

Filadélfia, 21 de Dezembro de 1783. Carta de Gershom Mendes Seixas para Hayman Levy, parnas da congregação Shearith Israel.

(Cincinatti, Ohio, American Jewish Archives, X-104 – cópia dactilografada)

Dear and Worthy Sir:

The many manifestations of your friendship to me since I have been in the office of *hazan* (both here and in New York) leaves no room to doubt of the sincerity of your professions, but as the Kaal Sheerit Israel is now situated, must confess myself incapable to form a judgement whether or not it will be in my power to render that degree of general satisfaction, which is absolutely requisite for any person who serves in that vocation.

In the first place I am unacquainted with the Spanish and Portuguese languages, which have ever been used since the first establishment of the synagogue. Secondly, I am informed that many parties are formed (and forming) to create divisions among the reputable members of the congregation, by which means a general disunion seems to prevail instead of being united to serve the Deity, consonant to our holy law. And, thirdly, as I have now a family to provide for, I can not think of giving up this place till I meet with some encouragement from you that my salary will be made equivalent to what I receive here, for unless I can obtain a sufficiency to support my family in a decent manner by being *hazan*, I must inevitably give up the calling and endeavour, with the blessing of God, to procure it by industry and an application to business.

These, sir, are the reasons why I have not been so explicit in “declaring my intention of serving the K. K. Sheerit Israel any longer” as you intimated in your letter I ought to have been.

Now, these circumstances premised, if it will be agreeable to the Kaal to have the same mode of carrying on public worship, as *We* unanimously agreed to and established in this city, if some regular form of government be adopted so as to have a proper subordination in the society, and [if] the finance of the *tsedaka* can afford to allow me a comfortable maintenance, I am very willing to return to my native city in the spring, say by Ros Hodes Nisan, and accept of my former station. If not, I must content myself to remain here till something more advantageous may offer.

You will please to observe that I answer (and write to) you as can individual and one to whom I entrust the management of the matter, in full confidence of your integrity and disinterestedness.

Your haveing accepted of the presidency of the synagogue gives me real satisfaction as it coincides with my opinion of its being your due, and knowing you to be a person capable of commanding a proper respect to the office of *parnass*, and by your example inviting others to behave with decency and decorum in time of public service.

May you long enjoy the pleasing self-satisfaction resulting from a consciousness of haveing done your duty. I can not conclude better than by repeating what our divine master and legislator told his immediate successor, "Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid or dismayed". Do that what you know to be right, that the Lord may be with thee in all thy ways.

Please to present my salutations to every branch of your family, in which my wife unites, and believe me to be, dear and worthy sir,

Your affectte humble serv't

Gershom Seixas

Philadelphia, 21st December, 1783.