



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

# SHABBAT BULLETIN

May 20, 2023 | 29 Iyar, 5783



## Dvar Torah Bamidbar 5783

By: *Rabbi Yehoshua Ellis*

This week we start the fourth book of the Torah, Bamidbar. Bamidbar means in the wilderness, it describes both the geographical and psychological state of the newly formed Nation of Israel. Bamidbar is the most difficult book of the Torah to read because we are in the same place at the close of the book as we were at the beginning, in the wilderness. Bamidbar is first and foremost about the risk inherent in freedom. The wilderness is the ultimate starting point, the place of complete freedom. All options are open, every direction is accessible. For the first time we face the freedom trap; though we can go anywhere we want, as soon as we move we collapse all other options, thereby losing our absolute freedom. As Janis Joplin said, "freedom's just another name for nothing left to lose."

The first lesson we need to learn is that freedom is not a noun, it is a verb. Freedom is a tool for achieving a holy life, it is a state to be worked towards because it allows us to act in a moral way. We all too often become enamored with our tools and turn them into our goals. Freedom that is not used to pursue the right and good ends up being a mockery of itself and in the end enslaves us. The pursuit of freedom at all costs makes us slaves to freedom.

So where do we lose it, what happens here in the wilderness that makes us slaves of freedom, what lesson are we supposed to learn to avoid being in the same place forty years from now? The answer is alluded to in the first line of our Parsha, where it says that G'd commanded Moshe to take a census of the Children of Israel on the first day of the second month of Israel's second year in the desert. Eighteen verses later we are informed that it was accomplished in one day! Ten chapters later, on the twentieth day of the second month of our second year in the desert, Israel finally strikes

camp, doing their best to actualize the potential that they have been building up for nearly a year in the desert, but it's too late.

The first lesson of Pessah is that lethargy is the enemy of freedom, Matza turns into Chametz by waiting just one second too long. At the beginning of our Parsha we see how quickly Israel can act, performing a national census of over six hundred thousand men in one day. Yet it then takes them another twenty days to finally start their journey as a nation. This week's Parsha clearly demonstrates our ability to organize and execute complex tasks on a national level with great speed and accuracy, but we are only able to do it when the motivation is external. In order to move forward in life, we need to cultivate the ability to motivate ourselves. As long as we leave our motivation to G'd's word we will never be able to realize the freedom he offers us.

Shabbat Shalom! and  
Hag Shavuot Sameah

### SHABBAT SHALOM Shabbat Mevarhim

Start/Debut      End/Fin  
**8:04 p.m.**      **9:18 p.m.**

PARASHAT BAMIDBAR  
HERTZ PAGE 568  
HAFTARAH JEREMIAH  
HERTZ PAGE 582

SHABBAT SERVICES  
SHAHRIT: 8:30A      MINHA: 7:45P

**ROSH HODESH SIVAN**  
SUNDAY/DIMANCHE  
MAY 21 MAI 2023

#### WEEKLY SERVICES SCHEDULE

**Sunday**  
Shahrit: 8:30A      Minha: 6:00P  
**MONDAY (LEGAL HOLIDAY)**  
Shahrit: 8:00A      Minha: 6:00P  
**TUESDAY - WEDNESDAY**  
Shahrit: 7:00A      Minha: 6:00P  
**THURSDAY (EREV SHAVUOT)**  
Shahrit: 7:00A      Minha: 7:00P  
**FRIDAY (SHAVUOT I)**  
Shahrit: 8:30A      Minha: 7:00P

#### CHEVRA SHAAS Service Schedule

**SHABBOS, May 20<sup>TH</sup>**  
Schachris 9:30 a.m.  
**SUNDAY, May 21<sup>ST</sup>**  
Schachris 8:00 a.m.

**TORAH CLASS**  
Join **ANDRE ROTCHEL** every  
Shabbat after services  
Beit Hamidrash  
Refreshments

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

**Synagogue Office**  
will be closed on  
Monday, May 22

#### OPINION

## Annual Giving Campaign

By: *Julia Peress*

We are coming off an incredibly successful year, and we are immensely grateful to our members and friends for their continued support. Our events were very well attended, and our synagogue has become known for its exceptional holiday parties. Our Shabbat Kids program is flourishing, and our Junior Hebrew school is experiencing significant growth. We have become a sought-after destination for young families, and in recent months, we have witnessed the return of our young adults. The Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue is alive and thriving, and we are only just getting started!

Looking ahead, we have ambitious plans for the next 12 months. In July, **Rabbi Yehoshua Ellis** will be joining us, bringing with him a wealth of fresh ideas. He has already begun planning programs for the upcoming High Holidays, showcasing his innovative and creative thinking. His aim is to offer something for everyone, with the ultimate goal of

deepening our connection to our Jewish roots, our synagogue, and each other. Together with **Reverend Hazan Daniel Benlolo** and our leadership, the shared objective is

to support our community through every stage of life. We want to provide engaging programming for our youth, captivate our teenagers, attract our young adults, and support our parents and grandparents. We envision the synagogue as a place where people eagerly want to go—a place they can always count on.

To achieve these goals and fulfill our vision, we need your support. Our programs and events currently run at a deficit, and without our donors, we would be unable to continue offering these vital services to our members and the wider community. It is with this in mind that I am pleased to announce our **3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Giving Campaign**, taking place this June 18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup>. We hope we can count on your support. Additionally, we are seeking volunteers to assist the office and fundraising committee.

We are honoured to announce that this year's campaign will be inaugurated by a special

guest, the **Right Honourable Stephen Harper**, who will address our community in our very own Mashaal sanctuary. We are humbled to have someone of his stature share his thoughts and answer our questions. Many of you have already purchased tickets, but if you have not, we strongly encourage you to do so. This is a remarkable opportunity to hear one of our great leaders speak and a chance to showcase the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue to the Montreal community. Following the address, all guests are welcome to join us for an elegant dessert reception.

We are making a significant effort to broaden our programming and to create events that we feel will add value to our membership. We cannot think of a better way to start this endeavor than by bringing in an esteemed former prime minister to speak to us. We really hope this will be the first in a series of similar events at our synagogue. Please help us by buying tickets, inviting your friends and family, and sharing our posts on social media. This is a huge step for our synagogue and a step we cannot take alone. The success of this significant event lies in your hands.

Shabbat Shalom.

THE SPANISH & PORTUGUESE SYNAGOGUE  
IN OUR 255<sup>TH</sup> YEAR  
INVITES YOU TO OUR 3<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL

*Giving Campaign* LAUNCH

**JUNE 14<sup>TH</sup>, 2023 | 7:00 P.M.**

KEYNOTE SPEAKER  
The Right Honourable  
**STEPHEN J. HARPER**  
22<sup>nd</sup> Prime Minister of Canada

PREMIUM SEATING: \$72 | GENERAL SEATING: \$54  
ONLINE AT [THESPANISH.ORG/EVENT/AGC23.HTML](https://thespanish.org/event/agc23.html)

VALET PARKING  
DESSERT RECEPTION TO FOLLOW

[WWW.THESPANISH.ORG](https://www.thespanish.org) • 5455 LEMIEUX, MONTREAL QC H3W 2V2 • 514-737-3695



