pm - 7:15 pm | Before and after evening services, Rabbi Chaim Yanetz and rabbinical students from YU are available in the Elias Room to study habrua with congregants of all ages.

**Tuesday**
- **Minyan Class and Breakfast** | Following Morning Services | Sponsored by Chaim Katzap

To sponsor a single class or an entire semester, go to shearithisrael.org/sponsoraclass

To find out when your favorite class is held, canceled or for community access...

Register Now for PTTS Hebrew School
- Don’t Miss the Early Bird Discount (until June 1)! Polonies Talmud Torah School, provides children and teens, ages 3-16, with a substantive Jewish education in a positive and engaging environment. Register at shearithisrael.org/hebrewschool.