

# Starting the New Year Under the Skies

By Mayer Sasson, President



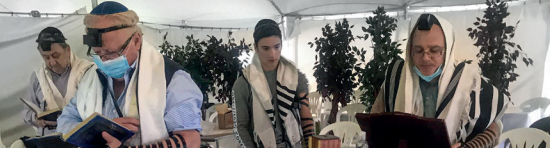
The MAGHEN ABRAHAM CONGREGATION started the year with a splendidly held BBQ in the Park next to the Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue, enjoying a hot day with cold refreshments to accompany a whole selection of different grilled meats. Which BBQ is complete without a splendid Raffle where virtually each one who bought tickets won something, from Swiss Pillows, to Jewellery to fine vintage wines, quality picture frames and what have you. All donated and sponsored by the Maghen Abraham's proud supporters, the Saad, Arghalgi, Sasson and the Darwishe Famililies.

Then we welcomed the New Year, Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippour Services in a massive Tent right in the heart of Hampstead Park. It was so successful that we were at a capacity of 120 by the time we reached the Nehila Service Closing Prayers on the last night.

Hashem was particularly kind with us in Blessing and Granting us with above all beautiful weather on all Three Events simultaneously of which much of the success achieved depended on. The Services were splendidly carried out with solemnity by **David Azerad, Meyer Oiknine, Joseph Azerad**, our main Pillars assisted by **Meyer Azerad** and **Rabbi Kaparow** joining us for the High Holidays for the first time.

The vast majority of the Kahal felt more comfortable conducting Prayers outside.

We thank you all the Famililies and the Members of the Clergy who helped make these events so Memorable!



## The S&P 2021 Soccer Game & BBQ

By Marc Hadid Ing./ PEng., parnass & edited by Marc Perez

Hello Spanish & Portuguese Sports Fans,

Here is the recap of the highly competitive soccer tournament that took place on Sunday, August 29th, 2021, between our two professional, OK semi-professional, soccer teams.

Our Red team that was led by the multi-talented Jose Layani, consisted of these outstanding stars: Joshua Layani, Jose Bentob, Rabbi Pinto, Reverand Hazan Benlolo, Abraham Israel and Allan Daly.

Our Blue team had David Nathaniel as their fearless leader. His group of gifted athletes were Liam



LA CONGRÉGATION MAGHEN ABRAHAM a commencé l'année avec un magnifique Barbecue dans le parc à côté de la Spanish, profitant d'une journée chaude avec des rafraichissements froids pour accompagner toute une sélection de différentes grillades. Et quel BBQ serait complet sans une splendide Tombola où pratiquement tous ceux qui ont acheté des billets ont gagné quelque chose, des coussins Suisses, aux bijoux, des Grands Crus, des cadres de photo de qualité et encore ! Tous commandités par les fiers supporters de la Maghen Abraham, les Familles Saad, Arghalgi, Sasson et Darwishe entre autres.

Ensuite, nous avons accueilli le Nouvel An, Rosh Hashana et les Services de Yom Kippour dans une immense Tente en plein cœur de Hampstead Park. Ce fut un tel succès que nous étions à une capacité de 120 personnes au moment où nous avons atteint les prières de clôture du Service de Nehila, la dernière Nuit.

Hachem a été particulièrement clément avec nous en nous bénissant en nous accordant surtout un temps magnifique aux trois événements simultanément dont dépendait une grande partie du succès obtenu. Les Services Religieux ont été magnifiquement exécutés avec solennité par **David Azerad, Meyer Oiknine, Joseph Azerad**, nos principaux Piliers, assistés de **Meyer Azerad** et **Rabbi Kaparow** nous rejoignant pour les Grandes Fêtes pour la première fois.

La grande majorité du Kahal se sentait plus à l'aise de faire les prières à l'extérieur.

Nous désirons remercier toutes les familles et les membres du Clergé qui ont contribué à rendre ces grands événements si mémorables!

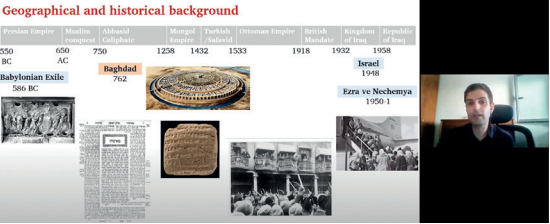
Nathaniel, Jeremie Nathaniel, Jamie Nathaniel, Josh Cohen, Danny Shahrabani, Charly-Marc Hadad and Marc Hadid.

Anxious spectators gathered to witness this exciting match and BBQ event with the weather fully co-operating. The two teams battled with their skills proudly displayed and managed to end the match up in a 4 to 4 tie. BRAVO!

Our thanks go out to our referees, Saadia Israel and Habib Perez. Volunteers, Rose Simon Schwartz and Marc Perez. BBQ Chefs, Yair and Santos and Marc Hadid, P.Eng our event organizer/coordinator.

## The Uniqueness history and future of the Jewish Arabic dialect of Iraq Skies

By Gladys Peress Mooallem, edited by Gigi Bitton



Dear Dr. Assaf Bar-Moshe,

I would like to thank you for the exceptional presentation you gave yesterday to the Women's Learning Group (WLG) of the Spanish & Portuguese synagogue, Montreal.

It was a great pleasure listening to you, whether we know the language or not.

The history you provided about the Jews in Iraq was decidedly informative and very interesting to everyone. The samples you showed of the pronunciation of various words and letters were precise.

You made everything about these barely spoken dialects look attractive and should fascinate the generations to come.

Our language had evolved through many generations. Words were being added and used by the whole community. However, we were so busy getting established, making a living in our new countries, and teaching new languages to our children that we neglected to keep our Arabic dialect alive.

We believed it was not useful anymore.

Yesterday, you woke us up to the sad fact that our ancient dialects could have perished. You showed us the work you are dedicated to through your research and presentations.

From the number of people, you gathered for your WLG presentation from all across the world to listen and learn from you, it is evident that Iraqi Jews are very interested in the language of their forefathers and are concerned about its future.

The success of your work already carries fruit. if, among other things, you have been invited to teach our language at Oxford University in London, England.

Incidentally, your work reminds me of the journalist Ariel Sabar who wrote the book "My Father's Paradise", about his Kurdish father, Yona Sabar, who had immigrated to Jerusalem. Yona Sabar then got a scholarship and continued his education at Yale University in the U.S.

He later taught Aramaic at U.S. universities and compiled an Aramaic dictionary.

Your research will lead you to unlimited success.

We wish you a great future. You deserve it.

I would like to thank our Vice-President and President of the Babylonian Iraqi Community, David Nathaniel, for trusting me to conduct yesterday's program through Women's Learning Group (WLG).

Thank you, dear Viola Tulchinski for recording and editing the session, then putting it professionally, on Youtube.

Thanks to all our dedicated office staff. who work tirelessly behind the scenes, for the success of our programs!

Thanks to all the people who joined us to learn and enjoy our session. You contributed enormously to our success.

November 6, 2021 | 2 Kislev 5782

## A COVID Wedding Story

By Daniel Schonholzer

After waiting such a long time to marry the woman of my dreams, I thought nothing could stop me. I was wrong and right at the same time. Getting married during COVID was far from ideal. What was initially planned as a 150-people wedding in a beautiful venue turned out to be 9 people in our backyard; anticlimactic, to say the least. Marion and I discussed the possibility of delaying our wedding; our parents strongly advised us not to wait. In the end, we are glad that we didn't, because it is now 1 year later, and we couldn't be happier.

Nothing is easy when it comes to living in confinement. Thanks to some great planning – mostly by my wife – we had a small but beautiful ceremony on a gorgeous day with Rav Pinto present to officiate. The lesson learned here is: there's no time like the present, so don't let anything keep you from doing what you really want to do. For Marion and me, it was to embrace our love and get married!



## EXTRA EXTRA... Read all about it!

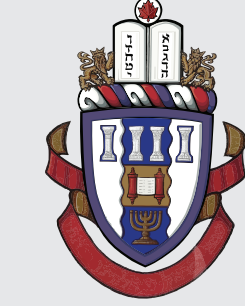
By Marc Perez

Welcome to the first edition of the Shabbat Bulletin with Hadashot (news)! With your feedback, the Marketing and Communication Committee took the initiative to share the latest news about our congregation's religious and community activities.

If you would like to submit an article, a piece of artwork, or comment about the website, the emails, the Shabbat bulletin, the Aleinu, we can be reached by email at [marketing@thespanish.org](mailto:marketing@thespanish.org) or contact me by phone at **514-963-7685**.

Would you be interested in volunteering? We are looking for content writers, editors, translators, photographers, music enthusiasts and more of all ages to help us out.

Stay safe & happy reading!



Shearith Israel  
SPANISH &  
PORTUGUESE  
Synagogue of Montreal  
Est. 1768

# SHABBAT BULLETIN

November 6, 2021 | 2 Kislev 5782

## Parashat Toldot

La Familia

Par: Rabbin Maimon Pinto

Trouver un partenaire n'est pas simple. Les rabbins ont caractérisé sa difficulté comme la division de la mer rouge à la sortie d'Egypte. Mais trouver ce partenaire et construire un mariage réussi et satisfaisant par la suite sont deux tâches différentes. D'après la parasha de cette semaine, il est évident que Isaac et Rivka sont en désaccord concernant le traitement de Eisav. Isaac est prêt à lui donner presque tout pour tenter de le sauver de sa propre nature maléfique et de son cours négatif dans la vie.

Rivka estime qu'Eisav est irrécupérable et que tout l'investissement de l'énergie parentale devrait être concentré sur Yaakov. Sa politique d'amour très dure contredit celle d'Its'hak envers Eisav. Ainsi, elle n'informe pas Its'hak de son intention d'accorder les bénédictions à Yaakov en le déguisant a Eisav. Elle exige que Yaakov quitte maintenant le pays pour échapper à la colère et aux menaces de mort d'Eisav.

Its'hak acquiesce à ses souhaits, mais pas pour les mêmes motifs qui ont poussé Rivka à renvoyer Yaakov. Bref, pour une grande partie de la parasha, Its'hak et Rivka ne semblent pas être sur la même longueur d'onde en ce qui concerne l'avenir de leurs fils. Cela entraîne naturellement des complications et des problèmes qui se refléteront à nouveau dans la famille de Yaakov, de ses femmes et de ses enfants.

Le fossé entre Its'hak et Rivka n'est pas discuté davantage dans la Torah et même dans le Midrash

## OPINION

## Chevra Shaas

Words From  
Rabbi Menahem White  
TOLEDOT 5782

I spoke about the following last Shabbat in Chevra Shaas. Since my readers of this blog were not there, and as it was a very meaningful experience for me, I repeat it here, with some modifications.

A week ago Thursday, I had a most meaningful and inspiring experience. At 12:00 noon, Mtl time (= 7:00 pm Israel time), a nephew of mine, "Frankie" Trachtman, had a hashba' ah, a swearing in ceremony, at the Kotel.

Thanks to modern technology, I was able to watch the ceremony live. [By the way, in case you didn't know, you can see the kotel at any time by clicking on [www.thekotel.org](http://www.thekotel.org).] At this ceremony, my nephew, together with his comrades, received his kumtah yeruqah, the green beret, indicating he was being inducted into the distinguished Nachal division of Tzahal, the Israeli Defence Army. May HaShem watch over my nephew, his comrades, and all of kelal Yisrael.



et les commentateurs ne s'y attardent pas. Pourtant, cela semble avoir une influence majeure sur la vie de Yaakov et d'Eisav et sur la relation torturée entre les deux frères.

La saga du favoritisme des parents à l'égard d'un de leurs enfants sera reprise par Yaakov dans l'histoire de Yosef et de ses frères. Cette dispute hantera la vie juive tout au long de son histoire. Tout le monde s'efforce de parvenir à une maison et une famille harmonieuses. Mais l'objectif est insaisissable pour beaucoup. Des circonstances différentes, des préférences personnelles, des erreurs humaines et des influences sociétales jouent tous un rôle dans le problème de la création d'un foyer harmonieux et aimant.

C'est ce que les rabbins voulaient dire lorsqu'ils ont déclaré que Yaakov voulait vivre dans la paix et la sérénité - il voulait réaliser cette maison de bonté

et de paix. Au lieu de cela, le désastre de Yosef et de ses frères s'est imposé à lui et à sa famille. Un grand sage a dit un jour que la vie et surtout la vie de famille peuvent être comparées à des navires qui traversent l'océan. Chacun fabrique son propre sillage, mais le sillage disparaît bientôt et le prochain navire doit se frayer un chemin à travers l'océan par lui-même.

Il n'y a pas deux situations familiales identiques et deux enfants d'une même famille ne sont pas identiques – même des jumeaux identiques. La Torah nous informe des difficultés inhérentes aux situations familiales et aux différences de personnalités et d'opinions. Il n'offre aucune solution magique à ces situations car il n'y a pas de taille unique qui puisse être avancée. La sagesse, la patience, la bonne volonté et le bon sens sont les ingrédients de la réussite et de la réussite familiales.

Chabat chalom.

My nephew's late grandfather, who is my wife's father, had come to Israel as a halutz about 100 years ago. His family in Europe was very much opposed to his aliya, as they were staunchly anti-Zionist. My father-in-law became very ill in Israel, had to return to Europe, and eventually made his way to America, where he settled in NYC and raised his family. I think it is reasonable to say that my nephew's enlistment in IDF/Nachal is the fulfillment of my father in law's dream.

\*\*\*\*

And speaking of fulfillment of dreams: this week's parasha, Toledot, discusses the continuation of the generations: from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob.

This past Thursday, 4 November (=29 Cheshvan) was the Sigd, the great holiday of the Beta Israel, the Ethiopian Jewish community. For hundreds and hundreds of years, they dreamt of returning to Jerusalem, a dream which has been realized in our time. We at Chevra Shaas have been enriched by the members of that community who have been praying with us for many years.

Shabbat shalom

## SHABBAT SHALOM

Start/Debut 5:27 PM End/Fin 6:30 PM

Parashat Toldot - Hertz page 930  
Haftarah Kings - Hertz page 102

Shabbat Services  
Shahrit: 8:30 AM Mincha: 5:15 PM

## WEEKLY SERVICE SCHEDULES

Sunday: 8:30 AM

Monday - Friday  
Shahrit: 8:30 AM  
Mincha: 4:00 PM

## CHEVRA SHAAS Service Schedule

SHABBOS, NOVEMBER 6<sup>th</sup>

Schachris 9:30 AM

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7<sup>th</sup>

Schachris 8:00 PM

## BEIT HAMIDRASH HELWANI WITH RABBI PINTO

Monday through Friday

8:40 AM - Hok L'Israel

Dvar Torah

Weekly Debate - Sunday after services

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday

8:25 AM - Halaka/Talmud

5:45 PM - Jewish Wisdom

Dear friends,

I am here for you. Whether you want to ask a question, consult, learn or just chat, you can call me on my mobile (514) 506-3164 or to my email [rabbi@thespanish.org](mailto:rabbi@thespanish.org)

I am available 24/6,  
Shabbat, emergencies only  
Rabbi Maimon Pinto

## STANDARD TIME BEGINS

Saturday night, November 6<sup>th</sup>,  
turn your clocks back 1 hour.

To contact Reverend Hazan  
Daniel Benlolo:  
[cantorbenlolo@thespanish.org](mailto:cantorbenlolo@thespanish.org)  
(514) 892-2859



## QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"The roots of education are bitter,  
but the fruits are sweet,"

Aristotle | Aish HaTorah



## PARASHA KISLEV

Allusions to the Month of Kislev

The letters of Kislev כסלו allude to the fact that on Chanukah we light a total of 36 נרות candles (without the shamesh) and כסלו in numerology is 80 - שמונים which alludes to the oils שמנים with which we light the 36 candles.

- Likewise in the verse "And G-d said let there be light" "יהי אור" - the numerology of the word יהי is 25 - כ"ה to allude to the 25th day of Kislev (Chanukah) for that is the time for the light of the Torah to shine. - In addition, the 25th word starting from the beginning of the at Torah "בראשית ברא" is the word light- "אור".

- We must know that that the month of Kislev is a time of unity for the Jews, as is alluded in the verse in the Megillah of Esther - "Go gather all the Jews in the Megillah of Esther" "ולך נכנס את כל היהודים" every 4th letter spells out "נסל" Kislev. This also teaches us that through unity in Israel years will be added to one's life, as it says, "for through Me your days will be increased..." "כי בי ירבו ימיך".

- In summation, the name of the month Kislev alludes to two words Kis -pocket - and Lev – heart; one must open his heart for charity (especially during Chanukah) and one's heart to do kindness, for this is true unity.

- And the holiday of Chanukah is alluded to in the mitzvah of charity, as it says, - "Take heed to yourself that there be no unworthy word in your heart... and then your eye looks badly towards your needy brother and you would not give him..." "ועיני באוחר" - where every 8th letter spells out Chanukah – that during the eight days of Chanukah it is a mitzvah to give much charity to our Jewish brethren.

SHABBAT SHALOM!!

## Jewish Wisdom

Character Exam  
Rabbi Maimon Pinto

Rabbi Elai said: In three matters a person's true character is ascertained; in his cup, i.e., his behavior when he drinks; in his pocket, i.e., his conduct in his financial dealings with other people; and in his anger. And some say: A person also reveals his real nature in his laughter. (Babylonian Talmud Tractate Erubin 65,b)

Although each one demonstrates one's character, for the good or the bad, it would seem that according to the Talmud an accurate indication of one's true character would be if he passes or fails all three and not just one.

It is also interesting to note the frequency of these three matters. While one's cup is tested periodically, his pocket is daily and his anger is tested hourly.



## Got A Question for Reverend/Hazan Daniel Benlolo?

Dear Danny, How do we entice Jews to affiliate and get involved in Synagogue life?

IS THERE ANYBODY OUT THERE?

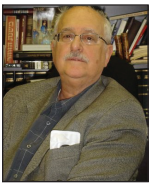
It is a question that has prompted Jewish organizations to bring to the table the subject of "unaffiliated Jews" in their 20s, 30s and up, who do not belong to any synagogue or Jewish organization. They often equate this lack of affiliation with being secular, Jewishly under-educated, and finding Judaism and its complex web of laws to be secondary in their hectic and demanding lives. Another equation might be, staying uninvolved with anything Jewish until it is time to send the children to Hebrew school, celebrate their Bar/Bat Mitzvah, wedding and inevitably in time of need. Indeed, the Jewish population surveys may show a high correlation between these traits, so this stereotype may be well-founded. If this population had more Jewish education and a stronger Jewish identity, would they become "affiliated" with the organized Jewish community? It is my hope that this answer to your question will somehow ignite a spark within us and challenge us (the "affiliated") to make a difference and once and for all reverse that trend.

Members of our sacred community at the S&P must seize this opportunity to fill that spiritual void in the life of a family by bringing them closer to their heritage. Some argue that the system does not know what to do with young Jewish families and singles who work in the secular world, and consequently does not cater to their needs. I say, give us a chance. Every year families from around the city come through my Bar/Bat Mitzvah School for the sole purpose of filling that "spiritual obligation". They eventually become members of the S&P family, and this is when it becomes our duty to entice them to remain. The question arises, if a multigenerational Jewish community were inclusive of educated laypeople, respectful of individuals with or without families, and open to inclusion in various aspects of Jewish life, would it be a place for all the unaffiliated Jews? The answer is a resounding YES. But first we must ask ourselves some hard questions and be able to give some straightforward answers. We must ask not merely how to market the status quo, but how to change the status quo. We must ask where educated and interested laypeople will fit into the big picture. We must find a niche and comfort zone for all the unaffiliated Jews. I understand....it has been the topic of discussion and debate in Jewish communities around North America and maybe around the world and it will require a large-scale transformation of the Jewish community. In the meantime, what can we do right here in our own backyard? My dear friends, today is the day when the Spanish should take charge. We are at a pivotal stage in our existence; we are warm, friendly, musical, spiritually well placed and a place where "everybody knows your name". We must no longer wait for leaders in the community to come up with a solution; we must be a viable and significant solution. It is the hope of the leadership of this congregation and you, its members, to build this bridge so that the unaffiliated may find their way home to the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue.

Until next time,  
RH Daniel Benlolo

## Upcoming Events

**Sunday, December 12**  
**11 AM – 1:00 PM**



**Sunday, November 7 | 12:00 - 1:00 PM**

Jewish Women Today - featuring Layers; Personal Narratives of Struggle, Resilience, and Growth From Jewish Women

3-series event, featuring the author, Shira Lankin Sheps

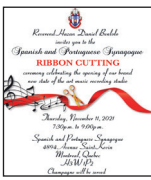
Rabbi Pinto Zoom ID 526 438 1158



**WLG - Wednesday, November 10 | 10:00 - 11:00 AM**

Stay "Tuned" Physically and Spiritually with Reverend Daniel Benlolo

Zoom ID 898 8229 8754 - Passcode: WLG2021



**Thursday, November 11 | 7:30 - 9:30 PM**

S&P Recording Studio Ribbon Cutting

Space limited. In-person only

RSVP today: [www.thespanish.org](http://www.thespanish.org)



**Monday, November 15 | 7:00 - 8:30 PM**

Lecture Series with Rabbi Pinto - Mindfulness/Conscious Living. Six-part series. In person & on ZoomGratitude: Modin Anachnu Lach

Rabbi Pinto Zoom ID 526 438 1158



**Tuesday, November 23 | 7:00 - 8:00 PM**

Sisterhood: From Microgravity to Macro Management Decisions: A Woman's Journey in Engineering. With guest speaker: Michele Shemie Cale, Director of Engineering at MK Plastics

Joins Zoom ID: 881 1057 1315 - Password: SUPERSIS

**Thursday, December 1 | 7:00 - 8:00 PM**

253rd Annual General Meeting - You are cordially invited to join our President, Officers and Board of Trustees.

For in-person attendance, proof of double vaccination is required. Registration is mandatory for in-person & virtual attendance: [www.thespanish.org](http://www.thespanish.org).

**Sunday, December 5 | 12:00 - 1:00 PM**

Jewish Women Today - featuring Layers; Personal Narratives of Struggle, Resilience, and Growth From Jewish Women

3-series event, featuring the author, Shira Lankin Sheps

Rabbi Pinto Zoom ID 526 438 1158

**Tuesday, December 7 | 12:00 - 1:00 PM**

Sisterhood Book Review: The Dark Flood Rises - By Margaret Drabble Reviewed by: Vicky Shemie

Zoom ID 895 2182 1866 - Password: SISBOOK

## PARNASS HAYOM BEIT HAMIDRASH HELWANI

**Shabbat 2 Kislev - November 6**

Claude & Penina Helwani, in honour of the Spanish & Portuguese Clergy.

**Sunday 3 Kislev - November 7**

Leila Khamara Family, in honour of Beit Hamidrash.

Famille Bensoussan, à la mémoire de leur père, Albert Bensoussan ז"ל.

**Monday/Lundi 4 Kislev - November 8**

Famille Chocron, à la mémoire de leur mère, Clara Chocron ז"ל.

Yaacov & Yehoshua Haimovici, in memory of their father, Leon Haimovici ז"ל.

Carmen & Jack Korin, in honour of the marriages of our Children.

**Tuesday/Mardi 5 Kislev - November 9**

Sylvia Shahin Family, in memory of Menashi Yehoshua Shahin ז"ל.

**Wednesday/Mercredi 6 Kislev - November 10**

Iris & Samuel & Vivienne Kairy, à la mémoire de Marco Kairy ז"ל.

Moussa Saad, à la mémoire de son père, Nissim Moussa Saad ז"ל.

Fouad Haron Mashaal, in memory of his brother, Edward Haron Mashal ז"ל.

**Thursday/Jeudi 7 Kislev - November 11**

Reuben Family, in memory of Reuben ben Yaacov ז"ל.

**Friday/Vendredi 8 Kislev - November 12**

Iny Family, in memory of their father, Eliyahou Iny ז"ל.

Shulamit Moulavi, in memory of her father, Jacob Sayegh ז"ל

## Installation of Reverend Hazan Daniel Benlolo

By Muriel Benlolo



In July 2021, Hazan Daniel Benlolo accompanied by his wife Muriel Benlolo journeyed to New York City to complete his cycle of rabbinical studies. Interviews were conducted by Rabbi Yamin Levy, Beth Hadassah Synagogue, Long Island and Rabbi Marc D. Angel, Rabbi emeritus, Congregation Shearith Israel, Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, New York City.

For forty years, Hazan Benlolo has worked as a full-time clergy in Sephardic and Ashkenazi Synagogues, deepening his knowledge and strengthening his bond with these communities.

His faithful service to the Jewish community was enhanced by his encouragement of religious diversity, striving for spiritual growth for one and all.

His interfaith and multicultural work has been acknowledged by the Universal Peace Federation, Interreligious and the International Federation for World Peace by honoring him the prestigious Ambassador for Peace award, in appreciation of his efforts toward unified world peace.



He has earned numerous honors for helping others in the community. In 2017, the Mayor's City Builder Award. In 2016, the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers. In 2013, the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award. In 2004, the United Way Community Builder Award and the Elain Rabin Social Service Award.

Pursuant to his interviews, Rabbi Yamin Levy and Rabbi Marc D. Angel acknowledged that he had proven himself to be worthy and conferred upon him the title of Reverend. The official certificate was presented to Reverend Hazan Daniel Benlolo in a ceremony at the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue by Rabbi Yamin Levy during his September 12, 2021 visit to Montreal. Witnessing the presentation were notable community leaders, guests, Synagogue members and families. Reverend Benlolo was officially installed by Rabbi Levy who then delivered a touching and inspiring dvar torah.

Rabbi Yamin Levy is a world-renowned speaker. He currently serves as Senior Rabbi of the Iranian Jewish Center, Beth Hadassah Synagogue in Great Lake,

Long Island. He founded and is the international director of the Maimonides Heritage Center, Tiveria, Israel and New York. He has been the Academic Director of Sephardic Studies at Yeshiva University. An author of many books including award-winning Sababa. He has published articles on Sephardic Studies, Jewish Law, Maimonides Studies, Biblical Studies and Jewish Thought. He corresponds with worldwide students and has an active YouTube channel.

It is in times such as these when community leaders are called upon to recognize the efforts of our local clergy, to bring attention to the presence of our Jewish community in society at large.

If you missed the installation, please visit the Synagogue's website at [www.thespanish.org](http://www.thespanish.org) to view the ceremony.

## Always there for you!

By Rabbi Maimon Pinto



The S&P community has, like many others, endured the challenges of the Covid pandemic. By hosting programs, dinners and gatherings; S&P members and friends were helped, and overcame, its perils by engaging in activities throughout the summer months and holidays.

Typical of the congregation's engagement was its collaboration with the Or Sheli daycare in hosting a fun and meaningful "Friday dinner in the park." Parents, grandparents and their young children danced and sang kabalat shabbat melodies. Under clear skies and the bright and warm sun, they chanted the kiddush and hamotzei blessings in unison.

As Rosh Hashana approached, the S&P hosted for its young families its program "Shofar So Good". Different sizes, colors and shapes of Shofars [Ram Horns] were showcased and the children had a real treat holding and feeling them. After a fun session of "Did, You Know" Rosh Hashana surprise boxes were given out followed by the dipping of apples in honey.

Sukkot allowed for further engagement and interaction with members in a very festive way. In addition to kiddush, "HutDinners" were hosted for S&P families to appreciate a joyful and uplifting, delectable meal with their friends. Hashem was thanked for all the good he had bestowed upon them. Celebrations continued with a Sukkah BBQ, which for some, was their first experience in the sukkah and an opportunity to recite the blessing. The kahal enjoyed their hamburgers and hot dogs while listening to an inspiring Dvar Torah from the Rabbi.

Moving forward, the S&P family will continue to host Friday night dinners for members and other in-person activities. During the last Friday night dinner, a delicious house-catered Iraqi Shabbat meal was served. The kids also had a good time playing within the vicinity of their synagogue.

Please join the S&P family, for their next in-person or online event for a meaningful and gratifying experience.

Rabbi and Gali Pinto

## Just As I Am: The Documentary

By Muriel Benlolo

Reverend Hazan Daniel Benlolo was ahead of the curve. In 2002, he founded the renowned Tamir Choir in Ottawa, which was composed of adults with developmental and physical disabilities. Hazan Benlolo has always been a firm believer in the power of music and singing to bring out the potential of people with disabilities. In 2017 Hazan Benlolo returned to Montréal to be closer to his family. The hardest part about leaving Ottawa was departing the choir...With the support of Federation CJA, Jewish Foundation of Montreal and the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, Hazan Benlolo co-founded the Montreal Shira Choir in 2019 with his wife Muriel and with the help of 3 amazing volunteer, Rebecca Bensimon, Rhonda Friedman and Lenore Vosberg. Under his direction, the Montreal Shira Choir members learn an eclectic repertoire of liturgical songs, as well as Broadway and pop hits, and perform at synagogues, hospitals, nursing homes, and at citywide events.

The documentary entitled, Just As I Am begins with



Left to right: Noah Leon (videographer), Even Beloff (Film Director), Reverend Hazan Daniel Benlolo, Marvin Rosenblatt (Producer)

Hazan Benlolo's attempts to raise awareness and garner attention for his new, Montreal based Shira Choir. He's been keenly aware of the desperate need for outreach from special needs adults who are regularly left out of the structured confines of school once they've reached aged 21. Hazan Benlolo routinely hears from their struggling parents and helps their adult children find their place in the world. As a result, the film details an intimate and collective profile of the courageous, special needs adults willing to join and help shape this new musical group. With unparalleled access to a selection of new choir members and their families, the documentary explores the universal language of music and how it works to empower and transform lives. We follow them as they prepare for weekly rehearsals and upcoming concerts. The breakthroughs, trials and tribulations become clearly evident in all the participants and Hazan Benlolo as well. From Hazan Benlolo and his wife Muriel making dozens of sandwiches and renting a bus to transport choir

members, to parents helping their children learn their lyrics, Just as I am also celebrates the front-line work of those in service, making life better for those that we generally ignore.

Just as I am, is a testimony to music as one of the languages of human experience and a way of dispelling stereotypes, removing the common discomfort people have towards the disabled. Music can change attitudes and forge extraordinary connections and Just as I am highlights choirmaster Hazan Benlolo and his unique and charismatic vision for enabling members with physical or intellectual challenges to fully participate in society and inspire both their families and the audiences they sing to. Ultimately, People with special needs over 21 years of age require a sense of belonging, with opportunities to maximize their strengths in a community; the film explores this omnipresent theme.

The documentary is available to watch here: <http://shiramovie.com>

