



# Beth Shalom Weekly Update

Thursday, April 29, 2021 to Wednesday, May 5, 2021  
Hazzan Lance H. Tapper    Shabbat Parashat Emor

Shabbat Service—Friday, April 30, 7:30 p.m.

## SHABBAT SERVICES

Friday Evening 7:30 pm

## SYNAGOGUE OFFICE HOURS

While the Beth Shalom office will be closed during the Covid 19 Shut Down, our office phone and email will continue to be attended to during regular working hours:

9:00a-4:00p Tue-Fri.  
562.941.8744  
bswoffice@verizon.net

## Yahrzeit

Samuel Pearlman  
in memory of wife,  
Bernice Pearlman

Jeffrey Kolnick  
in memory of grandfather,  
William Cutler

Ellen Singer  
in memory of father,  
Stanley Feldman

Sherman Esterson  
in memory of father,  
Abe Esterson

If you know of someone who is ill, had surgery, or just needs a call now and then, please let us know so we can reach out. Thank you.

## Happy Birthday

Michelle Hess  
April 30

## Clergy Schedule

Virtual Services: [www.facebook.com/bethshalomofwhittier](http://www.facebook.com/bethshalomofwhittier)

**April 30--7:23 pm organ prelude; 7:30 pm service**

Hazzan Lance and Mark Peterson

**May 7--7:23 pm organ prelude; 7:30 pm service**

Hazzan Lance and Mark Peterson

**May 14--7:23 pm organ prelude; 7:30 pm service**

Hazzan Lance and Mark Peterson

**May 16--Erev Shavuot--7:23 pm--Lewandowski Shavuot Organ**

**Prelude; 7:30 pm Service--Hazzan Lance and Mark Peterson**

Yizkor Memorial prayers recited during this service

## Speak and Say

**Torah Reading: Leviticus 21:1 - 24:23**

**Haftarah Reading: Ezekiel 44:15 - 31**

**Shabbat Parashat Emor**

By: Rabbi Cheryl Peretz, posted on May 9, 2009/5769

This week's parashah, Emor, is known as Torat Cohanim, the teaching for/of the Cohanim. Whereas the previous sections of the Torah focused on the holiness code for all the people, this section reads as a manual for the priests, instructing them on attaining holiness through their own set of symbolic obligations, duties, and maintenance.

In the opening verses, the Torah records how Moses is to instruct the priests of their responsibilities in this regard: "*Vayomer Adonai el Moshe - And the Lord Spoke to Moses, Emor el hakohanim b'ney Aharon v'amarta aleihem - Speak to the priests the sons of Aaron, and say unto them, There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people.*" ([Lev. 21:1](#))

As you read the verse, it is important to note that there seems to be a whole lot of speaking going on - each with a different form of the Hebrew verb *amar* (*aleph-mem-resh*). God speaks to Moses (*Vayomer*), Moses speaks to the priests, the sons of Aaron (*emor*), and speaks in specific words (*v'amarta*). It makes sense to think that the verse might begin with God speaking to Moses - 65 other such Torah verses begin in this way. But, the repetition of the word in the second part represents an apparent redundancy, "**Speak to the priests, and say to them...**"

Over the centuries, many readers of biblical text have been puzzled about this verse and the meaning of the word *amar*. Why is it that the Torah tells us that Moses spoke to the people and then says and here is what he said' rather than simply moving into what he said to them?

One such *midrash* deals not with the doubling of the word *amar*, but with the use of the word *amar* itself. In honor of this weekend's celebration of Mother's Day and the uniquely special qualities of the special women who are our mothers, I share it with you as part of our discussion. There is a verse in the book of Exodus (shortly before the revelation atop Mount Sinai) which reads: "*Koh tomar le-vait Yaakov, ve-tagaydli-vene'i Yisrael*" - So shall you **say** to the House of Yaakov, and **tell** the Children of Israel." ([Shemot 19:3](#)).

## Save the Date

## Celebrating The Festival of Shavuot

Sunday, May 16  
7:30 p.m.

See attached Flyer.

**Beth Shalom Services:** Because of COVID-19, we continue to livestream our Shabbat and Festival services on our Facebook page, **Beth Shalom of Whittier**. When there is a livestream taking place, you can click on it and watch. We encourage everyone to continue to tune in each week and take part in our services virtually and leave messages of greeting to other who are watching. This is one way we can all stay in touch.

**Directions for viewing livestream services:** If you are a current Facebook subscriber, you need only to go to our Facebook page, **Beth Shalom of Whittier**, to view these announcements and videos. If you are not a current Facebook subscriber, you need to go to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and sign up with a username and password and then you can access our page at that point. Always log in 5 minutes ahead the video start time.

**ROSE HILLS CEMETERY PLOTS**  
If you want to do your family the mitzvah of pre-planning, please call the office. They can give you information as to what gravesites are available and what steps to take to secure your plot(s). Plots are \$3500 each.

**Book Club:** Our next meeting is Wednesday, May 12th at 12:30pm. We will be having a joint meeting with Millenium (Our other book group). We will be reading "Witness: Lessons from Elie Wiesel's Classroom" by Ariel Burger. A winner of the National Jewish Book Award.

**Tribute Cards:** To send a Tribute Card, please contact Michelle Hess with your request. Her e-mail is: [michelleh3532@gmail.com](mailto:michelleh3532@gmail.com)

**PayPal Donations:** Paypal donations welcome: [bswoffice@verizon.net](mailto:bswoffice@verizon.net)

The Midrash points out that this verse uses both the word *amar* and the verb *tagayd*, both of which mean, 'to tell'. There, the first part refers to the house of Jacob, meaning 'the women', and that the intention is to say the words to them in a soft voice, which is as they are. The second part of the verse, however, references the 'children of Israel', intending to explain that the punishments and stringencies are to be explained to the men. There are, it seems the *midrash* is saying, different ways of speaking, and *amar* represents the softer, more gentler, more motherly type of speaking.

Certainly there is a message in that; one that is not just about moms and the ways we envision them nurturing their children, but about the ways in which gentle speech helps create an environment of sanctity and meaning. Perhaps our verse is simply trying to say that Moses ought to speak to the priests with softness and gentleness in explaining their unique role in the community. And, just in case he might forget to do so, the Torah repeats the word.

Still, we are left with the question of why the word *amar* is repeated. Rashi, borrowing from a reference in the Talmudic tractate of Yevamot, attempts to answer this question. He says this doubling of the words, *emor v'amarta* is meant to warn the *gedolim*, the big priests, concerning the *k'tanim*, the small priests. The repetition of the words, Rashi explains, is to add a warning to the priests not to bring any 'impurity' upon children who will eventually be adult priests. These young priests are impressionable, and sometimes don't know what might invalidate them or others from participating in ritual purity. Therefore, the responsibility to do so is placed upon the shoulders of the adults of the priestly community.

For the ancient priests, the determination of ritual purity and impurity revolved around such issues as life and death, appropriate sexual relationships, and definitions of religious devotion. Though the specifics may sound different, the same issues - life and death, appropriate sexual relationships, and definitions of religious devotion - continue to occupy our modern sensibilities and path to holiness. The children of our generation are equally impressionable and need us to make sure that our impurities don't affect them, and that we instruct them in the ways of holiness and goodness. When it comes to our children, we are all big priests, for our children of birth, our children of family, our children of community, and our children of society. We have the power and the responsibility to show them what is *tamei* (impure) and what is *tahor* (pure), and to help prepare them to assume their roles as active, productive members of our community. And, in keeping with the midrashic explanation of the word *amar*, they need our nurturing and our soft spoken ability to speak to them and to teach them to bring holiness and meaning into the world. They watch us and they act as we do.

So, imagine for a moment a world in which before each act we too heard the loving voice of God **speaking** to us and that it **said** to us be careful - what will this do to the small ones?'

Shabbat Shalom.

PLEASE JOIN US  
**BETH SHALOM OF WHITTIER**

In Celebrating

*The Festival of SHAVUOT*



ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE: BETH SHALOM OF WHITTIER

**SUNDAY, MAY 16, 2021**

LEWANDOWSKI SHAVUOT ORGAN PRELUDE 7:23 PM

SERVICE INCLUDING YIZKOR 7:30 PM

HAZZAN LANCE H TAPPER, OFFICIATING  
MARK PETERSON, ORGANIST

THE SPECIAL SHAVUOT MAHZOR WILL BE UPLOADED  
TO OUR FACEBOOK PAGE AHEAD OF THE SERVICE