

1801, 22 Novembro, Nova Iorque. Petição de Gershom Mendes Seixas sobre os serviços prestados à congregação Shearith Israel.

(in *“Items Relating to Congregation Shearith Israel, New York”*, Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society, 27, 1920, pp. 134-137.)

To the Electors of the Congregation Shearith Israel in New York

Gentlemen

The Petition & Remonstrance of G. Seixas Hazan of the aforesaid Congregation
Humbly Sheweth

That it is now upwards of thirty years since he was called to the office of Hazan & excepting seven years that he was in exile – during the revolution (he flatters himself) he has always performed the duties pertaining to the office according to the trust reposed in him.

In the year 1784 I returned from Philadelphia where I had served near four years at the rate of £200 Pennsylvania currency per annum, fire wood, and the emoluments belonging to the office of Hazan, that I returned here in the month of January and contracted with the Parnass & Junta to serve this Congregation again at the rate of £200 currency per annum with six cords of hickory wood, matsoth and perquisites as usual.

When the Charter was obtained it was thought necessary that I should resign in order to be established consonant to the rules laid down by the act of the Legislature for incorporating Religious Societies. This I consented to & was reelected, and the salary fixed by the Electors – conformable to the previous agreement.

In the month of October 1785 I wrote a letter to the trustees of the Congregation & stipulated the conditions of serving the Congregation during good behaviour. Sometime after a meeting of the Electors was held and my letter was laid before them as appears by the Minutes of the Trustees Book.

In consequence of which a motion was made and carried in the affirmative that the Hazan be allowed the salary of £50 for every three lunar months (which was paid, with six cords hickory wood and perquisites as usual) of this I am informed by M^r Manuel Myers who was the President of the Board of Trustees, and Parnass at that time – this being the mode used previous to the Charter, no other was thought necessary, and the Book kept by the Parnass and handed to each succeeding Parnass, was deemed a sufficient contract between the parties. This passed on for some years, when I was informed that the funds of the Synagogue were insufficient to defray the expences and

desired to know if I expected to be paid for the additional month of Veadar (it being leap year) I answered them that I had a right to expect it according to our agreement of 1785 but considering the impoverished situation of our funds I would relinquish it, and was willing to engage with them at the rate of £200 per solar year, with perquisites as usual – this they readily agreed to and thought it would be the best mode.

Some time afterwards I was again requested to attend the Board of Trustees, to propose ways and means, whereby I might be paid (as there was a considerable sum of money due to me at that time) I answered that it was not for me to dictate, as I was not a Trustee, and it was entirely out of my province but would be glad to know what they meant to do, they replied they intended to curtail the salaries of the hirelings and proposed it to me to consider of it, I told them it was not in their power to annul any contract made with the Electors without the mutual consent of both parties, I argued of they meant to impeach me of Neglect of Duty, or that I had been guilty of Malpractices, it was necessary I should have a fair trial, and if convicted before the Congregation I should then naturally dismissed the office. They said it was not their design so to do, but pled the inability of the funds either to discharge the debt due to me, or to continue me in office at that rate – in short things went on in this manner for some considerable time, until I relinquished another considerable sum in order to accomodate, upon the assurance give me by the Board of Trustees that whenever the funds of the Synagogue were adequate they would be ready to fix my salary equal if not superior to what it had always been – depending in some measure on the[ir] integrity. I cheerfully submitted to the inconveniences which I have experienced during many years services.

I shall say nothing of the services I have rendered to the Society, abstracted from the duties of my office, but having spent the prime part of my days in the service of this Congregation and being now advanced in years, cannot so readily establish myself in any other line of life, that it may please you to take the premises into your serious consideration and that your conclusion may be favorable, and your petitioner as in duty bound shall ever pray &c.

Signed for G. Seixas Hazan

& acknowledged by G. Seixas Hazan

New York, 22^d Nov^r. 1801.