

The Rabbi's Back
(need I say anything more!)

CSH Community Shabbat Services
at the home of Rabbi Jan Uhrbach
258 Redwood Road (directions below)
Friday, May 28th at 6:30 pm

Friday May 28, 2010 **Candle Lighting 7:54 pm**

This week's Torah reading: Beha'lotekha

Annual (Num. 8:1-12:16): Etz Hayim p. 816

Triennial (Num. 10:35-12:16): Etz Hayim p. 826

Haftarah (Zechariah 2:14-4:7): Etz Hayim p. 837

Musings on Beha'lotekha ... "El na r'fa na lah" (O God, pray heal her!)

Five words—eleven Hebrew letters—are all that Moses speaks (12:13). Except for God's name, each word ends in a vowel, as if each word were an unending cry. It is as if each word is punctuated with an exclamation point, the brevity of the syllables giving voice to the tortured helplessness of the supplicant: *"God! Please! Heal! Please! Her!"* In the midst of catastrophe, the verb of consequence--the bull's-eye of the prayer--is the central plea: **heal!** Indeed, the prayer is nearly a palindrome--reading the same forwards as it does backwards--homing in with laser precision on that most urgent desire: heal!

This prayer has few words but much resonance. It is a primal cry, capturing fear, powerlessness, and incomprehensibility in the face of sudden illness, accident, or injury. It is not the entreaty of the one beset by the catastrophe, but rather that of the witness, the powerless onlooker, the potential caregiver absorbing the shock, the one who is overwhelmed and stymied about how to help.

To read this d'var in it's entirety: http://www.myjewishlearning.com/texts/Bible/Weekly_Torah_Portion/urj-bhaalotcha.shtml

Miriam the Prophet teaches: Even though the Torah states that both Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses (Numbers 12:1), only I am singled out by the narrator and by God for punishment.

Leah the Namer points out: Note that the verb *va-tedaber* - "spoke against" is in the feminine singular, although both Aaron and Miriam are its subjects.

The Rabbis add: And note also that Miriam's name is listed first, reversing the usual order in the Torah, and that only Miriam is stricken with leprosy, while Aaron remains untouched, proving that she is the instigator of this challenge to Moses.

Lilith the Rebel protests: No, it only proves that she's taken the rap.

Our Daughters ask: But what motivates Miriam to speak up against her younger brother Moses? Is it really because of the Cushite woman he had married (Numbers 12:1)? Who is she? And what has she done wrong?

The Rabbis Answer: She is an Ethiopian queen - "Cush" being the biblical name for Ethiopia - whom Moses marries after fleeing Egypt but before reaching Midian. Others teach that she is Moses' Midianite wife, Zipporah. In this second interpretation, "Cush" refers to either her native country or her beauty.

Our Daughters ask: Why does Miriam speak against her to Moses?

The Rabbis answer: Some say that Miriam's complaint is racially motivated: she objects to her brother's marriage to a black woman.

Hagar the Stranger objects: I doubt that! We know that the ancient Near East, especially the North African region of the Nile Delta, was a melting pot of ethnic groups, so this kind of racial bias seems unlikely.

The Rabbis suggest: Another view is that Miriam is rebuking her brother for refusing to sleep with his wife once he has returned from Mount Sinai, newly "dedicated" to God. So Miriam is speaking not against the Cushite woman but on her behalf.

Beruriah Comments: How often is the wife of a great leader widowed because of his career demands! Therefore to all of Miriam's other merits we should add: defender and guardian of women's sexual rights.

From Frankel, Ellen. *The Five Books of Miriam - A Woman's Commentary on the Torah* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1996), p. 209.

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**Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 115b**

Our masters taught: "And it came to pass when the Ark set forward that Moses said," etc. (Num. 10:35). For this section the Holy One provided signs (the inverted letter nun) to precede it and signs to follow it, in order to indicate that the section is not in its proper place.

But Rabbi [Judah I, the Patriarch] said: This is not the real reason. The signs indicate that the section is to be regarded as a separate book in itself.

Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel said: The section is destined to be moved from its present place and put where it belongs. Why then was it put here to begin with? In order to provide a break between the account of one calamity (note: the account of Israel's three day departure from God in the previous passage which is taken as figurative - Israel departed from God) and the account of another calamity (the account of the murmurers in the wilderness) that immediately followed

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"Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman he had married."
(Numbers 12:1)

We are all inclined to make assumption, and cling to them, because it is more comfortable to go on believing what we are accustomed to believe than to think afresh; and when we come up against contrary evidence, we tend to dismiss it, and say: 'I have made up my mind, don't confuse me with facts.'

Most dangerous are the assumptions we make about people, especially those who differ from us in the way they look or speak or dress or behave, or in the religious or political views they hold. It is so easy to make, and easier to assent to, unfavourable generalisations about them. We Jews have often been victims of such stereotyping; how careful we should therefore be not to commit the same sin against others. (Rabbi John Rayner, in our Siddur Lev Chadash, 296).

<http://www.eljc.org/parashot/behaalotecha5765.html>

Memorial Day – A Day of Remembrance

Although summer doesn't officially begin until the summer solstice in June—we all know that this weekend marks the start of the summer season—Memorial Day weekend. Break out the white shoes, the BBQ grill and see if you have enough sun tan lotion left over from last summer! Shop the weekend Memorial Day sales! But it is a sad irony that this weekend is so filled with outdoor entertaining, sports events and picnics and relaxing. We have forgotten as a country that Memorial Day was a time in our country to remember those who gave their lives while serving in our Armed Forces.

Memorial Day was originally called Decoration Day. It was proclaimed by Gen John Logan in 1868 as a way to honor the memory of the soldiers of the Civil War. The first Memorial Day in 1868 had flowers placed on all the graves of the soldiers both of the North and South that were interred in Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia. While Memorial Day became widely observed by the Northern States (the remnants of the Confederacy observing a different day), after World War I it became a day to honor the memory of all the war dead regardless of the conflict in which they served.

This year as the number of our war dead grows—our Memorial Day observances ought to take some time to recall the sacrifices that have been made not only in years past but in these last five years of the war in Afghanistan and Iraq. It should not matter your political leanings or your feelings about the war, whether we should stay or go. This Memorial Day—Monday we need to take some time to pause and reflect about the more than 3000 American who have given their lives in service to our country.

In Israel, Yom Hazikron is Israel's Memorial Day. It is the day before Israel's Independence Day—Yom Ha-atzmaut. It is marked throughout the country with solemn commemorations. I have been present as a guest of the government at the moving and solemn memorial service at the Western Wall Plaza. Young people in uniforms from the various branches of the Israel Defense Forces line the plaza—a memorial flame is lit and songs and prayers amid speeches of memory with the Western Wall and Temple Mount as a backdrop. Each year parents and family of fallen soldiers are invited to attend and represent the many families of who have lost a son, daughter, spouse, husband or wife.

Because most everyone must serve in the Israel Defense Forces for a period of time and because every family has been touched by the death of a soldier that they knew—a relative, a neighbor, a teacher, a co-workers child—Memorial Day in Israel truly honors and blesses the memory of those who died while serving their country.

Perhaps too because there is a direct link to the nation's independence day—that the entire country sees the link between the patriotism of serving and dying for one's country is linked to the freedom and independence of the nation. Unfortunately I believe that aspect is often lost here in our America.

In Israel on Yom HaZikaron—a siren of memory wails and the nation pauses. People get out of their cars on the freeway, buses empty, pedestrians pause. For two minutes the nation comes to a stand still to remember their war dead and the incredible cost of those lives to their family and to the nation of Israel. The silence descends upon the streets of Haifa and Tiberias, the hills of Jerusalem and the beaches of Tel Aviv. And in the silence there are tears, honor and even

blessing. In the silence they give thanks for the sacrifice, the struggle and in the silence there are prayers for comfort and redemption.

There is a movement here in the United States to pause as well on Memorial Day to remember those soldiers who have died in service of their nation. In December of 2000, Congress established a National Moment of Remembrance and designated 3:00 p.m. on Memorial Day local time as a moment to pay tribute to individuals who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our country. But you and I know –it is hard to stop and pause for a memorial in the middle of pouring a Margarita—or a tennis match. The entire Memorial Day weekend certainly doesn't encompass the solemnity of the message behind the remembrance. But this Monday I want to urge you to take a moment and think about the great freedoms you enjoy because some were willing to step forward in service to their nation. Take a moment with those that you are with at 3 pm this Monday to pay tribute and bless the memory of those soldiers who died in recent months and years and decades past.

<http://www.kol-ami.org/sermons/archive/2007/05/index.html>

On the Calendar -- June 19th

We are invited to Temple Adas Israel for Mincha and Seudah Shlishit on Saturday, June 19 at 5:00 PM, to honor Rabbi Minna Bromberg on the occasion of her ordination.

August 13th -14th

Zvi Gitelman returns to CSH. Maybe he'll talk about the "Litvak-Galitsianer Wars" and/ or "the history of the Jews in Russia."

End Quote

"The Chinese word for crisis consists of two characters: danger and opportunity." "There is always danger in crisis. However, great blessings lie ahead for the one who can see the opportunity that exists within each crisis." *Gail P. Hunt*

Shabbat shalom.

Stacy

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Directions to
Home of Rabbi Jan Uhrbach
258 Redwood Road

From East Hampton and points east (via Route 114)

Take Route 114 north to Sag Harbor. Turn left on Union Street (there is a deli on the near left corner called Madison Market). Turn left onto Main Street. Turn right onto Glover Street (directly across the street from the Cove Delicatessen). Pass Long Island Avenue on your right, and turn left at the next stop sign onto Redwood Road. Pass the marina on your right, and take the first left onto Cove Road. As the road swings to the right, number 258 will be the second house on the left, the tan house with the red door.

From Sagaponack or Wainscott (via Sagg-Main)

Take either Sag Harbor Tpke or Sagg-Main Street into Sag Harbor. Turn left on Union Street. Take the first left onto Main Street. Turn right onto Glover Street (directly across the street from the Cove Delicatessen). Pass Long Island Avenue on your right, and turn left at the next stop sign onto Redwood Road. Pass the marina on your right, and take the first left onto Cove Road. As the road swings to the right, number 258 will be the second house on the left, the tan house with the red door.

From Bridghampton (via Bridge-Sagg Pike)

Take the Sag Harbor Tpke into Sag Harbor. Turn left onto Glover Street (just past Canio's Bookstore and directly across the street from the Cove Delicatessen). Pass Long Island Avenue on your right, and turn left at the next stop sign onto Redwood Road. Pass the marina on your right, and take the first left onto Cove Road. As the road swings to the right, number 258 will be the second house on the left, the tan house with the red door.

From Watermill (via Scuttle Hole Road)

From 27, turn left onto Scuttle Hole Road. Stay on Scuttle Hole Road until the end, then turn left onto the Sag Harbor Turnpike. Take the Sag Harbor Turnpike all the way into Sag Harbor, and turn left onto Glover Street (just past Canio's Bookstore and directly across the street from the Cove Delicatessen). Pass Long Island Avenue on your right, and turn left at the next stop sign onto Redwood Road. Pass the marina on your right, and take the first left onto Cove Road. As the road swings to the right, number 258 will be the second house on the left, the tan house with the red door.

From Southampton, West Hampton, and points west

Take 27 (Montauk Hwy) east. Turn left at the large green sign pointing toward Sag Harbor (just past East End Clambakes). This will be Sandy Hollow Road. Turn left at the first light onto North Sea Road. Take North Sea Road to Noyack Road – turn right onto Noyack Road, following the signs to Sag Harbor. Turn left onto Long Beach Hwy. Turn right onto South Ferry Road at the traffic circle (sign will say Route 114 South). Cross the bridge into Sag Harbor. Turn right onto Main Street (opposite the windmill and the wharf). Go straight along Main Street past the stores. Toward the end of the stores there is a fork in the road (at the monument and Allen Schneider realty); bear right to stay on Main Street. Turn right onto Glover Street (directly across the street from the Cove Delicatessen). Pass Long Island Avenue on your right, and turn left at the next stop sign onto Redwood Road. Pass the marina on your right, and take the first left onto Cove Road. As the road swings to the right, number 258 will be the second house on the left, the tan house with the red door.

From Southampton, West Hampton, and points west - Alternate

Take 27 (Montauk Hwy) east. Turn left at the large green sign pointing toward Sag Harbor (just past East End Clambakes). This will be Sandy Hollow Road. Turn left at the first light onto North Sea Road. Take North Sea Road for a very short distance, and make a right onto North Sea Mecox Road. Take that to the end, then turn left on Seven Ponds Road. At the end of Seven Ponds there is a stop sign, and fork in the road. Take the middle path (always a good idea anyway), onto Lower Seven Ponds Road. Make a left at the end of the road onto Head of the Pond Road, and bear right at the next fork, staying on Head of the Pond. Stay on Head of the Pond Road until the end (it will curve and turn a fair amount, then take a left turn on Scuttle Hole Road. Stay on Scuttle Hole Road until the end, and turn left onto the Sag Harbor Turnpike. Take the Sag Harbor Turnpike all the way into Sag Harbor, and turn left onto Glover Street (just past

Canio's Bookstore and directly across the street from the Cove Delicatessen). Pass Long Island Avenue on your right, and turn left at the next stop sign onto Redwood Road. Pass the marina on your right, and take the first left onto Cove Road. As the road swings to the right, number 258 will be the second house on the left, the tan house with the red door.

PARKING

You may park in the driveway, or on the street, but please be particularly careful of the neighbors' driveways. There is also a small public parking area on the right side of Redwood Road, just past the marina and directly opposite the left turn onto Cove Road. It is then a very short walk to the house.