

Purim @ E55

SATURDAY NIGHT, FEBRUARY 27th @ 8pm

The East 55th Street Synagogue
308 E55th, New York

Not to be missed! Costumes encouraged!

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### **February Shabbat Service Schedule**

February 20th Parashat Terumah

### **March Shabbat Service Schedule**

March 6<sup>th</sup> Shabbat Parah  
March 27<sup>th</sup> Shabbat HaGadol

Friday February 19, 2010 **Candle Lighting 5:11 pm**

**Shabbat morning -- 9:30**

Old Whalers Church

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

**Annual (Ex. 25:1-27:19): Etz Hayim p. 485**

**Triennial (Ex. 26:31-27:19): Etz Hayim p. 495**

**Haftarah (1 Kings 5:26-6:13): Etz Hayim p. 500**

### **Musings on Terumah --**

The subject of the Tabernacle occupies the remaining third of the book of Exodus. Amidst the details this week we learn: **“Five curtains will be connected, each to its sister-piece, and five curtains shall be connected, each to its sister-piece” (Ex. 26:3).** The Hebrew *isha el achota*, rendered “each to its sister-piece” literally means “a woman to her sister”. Elsewhere (Ex. 25:20) we find a similar linguistic style for “a man to his brother.” Why, when describing beams and poles, nuts and bolts fitting together, does the Torah’s language use a relational metaphor? Rabbi Jonathan Sacks has written eloquently about the difference between face-to-face and side-by-side encounters. Civil face-to-face dialogue between adversaries only goes so far; while side-by-side efforts, even between adversaries, goes further and runs deeper. Consider the difference between polite dinner conversation (face-to-face), and the meal’s more labor-intensive preparation and clean up (side-by-side). The shared sweat of the side-by-side endeavor generates a cohesive bond, even if few words are exchanged, between complete strangers. This is why God institutes the side-by-side project of assembling and disassembling a structure like the Tabernacle following the Sinai revelation – to enable national cohesion to take root. Nation-building takes more than a founding story (the Exodus) and a lawgiving, defining moment (at Sinai), it requires that something be built together (a Tabernacle) side-by-side, relationally indicated by the Torah’s idiom “each to its sister-piece.”

<http://www.congki.org/welcome/2010/02/parshat-terumah/>

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"Speak unto the children of Israel that they may bring Me terumah" (Ex. 25:2). The emphasis is on the Hebrew word *lee*, to Me, which Rashi interprets *lishmi*, for the sake of God's name. Some give because of *lekha*, you. They wish to impress you with their generosity. Others give because of *lo*, him. They get political and commercial advantages and honors out of their giving. The correct way of giving is *lishmi* --to alleviate suffering, to educate the young, to promote human welfare and freedom, to spread the word of God.

<http://www.jr.co.il/books/rberzon/styr037.htm>

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**Spiritual practice is about making our lives into a Mishkan**, a dwelling place for Divine Presence. About one third of the Book of Exodus consists of the detailed instructions for building the Mishkan. As we build our spiritual practice, the details are important. The purpose of the Mishkan is to send us to the space within where we can receive the Mystery of Presence. Just as a great poem points us towards a truth that is beyond mere words, so the beauty that shines from the Mishkan of our lives illuminates the beyond that is within us.

The portion of Terumah begins with the invitation to explore and discern the true generosity of our hearts. For the Mishkan cannot be built solely out of a sense of duty, obligation or debt. Only the willing and generous heart can participate in this endeavor. The willing and generous heart is fueled by love and carries the motivation needed for spiritual practice.

What makes the artist choose one color over another? What inspires the composer to create a song that can open the heart? Where does the sculptor get her vision of the form that lies buried inside the block of marble? What moves the writer to express the inexpressible? Here is the blessing of Terumah: When the heart is willing and there is a commitment to the work, then the Divine Spirit will show us the pattern, the blueprint, the plan, the inspiration that births beauty into the world. And that beauty is designed to send us back to the Source of its inspiration.

<http://www.rabbishefagold.com/Terumah.html>

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The[se] principles that informed the construction of the Mishkan—noble intention and collective engagement—**could be well utilized in guiding a modern contribution and construction enterprise, U.S. foreign aid.** We might assume that the sole purpose of U.S. foreign assistance is to fight poverty and to improve the lives of citizens of developing countries. But in fact, this noble goal is pursued together with, and often in conflict with, a second stated goal, that of “furthering America's foreign policy interests in expanding democracy and free markets.”⁵ As a consequence of these competing intentions, most aid is distributed to allies in the “war on terror” and “war on drugs,” while only a small portion actually supports humanitarian work.⁶

Another problem prevalent in the foreign assistance community is a disconnect from the genuine needs of aid recipients. Josette Perard, director of The Lambi Fund of Haiti, a grassroots organization that works to promote sustainable livelihoods, notes that:

With large-scale foreign aid, the organizations go and say “I’ll put something there,” but maybe it’s not what the community wants. Often these million-dollar initiatives fail because they don’t involve the people in the doing of the activity.⁷

The hallmark of sponsorship of the Mishkan—selfless intent and engagement—is sorely missing from U.S. foreign assistance, drastically limiting its positive outcomes...Just as the Or HaChaim pointed out that the Mishkan depended on the interconnectedness of all members of the Israelite community, successful foreign aid requires an understanding of the connections between the numerous factors that contribute to poverty and cannot respond to these factors in isolation.

[You can visit www.ajws.org/justaid to learn more about the campaign to bring U.S. foreign assistance more in line with our sacred duty.]

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### **The Man in the Mirror – A Chassidic Tale**

--Who do you see in this mirror? The rabbi asked the rich man.

***I see myself! – the man said.***

--Now go over to the window and look. What do you see now?

***Now I see all kinds of people in the street. – said the rich man.***

--Pay attention: Both the mirror and the window are made from glass.

There is only a small difference. The glass of the mirror is coated with silver on the back side.

And therefore you only see yourself through it and you do not see other people!

**The rich man understood the hint and gave a large sum of money to charity.**

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Donations

Sarah Engel in honor and appreciation of Jan Uhrbach

The next time you are looking for a meaningful way to celebrate a simcha, a birthday, a promotion, remember a loved one, or comfort a mourner, please consider making a donation to The Conservative Synagogue of the Hamptons.

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### **Mazel Tov**

**Lorraine and Herb (Leah and Tzvi) Schottenfeld on the upcoming marriage of their granddaughter in Israel on Tuesday**

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CSH Membership -- We Need Each Other

"A 'Temple of the Lord' is not a structure of wood and brick and mortar and aluminum and glass. It is a House of Holiness that is built out of the collective good deeds and the worshippers, the cumulative piety and generosity and nobility of those who minister within it.

According to this classical conception, the synagogue is not an oven which gives heat and power to the religious functioning of all else: but a thermometer, which gives a clear index and measure of the spiritual health and warmth of the entire community."

Rabbi Norman Lamm / The Jewish Center / February 22, 1969

<http://brussels.mc.yu.edu/gsd/collect/lammserm/index/assoc/HASH5fe1.dir/doc.pdf>

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http://www.synagoguehamptons.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/Membership_Form_2010.pdf

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### **Quote of the Week**

A pessimist, they say, sees a glass of water as being half empty; an optimist sees the same glass as half full. But a giving person sees a glass of water and starts looking for someone who might be thirsty. ~ G. Donald Gale

Shabbat shalom.

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