

## January Shabbat Service Schedule

January 9th Parashat Shemot

January 23<sup>rd</sup> Parashat Bo

### **DON'T FORGET!**

If you would like to order book(s), please email CSH1800@aol.com immediately.  
**Send your check made out to CSH for \$24.20 per book (or \$72.60 for the large print),  
NO later January 18.**

The total cost is \$24.20 per book (\$22 + \$2.20 for shipping \ half the \$44 cover price). You may order as many as you wish. There is also a large-print pulpit edition available for \$66 + \$6.60 shipping (the pulpit edition is not discounted).

When you write your check, please consider adding an additional donation to CSH of \$36 (or other multiple of chai). And of course, if anyone is moved to help us buy enough books to be able to use them as a congregation this High Holy Days, by all means please let us know.

The books will be shipped in May, 2010, and will be available for pickup in the Hamptons as soon as they arrive.

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**Friday January 8, 2010      Candle Lighting 4:21 pm**

**Shabbat morning 9:30**  
**Old Whalers, Sag Harbor**  
*Birchat HaChodesh Sh'vat*

**This week's Torah reading: Vayechi**

Annual (Ex. 1:1-6:1): Etz Hayim, p. 317  
Triennial (Ex. 4:18-6:1): Etz Hayim, p. 335  
Haftarah Isaiah 27:6-28:13, 29:22-23 Etz Hayim, p. 343

### **Musings on Shemot**

Then the startling moment occurred: God appeared to Moses "in a flame of fire out of the bush; and he looked, and lo, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed" (Exodus 3:2). In the face of that startling fact, Moses said: "I will turn aside and see this great sight, *why* the bush is not burnt." The question "*why*" was never answered. How indeed is it possible for the world to bear the divine?

Perhaps this is the meaning of the burning bush. A new element was brought into being; fire that burns but does not consume. It indicated a new order in God's relation to man, namely, that *to reveal He must conceal*, that to impart His *wisdom* He must hide his *power*. It made revelation possible.

The bush was the precedent for Sinai that was not crushed, for Israel that was not consumed.

***Abraham Joshua Heschel (born 11 January 1907): God in search of Man (Chapter 20)***

### **Another Voice - Bronya Gorney**

Shemot is positively bursting with female protagonists. We watch two midwives outwit Pharaoh's orders, observe Moshe's mother hiding him as a baby, peer in on Pharaoh's daughter rebelling against her father by saving Moshe from the Nile; and witness Tzipora saving her son from being killed by God.

The Midrash adds more women onto centre stage: Midrash Rabba tells how Moshe's father was in such utter despair about the dangers of having children during Pharaoh's regime, that he divorced his wife. The Midrash accredits Miriam with persuading her father to continue marital relations, thereby securing Jewish continuity.

These brave women boldly defy their place in society. Their proactive intervention strongly contrasts against our new male "anti-hero" Moshe, whose insecurities & self-doubt spill out over the pages. Like his father before him (see Midrash above), Moshe's uncertainty and passivity paralyze both him and the future of his people. His speech may be impeded but it is his hesitation that truly incapacitates him.

So why are Redemption and Hope depicted as being so entwined with the female psyche? When tribal self esteem is shattered, why look to the women to affect some kind of revolution? Surely it's the women, who were carrying children for nine months not knowing whether they would be allowed to live or die, who should have been crippled by despair. And yet it is they who spring into action.

This defiant investment in the future echoes throughout our world today. In the developing world it is the women who, despite carrying the heaviest burden due to gender inequalities, manage to organise themselves into enthused enterprises. Overwhelmed into standstill by poverty and civil unrest? No. Educating themselves, they become key agents of well being. Maternal literacy across the world is strongly correlated with lower infant mortality rates, better nutrition and children remaining longer in school.

<http://www.limmud.org/publications/tasteoflimmud/5768/Shemot/>

### **Meaning, origin and etymology of the name Moses...**

The etymology and original meaning of the name Moses have been long disputed. Jones derives it from the Egyptian word for water, *mo*, and the verb to save out of water, *'uses'*. BDB relates it to the Egyptian word *mes*, *mesu*, meaning child, son.

Then, of course, there is the Hebrew verb (*masha* 1253), which is identical to the name save for the Masoretic additions. It means draw, draw out and is used only two times in Scriptures: 2 Sam 22:17 in a Psalm of David that was copied into the Psalter as Psalm 18 (see verse 16), "He drew me out of many waters". The other occurrence of the verb is in Ex 2:10, where Moses is named, "And she named him Moses, and said, "Because I drew him out of the water"."

Since it is highly unlikely that the Egyptian princess was speaking Hebrew when she said it, Moses was probably known by the Egyptian word for Draw Out. Then, when he began to play a role in a Hebrew text, his name must have been subsequently translated into Hebrew.

TWOTOT devotes an article to the name Moses and notes that this name is a 'Qal active participle' of the verb *masha*, and concludes that the name Moses doesn't mean He Who Was Drawn Out, but rather He Who Draws Out. 'The name is explained not because Moses is derived from *masha* but because it resembles it in sound' (TWOTOT). TWOTOT further states that the consensus today is that Moses has to do with the Egyptian word for child (as BDB reports).

This in turn suggests that the emphasis in Exodus 2:10 should not be placed on the verb drew - 'because I *drew him out of the water*' - but on the princess who claims right to adopt and name Moses because she drew him out: And *she* named him because *she* drew him out of the water.

That Moses went on to become the founder of an independent Israel, and author of a text that contained unprecedented insights in the nature of man, may have reminded a Hebrew audience of the third creation day, when dry land came forth from the waters. To that audience, the name Moses means He Who Extracts; He Who Draws Out Of The Waters.

<http://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Moses.html>

### **...and Shifra and Puah**

It is significant that the Biblical text actually mentions Shifra and Puah by name, suggesting the ultimate importance of their role in the liberation of the Israelites. The Talmudic sages taught that

the names “Shifra” and “Puah” indicate different roles midwives play. “**Shifra**” stems from the Hebrew verb to swaddle or to clean a baby, while **Puah** comes from the Hebrew word to cry out because a midwife tries to calm a new mother’s cries by offering her words of encouragement.  
<http://jwa.org/discover/infocus/midwives/>

### **In the Liturgy**

The “cry” (*tza’akah*) of the Israelites that God acknowledged in appears in the *Ana B’khoah* prayer for deliverance recited in the Kabbalat Shabbat [Jewish services](#) between and [Lekhah Dodi](#)  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shemot>

### **TMI (?)**

The Hebrew term for “birth stool” in Exod 1:16, *obnayim*, means literally “two stones.” It refers to the primitive form of the birth stool, which was simply two bricks (or stones) placed under each of the buttocks of the woman in labor. Such birth stools are depicted in the later forms of the hieroglyphic symbol for “birth” and are referred to in ancient Egyptian folk sayings, such as “He left me like a woman on the bricks.” Ancient Egyptian pictorial art shows that the two bricks were replaced by a chair with an opening in the middle (like a toilet seat) through which, with the help of gravity, the mother could push out her baby into the deft hands of the midwives.  
<http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/puah-bible>

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### **Mazel Tov**

Joan and Paul Shreiber on the birth of their newest grandson

Mazel tov to Judith Stern Peck and her whole family on the occasion of her eldest granddaughter, Josie Stern, becoming bat mitzvah this weekend.

### **Refuah Shelaimah**

Gary Gaines

### **Condolences**

Neil Kleinhandler on the death of his father, Nathan Kleinhandler

### **Quote of the Week**

Dear God of many Names,  
Protect your children tonight wherever they are sleeping  
And let them know the world does not have to be like this  
Place a kiss upon each of their foreheads  
And remind them oh so gently  
That there are reasons to be hopeful  
And reasons for them to dream beautiful dreams.

Amen

***Ron Atchison***

Shabbat shalom.

Stacy

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