

General Membership Meeting

Sunday August 16th 10:00 am
100 Redwood Road
Brunch following

Continuing

LEARNING WITH RABBI UHRBACH

Join us for a close study and spirited discussion
of the Book of Genesis (Bereshit).
100 Redwood Road, Sag Harbor; Thursdays, 6-7:30 pm.
Open to everyone; come to any or all sessions. No charge.

Rosh Chodesh Elul

9:00 am minyan
Friday, August 21st
100 Redwood Rd.
Bring your shofar!

Dinner and Cabaret
Monday, August 24th 6:30
RSVP immediately

The Conservative Synagogue OF THE HAMPTONS קהל תפארת

THE LAUNDRY RESTAURANT BAR

DINNER AND CABARET: SWING TO SOUL
WITH ACCLAIMED CANTOR MARCOS ASKENAZI
Monday, August 24 6:30 p.m.
\$75 Prix Fixe Dinner
Proceeds to benefit the Sag Harbor Food Pantry

Limited Seating.
Cash or Check only. Cash bar.

For reservations:
csh1800@aol.com or 631-725-8188

Candle Lighting Friday, August 14 7:32pm

Kabbalat Shabbat Services 6:30 pm

100 Redwood Road, Sag Harbor
Dinner following services – Sponsored by Arlene Davis

For directions to Rabbi's home:

<http://www.synagoguehamptons.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/DIRECTIONS-TO-100-REDWOOD-ROAD3.pdf>

Shabbat Morning, Services 9:30am

Old Whaler's Church
Birchat Chodesh Elul
Kiddush sponsored by Bobbie Stein and Michael Jaffe

Parashat Re'eh

Annual: Deuteronomy 11:26 – 16:17 (Etz Hayim, p. 1061)
Triennial: Deuteronomy 12:29 – 14:29 (Etz Hayim, p. 1068)
Haftarah: Isaiah 54:11 – 55:5 (Etz Hayim, p. 1085) chanted by Michael Jaffe

Torah Thoughts on Parashat Re'eh

O holy Shabbes Inspiration Re'eh

See, I have set before you this day, a blessing and a curse
the blessing –
if you shall listen to the commandments of God
which I command you this day
and the curse —
if you shall not listen to the commandments of God
but turn aside
out of the way
go after other gods
which you have not known. [Deut. 11:26 ff.]

Goodbye Moses our mother
farewell old friend
sorry you're not making the trip with us
ciao.

You are preparing us for life without you.
Wear your rubbers
stay out of the rain
drink plenty of water
say your prayers
everything you've taught us before.
Don't walk around in wet socks.

It begins with See – the intuitive grasp of everything
the momentary aha!
switching to listen
the way a message unfolds in sequence
as – I – am – writing – this
and you are hearing it.

Two ways of knowing
the intuitive grasp
the momentary apprehension
and the careful unfolding through sequencing
seeing and listening.

Something else:
See is singular
switching to plural
listen is plural
all the verbs and pronouns go plural.

Every singular has the power to go plural
to tilt the world
– the world may be that evenly balanced –
one singular on this side
shifts it here
one on that side
shifts it there. [B.T. Kiddushin 40b]

To choose blessing seems obvious
this from the Italian: we are always extremist
we can choose either blessing
or curse [Ovadia Sforno 1475 – 1555]
it is always either/or for us.

Not all of us –
Choose it this day
this day three times in the passage
it's a daily choice
good news
you choose wrong today
you can choose right tomorrow.

Something else, from the Gerer rebbe
you know what listening is don't you
listening implies blessing. [Sefat Emet, the Gerer rebbe]
You know what blessing is –
when you attach to the life of Life
the source
the heart of the world.

What specifically is the blessing?
What the curse?
You know which choices are blessing
you know which are curses
so forget about this last point.

Here is the blessing
found in the mud:

I will bless you and increase you as the earth,
as the sands of the seashore as the sea,
look at the algae now
and the horseflies buzzing around your face,
I will make you as great as the algae, as the grasshoppers.

Look up now to the sky
you will be as great as the stars
as the darkness too
you will be as great as the darkness
as the sand and the sea and the stars
the mud and the dark and the green
the sticky stuff on the surf
the early rains and the later rains
the mud and the mud the green the sand the dark.

You will be a blessing –
as great as the dark
as the sea
the sand
the green
the flies.

Amen.

<http://stonegoodman.com/blog/?p=41>

“You shall surely open your hand” is the basic duty of tz’dakah (Deut. 15:11). The Hebrew comes through a doubling of the verb: “pato’ach tif’tach”, literally “(to) open you shall open”. The doubling of a verb for the sake of emphasis is common. Another example is the second paragraph of the Sh’ma, which instructs us, “shamo’a tishm’u” – “you shall surely listen (to God’s commandments)” (Deut. 11:13). Translators sometimes render the extra verb with the English adverb “diligently” – e.g. “you shall listen diligently”. In the case of charity the rabbinic commentators explained that there were two possibilities. A person had to respond when a poor man asked for charity (“pato’ach”) – but also when the poor man needed help but did not ask for it, perhaps because of embarrassment (“tif’tach”). Charity is valuable whether it is reactive or pro-active, whether one gives when asked or without an actual request. A good citizen does not wait. He sees what is happening around him and offers a supportive hand on his own initiative.

<http://www.oztorah.com/2008/08/opening-your-hand-reeh/>

Gerisim and Ebal are two peaks of the Ephraim range of mountains which still show a striking contrast in their appearance. Gerisim to the south of the valley of Shechem presents a smiling green slope rising in fruit-covered terraces to its summit, Ebal on the north side, steep, bare and bleak, some 2,900 ft. high, slightly higher than Gerisim. The two mounts lying next to each other form accordingly a most speaking [sic] instructive picture of blessing and curse. They both rise on one and the same soil, both are watered by one and the same fall of rain and dew, the same air breathes over both of them, the same pollen wafts over both of them and yet Ebal remains in barren bleakness while Gerisim is clad to its summit in embellishment of vegetation. In the same way, blessing and curse are not conditional on external circumstances but on our own inner receptivity for the one or the other, on our behavior towards that which is to bring blessing.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, The Pentateuch – Translation and Commentary, (Judaica Press, Gateshead, 1982)

You shall not eat anything abhorrent... the camel, the hare, and the daman – is unclean for you . . .also the swine. You shall not eat of their flesh or touch their carcasses (Deut. 14:3-8).

In Jewish consciousness the prohibition against eating pork is taken very seriously and represents the attempt of the Jewish people to separate themselves from their gentile surroundings. Swine, considered an extremely abhorrent animal, is perceived not only as a religious prohibition but also as the symbol of abomination and furtherance from other peoples. The sages would not even call a pig by its name, but used the euphemism *davar aher*, “something else,” comparing it to feces and to “a walking toilet.”

The Rabbis have given several reasons for swine being more abhorrent than any other unclean animal. Some saw it as a spiritual matter, and others explained that swine are the filthiest of animals. About 150 years ago several medical studies were published claiming that swine transmit disease [!] and endanger one’s health, but some people denied any connection between these medical findings and the Torah’s proscription against eating pork. The Sages made the following comment on such notions:

My rules alone shall you observe, and faithfully follow My laws: I the Lord am your G-d (Lev. 18:4) – this applies to those things to which Satan and the nations of the world retort [saying that there is no reason for the prohibition], and these are they: eating pork ... and lest you say it is really senseless, to this end Scripture teaches us, “I the Lord” made these laws, and you have no right to ponder them. <http://www.biu.ac.il/JH/Parasha/eng/reeh/shil.html>

Quote of the Week

We are trained to fear, resist, and fixate upon external enemies and to see ourselves as our most faithful and loyal friend. This is an inversion—most people never experience an external enemy that even begins to match the power of the opponent within. Although you may not know it, one of the greatest blessings that you can experience is a single moment of your life in which you are not your own worst enemy. **By Paul Richards Source: Wild Attraction, a Ruthlessly Practical Guide to Extraordinary Relationship, Page: 301**