

Summer Learning with Rabbi Uhrbach

Thursdays at 6 pm (beginning tonight)

Join us for a close study and spirited discussion of the Book of *Genesis* (Bereshit)

100 Redwood Road, Sag Harbor

Open to everyone; come to any or all sessions.

JTS Chancellor Arnold Eisen at CSH

Shabbat July 10th and 11th

(Just a reminder)

July 31st / August 1st

We welcome Guest Speaker

Zvi Gitelman

Generously sponsored by Lenore Weitzman

Zvi Gitelman is Professor of Political Science, Preston Tisch Professor of Judaic Studies, and was Director of the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Gitelman is the author or editor of twelve books and 100 articles in scholarly journals. He has been a Fellow of the Institute for Advanced Studies of the Hebrew University; a Skirball Fellow of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, Oxford, England; a Fellow of the Rabin Center for Israel Studies and of the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, University of Pennsylvania. A second, revised and expanded edition of his acclaimed *A Century of Ambivalence: The Jews of Russia and the Soviet Union since 1881* was published in March 2001 by Indiana University Press. *Bitter Legacy: Confronting the Holocaust in the Soviet Union* was published by that press in 1997. His most recent edited books are *The Emergence of Modern Jewish Politics: Bundism and Zionism in Eastern Europe* (University of Pittsburgh Press); *Jewish Life After the USSR* (Indiana University Press) and *New Jewish Identities in Contemporary Europe* (Central European University Press), all published in 2003.

Gitelman has been a visiting professor at Tel Aviv University several times, and taught at the Hebrew University as the recipient of a Fulbright award. He has served on the Board of Directors of the Association for Jewish Studies and is a Fellow of the American Academy for Jewish Research. His current research is on Jewish identities in post-Soviet Russia and Ukraine and on Jews in the Soviet armed forces during World War II.

NOT TO BE MISSED

**The Southampton Rose Society Garden
at the Rogers Memorial Library
Coopers Farm Rd, Southampton**

Of Interest

**The Perlman Music Program
Annual Children's Concert**

Sunday, July 5th at 11:30 am
www.perlmanmusicprogram.org

There are still opportunities to sponsor Kiddush this summer.

August 1 -- August 29 --September 5

Candle Lighting Friday, June 26 8:07 pm
Kabbalat Shabbat Services 6:30 pm
100 Redwood Road, Sag Harbor
Dinner sponsored by Frances and Ed Gotbetter

For directions to Rabbi's home go to:

<http://www.synagoguehamptons.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/04/directions-to-100-redwood-road.pdf>

Shabbat Morning, Services 9:30am
Old Whaler's Church

Parashat Korach

Annual: Numbers 16:1 - 18:32 (Etz Hayim, p. 860)
Triennial: Numbers 16:20 - 17:24 (Etz Hayim, p. 863)
Haftarah: I Samuel 11:14 - 12:22 (Etz Hayim, p. 877)

Thoughts on Korach

The portion describes a rebellion against Moses and Aaron's leadership led by Korach, a Levite, along with Dathan, Abiram and On, of the tribe of Reuben. They are joined by 250 respected community leaders. These men accuse Moses and Aaron of elevating themselves as a religious elite--acting as though they were above the rest of the community in holiness when, in fact, the whole community is holy.

In his commentary, Rabbi Harvey Fields quotes Martin Buber who suggested that "both Moses and Korah desired the people to be...the holy people. But for Moses this was the goal. In order to reach it, generation after generation had to choose again and again...between the way of God and the wrong paths of their own hearts; between life and death. ... For Korach, the people ... were already holy so why should there be further need for choice? Their dispute was between two approaches to faith and life."

Buber's comment raises two, intersecting questions: How do we understand the process of being a holy community? And what is the appropriate role of religious leadership in furthering that process? Neither question lends itself to a very brief answer. But let me suggest the following directions for further thought and discussion...

First, using Buber's distinction, I clearly side with Moses on this one (big surprise!). It seems to me that the pursuit of eternal values (e.g., justice, compassion, holiness) is not a finite task. We are never "finished" creating a just society or becoming a holy community.

We are never "done" becoming good (at least, not until the messianic age). The process of realizing eternal values is as ongoing, fluid, vibrant and tenuous as life itself.

Given that inevitability, the role of religion and religious leadership [by which I mean both lay leaders and "clergy"] is paramount (another big surprise!). We need societal structures and individuals that help us to remain focused on these values and goals as we make choices. We need individuals, communities and systems for living that help us to celebrate every step closer to God and that also nurture our will to continue making the effort. And yes, we also need those people and systems to help us get back on track when we regress or go astray.

But there are potential seductions here, as well. Leaders need to struggle lest they confuse their own needs and agendas with their responsibility to serve and remind the community of who it is called to become. And communities need to struggle lest they abdicate all responsibility and blame (or credit) the leader accordingly. In other words, as Buber himself would probably emphasize, the ongoing process of becoming a holy community depends on nurturing a mutually responsible, empathetic and generous relationship between religious leaders and the members of the religious community. By Rabbi Jonathan Kraus

<http://ma002.urj.net/dtkorach96.html>

Wife of On Ben Pelet: Midrash and Aggadah by Tamar Kadari

The Torah makes no mention of the wife of On Son of Peleth, but the midrash speaks highly of her, as having saved her husband from death. Num. 16:1 states that On son of Peleth, one of the rebels of the company of Korah, was a Reubenite. He joined Korah, Dathan and Abiram and the two hundred and fifty men of repute who rose up against Moses and Aaron with the complaint (Num. 16:3): "You have gone too far! For all the community are holy, all of them, and the Lord is in their midst. Why then do you raise yourselves above the Lord's congregation?" On Son of Peleth completely disappears from the continuation of the Korah narrative, and when the Torah portrays the fate of the rebels in detail, he is not mentioned among those who received their punishment.

The midrash suggests that On's wise wife saved her husband by extricating him from the band of malcontents. After she saw that he had joined Korah and his company, she told him: "What will you gain from this quarrel? Now Moses is the teacher, and you are the pupil. And if your rebellion succeeds and Korah replaces Moses, once again, he will be the teacher and you will be the pupil! What will you gain from this revolt?" On told his wife: "What can I do? I took counsel with them, and I swore to them that I would be with them in all!" His wife told him: "'For all the community are holy'; I know that all the community are holy, and that they are scrupulous in matters of modesty. Sit, and I will save you." What did she do? She gave him wine to drink, intoxicated him, and laid him down inside the tent. The woman sat at the entrance to the tent and loosened her hair, as if she were bathing. Whoever came to call On saw her and went back. When On awakened, Korah and his company had already been swallowed in the bowels of the earth, the two hundred and fifty notables had been burnt, and On son of Peleth was saved from being swallowed up alive and from being burnt to death. <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/wife-of-on-ben-pelet-midrash-and-aggadah>

IT'S EASY TO WIN A WAR, HARD TO WIN A PEACE --BBC Radio4 - Thought For The Day 5th June 2009

Yesterday we had the European elections and Barack Obama's speech in Cairo, charting a new way forward in the relations between the United States and the Islamic world. Tomorrow we'll

have the 65th anniversary of D Day and the Normandy landings that marked a turning point in the 2nd World War. And today is the anniversary of the start of the 6 Day War between Israel and her neighbours in 1967.

And if there's one theme that links them all, it's the difference between winning a war and winning a peace.

The European Union was created so to interlink the destinies of the nation states of Europe that they could no longer engage in the kind of conflict that led, in less than thirty years, to two world wars. Israel won a surprise victory in one of the shortest wars in history, yet still 42 years later has not found peace. And Barack Obama's speech was America's way of saying that wars like those in Iraq and Afghanistan cannot in themselves bring peace to a troubled region. They used to say about one of my predecessors that he never despaired of a peaceful solution to a conflict once every other alternative had been exhausted. And that is where we are in the world today.

Why is it that war, so costly in human lives, has been our preferred method of conflict resolution since humanity first set foot on earth? Why is it that peace, from which both sides gain, has proved so elusive? The answer, neuro-scientists tell us, is that the rational brain is easily overridden by our more primitive reactions of fight or flight in the face of fear. That's what leads time and again to destructive action when people on both sides of a conflict feel themselves under threat. It's hard to defeat fear in the name of hope; it needs enormous courage to move from a mindset of us-against-them to one of all-of-us-together. Yet as our powers of destruction grow ever greater, we need that courage ever more.

The two signals of hope in my lifetime have been the creation of a Europe of peace and the mending of relations between Christians and Jews. Those are what we need to build on if we're to make peace in the Middle East and mend relations between Islam and the West. It's easy to win a war, hard to win a peace, but there is no alternative, for the sake of the future of the world we share. covenant.conversation@chiefrabbi.org

Quote of the Week from [You Can't Always Get What You Want](#) by Elyse Frishman

The challenge not to confuse privilege with ownership is timeless: to be stewards of the earth and not reckless lords; to manage employees, partners, and children with appreciation; to learn and then fulfill the role that each of us plays in the work of the world, without greed or envy. <http://urj.org/torah/>

Shabbat Shalom

Stacy

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