



Shearith Israel  
**SPANISH &  
PORTUGUESE**  
Synagogue of Montreal  
Est. 1768

# SHABBAT BULLETIN

October 23, 2021 | 17 Heshvan 5782



## Parashat Vayeira

*An Intelligent Question is Half of  
the Answer*

*By: Rabbi Maimon Pinto*

Being a member of the Gerut Beth Din in Montreal, I am often exposed to personal stories and journeys. This week one candidate shared some of their experiences, and although they love the equilibrium that Judaism brings to their daily lives, they are still struggling with some of the laws and rituals. One, for example, was Brith - circumcision and its meaning? And why are women excluded from the idea the Brith represents? At first, my first thought fell upon the second part of the question; Women excluded from brith?!? Can't you be serious? It is a biological and not a gender issue. But after scratching my head a little, I realized how intelligent the question was.

It is true Jews have the gift of keeping their balance despite being confronted with extremes. They have great ideals but are also realistic and pragmatic. They are sensitive to spirituality, with a long list of prophets and visionaries, but also know how to keep their feet on the ground. They are imbued with the study of the sacred Torah and learn how to make a living and create a warm and

welcoming home environment.

This ability to balance spirituality with the practical level of life dates back to Abraham and the opening theme of Vayera's Torah reading. Abraham just circumcised and is seated at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. At that time, Hashem reveals himself to him.

The idea of Hashem being revealed to someone is a very striking concept. Obviously, it means some sort of intense state of consciousness. Abraham had experienced this before, as we see in last week's Torah portion. There we are told that "Abram bowed down with his face to the earth, and Hashem spoke to him." In contrast, in our reading of the Torah, when Hashem reveals himself to Abraham, he is calmly seated at the entrance of his tent.

Abraham continued to sit calmly at the entrance. There is no indication that he has lost his mind. He seems to have been able to balance the Divine and intensely spiritual revelation of the Divine with being a hospitable person, sitting at the entrance of his tent and seeking guests.

The Sages tell us that it was because he had been circumcised. The covenant with Hashem, expressed by the brith, enabled Abraham to keep his balance when Hashem revealed himself to him.

Why does circumcision have this effect? One explanation is that it makes a pact between Hashem and the most physical part of the person. It gives the person the ability to reach the highest level of the sacred while keeping their feet on the ground.

According to the Sages, for a man, the pact of circumcision requires a physical operation. In contrast, a Jewish woman is considered to be born circumcised, in other words, born with the ability to balance holiness with the reality of everyday life. So, according to the sages, women are not excluded; they are naturally balanced, while Men need to be shaped into that reality.

Another aspect of the covenant that balances holiness and everyday reality is that it has the power to affect not only a person's physical body but the world at large. The best example is the Sacred Land of Israel. The Sages tell us that the Jewish people received possession of the Holy Land by merit of the covenant. They were able to transform the Land of Canaan into the Sacred Land of Israel, the land where the Divine reveals itself most intensely.

This is the goal of the Jewish people: to unite holiness and everyday reality, including the physical flesh and physical earth, with poise, tenderness, and joy.

Shabbat shalom

### SHABBAT SHALOM

**Start/Debut**      **End/Fin**  
**5:38 pm**            **6:40**

*Parashat Vayeira - Hertz page 63*  
*Haftarah Kings - Hertz page 76*

**Shabbat Services**  
Shahrit: 8:30      Mincha: 5:15

### WEEKLY SERVICE SCHEDULES

**Sunday:**                    **8:30 a.m.**

**Monday - Thursday**  
**Shahrit:**                **7:30 a.m.**  
**Mincha:**                **5:30 p.m.**  
**Friday**                    **5:15 p.m.**

### CHEVRA SHAAS Service Schedule

**SHABBOS, OCTOBER 23<sup>rd</sup>**  
Schachris 9:30 a.m.

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 24<sup>th</sup>**  
Schachris 8:00 a.m.

### 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*

*I am available 24/6.  
Shabbat, emergencies only*

**Rabbi Maimon Pinto**

*To contact Hazan Daniel Benlolo:  
cantorbenlolo@thespanish.org  
(514) 892-2859*



### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

*If you realize that you aren't as wise today as you thought you were yesterday, you're wiser today.*

| Aish HaTorah

### OPINION

## Chevra Shaas

**Words From**

**Rabbi Menahem White**  
**VAYEIRA 5782**

--Do you really believe that fire and salt suddenly came down from the heavens and destroyed a city and the surrounding beautiful agricultural area?

-- Well, yes, and let me explain. An exploding meteor, when reaching the thick part of the atmosphere, will create a powerful explosion known as an airburst. Back in 1908, in a very sparsely inhabited area of eastern Siberia known as Tunguska, there was such an explosion: 80 million trees, in an area more than 2000 sq kilometres, were destroyed.

For many years, archaeologists have been studying an area near the Dead Sea. In an article published this past September in the prestigious scholarly journal, Nature, many scholars collaborated in their conclusion that the site known as Tall Hammam, near the Dead Sea, was destroyed by such an airburst. They claim that the details in Genesis of the destruction of Sodom and environs reasonably match the known details of a cosmic impact event. The scholars have dated this destruction to have occurred around 3600: which happens to be around the time of Sodom's destruction.

Usually, when archaeologists come upon destroyed objects, they attribute the destruction to warfare. Yet in this case, the scholars felt that the destruction had been caused by exceptionally

unbearable temperatures.

Although the archeologists are not ready to identify this site as ancient Sodom, it does seem to make considerable sense.

So, now we can understand why Lot's daughters thought they were the only ones left in the world. There was such a terrible destruction around them, they could not imagine how anyone else could be alive.

And what was the greatness of Abraham, as opposed to the inhabitants of Sodom?

The Torah tells us that Abraham would transmit to his children the values of righteousness and honesty: *tsedaqa u-mishpat*.

Shabbat shalom





**Our Shabbat Kiddush is Sponsored By:**  
Our members, **Chantal Brahmi & Thomas Cadieux**, and **Debra & Charles Brahmi**, in memory of **Anna Elofer z'l**.  
**Sandra & Albert Mashaal & Families**, in memory of **Elliahou Kazam z'l**.  
**Our Seudah Shlishit is Sponsored By:**  
Our members, **Marc Hadid & Elie Hadid**, in memory of their mother, **Victoria Bat Farida z'l**.

Mazal Tov To



Our members, grand-mother, **Angelle Shahra-bani** and **Rosalin Shahra-bani** and **Jonathan Khayat**, on the Bat Mitzvah of **Juliana Khayat**.

**Shloshim Service**  
for **Renée Mann z'l** will take place Monday, October 25 after Minha services at 5:30 p.m.

Congregation Maghen Abraham

Thoughts: Mayer Sasson  
Parasha VAYERA

“And he planted a tree אשל in Be’er Sheva...” (21,33)

Hospitality

A villager once came to the Magid Rabbi Yisrael of Kozhnitz and told him of his troubles.

“Holy Rabbi” –he cried with teary eyes – “I tried to fulfill the mitzvah of hospitality properly and every guest who happened to

come to my home always found a table full of food and drinks. And now a great tragedy has befallen me: A fire broke out in my home and destroyed all my money and property that I accumulated with my family over years.”

The Magid looked at the villager for a while and after he finished speaking he told him: The Early Rabbis learn from the verse on Avraham Avinu - “And he plant-

ed a tree אשל in Be’er Sheva” from the initials of the word אשל that it stands for לינה, שתייה, אכילה – food, drink and sleeping accommodations, or אכילה, שתייה, לוויה – food drink and escort. Avraham Avinu supplied not only food and drink to his guests but also proper sleeping accommodations and he equipped them with all the best when they left his home. You, on the other hand, only fulfilled the mitzvah of food and drinks with the guests who came to your home and did not ascertain that they have proper sleeping accommodations or escort upon going on their way. Therefore

the letter ל' was missing from the word “אשל” and there remained the two letters of “אש” – fire.

SHABBAT SHALOM!!



COMMUNITY

Jewish Wisdom

Le bon équilibre  
Rabbi Maimon Pinto

La méchanceté de Sodome et de ses voisins était une réaction excessive et malavisée au déluge de Noé. La génération du Déluge avait été anéantie principalement parce qu'ils pratiquaient et toléraient le vol - la prise par la force et injuste des biens d'une personne par une autre. Les habitants de Sodome, conscients de cela, ont déclaré les droits de propriété privée absolus, interdisant la charité et l'hospitalité en tant qu'utilisations injustes des biens d'une autre personne.

Dans leur zèle, les habitants de Sodome ne se rendaient pas compte que cet extrême opposé était tout aussi destructeur que de tolérer le vol. Ainsi, puisque le monde ne peut pas remplir son objectif d'être la véritable demeure de D.ieu si nous, les êtres humains, ne pouvons nous entendre les uns avec les autres, Sodome et ses voisins ont dû être éliminés, tout comme la génération du Déluge. Néanmoins, étant donné que leurs intentions, si déformées soient-elles, découlaient d'un désir de faire ce qui était juste, on nous dit que ces villes seront restaurées à l'ère messianique.

Nous pouvons apprendre de cela que notre défi est de trouver le bon équilibre plutôt que de vivre une vie d'extrêmes

Got A Question for Reverend/Hazan Daniel Benlolo?

**Dear Danny,** I have heard that there is some halachic restriction which states that persons who are mentally disabled do not count towards the mandatory minimum of ten for a *minyan*. Is this true? If so, at what point is someone's disability considered to be too significant for them to be counted in a *minyan*?

**Dear reader,** I thank you for bringing such a question to light. As you may know, this is a topic that is very close to my heart as I am heavily involved in reinforcing the importance of a mainstream experience and the inclusion of those with developmental disabilities into everyday community life. I feel strongly about the stigma against mental and/or physical disability, and I have committed part of my life to trying my hardest to encourage acceptance and equality, so that individuals with disabilities will be able to contribute to the community in which they live, and feel relevant in the eyes of others.

(cont'd from last week)

The other school of thought on the subject is a general acceptance of all – this encompasses anyone who feels that they should be weighed equally in the grand scheme within the faith. Under this interpretation, anyone may be considered to be a part of the minyan, regardless of designation, race, gender, or mental/physical disability. Dear reader, it is of course your choice alone which interpretation suits you – should you feel that the obligation of the minyan is fit to fall upon all members of a community, or that it should be delegated to particular individuals who are “best suited” to do such a job.

For what it is worth, taking into consideration my work with the Tamir Foundation, I do believe that people with developmental disabilities should be afforded the opportunity to decide for themselves whether or not they would like to be counted within a minyan. For others to decide on their behalf that this is a decision they cannot make on their own is offensive, in my mind, as it infantilizes people with developmental disabilities. Individuals who are mentally and/or physically disabled are not second-class citizens, and should certainly not be treated as such. The key to helping people with developmental disabilities is to provide the means by which to allow for acceptance in society, and to treat those who are disabled the same way one would treat any other person, able-bodied or not. Dear reader, I implore you – however side you may fall on this particular debate, please do not forget: people with developmental disabilities are just that; they are people. Treating anyone in any way less than how you would like to be treated by others is not becoming of someone within the Jewish faith. You must always do your best to help those in need.

Until next time, Cantor Danny

PARNASS HAYOM BEIT HAMIDRASH HELWANI

**Shabbat 17 Heshvan - October 23 octobre**  
Hadid Family, in memory of Victoria Balaciano Hadid ז"ל.

**Sunday 18 Heshvan - October 24 octobre**  
Victoria Moghrabi & Famille, à la mémoire de Moïse Elias ben Rahel ז"ל.

Albert & Jimmy Levy, à la mémoire de leur père, Mardoche Levy ז"ל.

Myriam Reuben, in memory of her mother, Evelyn Dahan ז"ל.

**Monday/Lundi 19 Heshvan - October 25**  
Beverley & Joseph Sasson, in honour of the Sasson Family.

**Tuesday/Mardi 20 Heshvan - October 26**  
Leila Khamara & Family, in honour of the wedding of David to Lindsey.

**Wednesday/Mercredi 21 Heshvan - Oct. 27**  
Leila Khamara Family, in honour of Adel & Laurie and Miriam, Lilian & Gabriel.

**Thursday/Jeudi 22 Heshvan - Oct. 28**  
Denise & Manny Touaty, in recognition of their support & generosity to BH & S&P.

**Friday/Vendredi 23 Heshvan - Oct. 29 Oct.**  
David & Dody Hasson, à la mémoire de Lucie Halabi bat Sara ז"ל

Famille Srour, à la mémoire de leur père, Nisso Srour ben Esther ז"ל

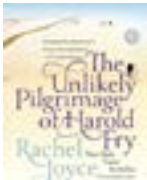


Upcoming Events



**Monday, October 25 | 8:00 - 9:00 pm**  
Ten Paths to God - Concluding The Program with André Rotchel

Zoom ID 846 5677 7165 - Password: 058194



**Tuesday, October 26 | 12:00 - 1:00 pm**  
Sisterhood Book Review: The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry - By Rachel Joyce Reviewed by: TBA

Zoom ID 895 2182 1866 - Password: SISBOOK



**Wednesday, October 27 | 10:00 am**  
WLG - The Wondering Jew: Israel and the Search for Jewish Identity - A review of Micah Goodman's book by Rabbi Schachar Orenstein

Zoom ID 898 8229 8754 - Passcode: WLG2021



**Wednesday, November 3 | 10:00 - 11:00 am**  
WLG La Danse Juive à travers le temps, autour du monde et jusqu'aujourd'hui - avec Maurice Peretz

Zoom ID 898 8229 8754 - Passcode: WLG2021



**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 a.m**  
Stay “Tuned” Physically and Spiritually with Reverend Daniel Benlolo

Zoom ID 898 8229 8754 - Passcode: WLG2021



**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