

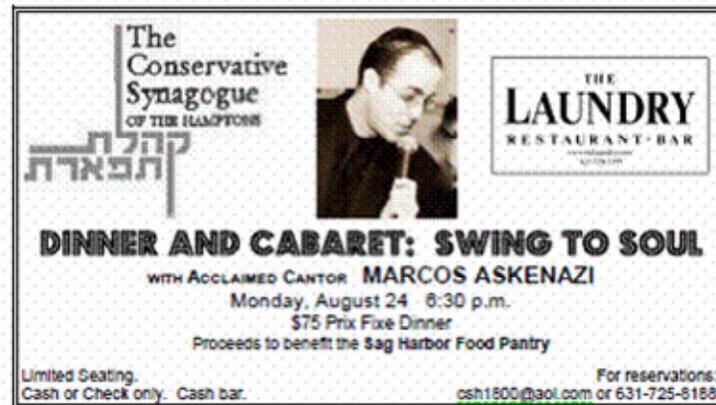
UPCOMING

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. No class on Tisha B'Av
Open to everyone; come to any or all sessions. No charge.

Candle Lighting Friday, July 31 7:49pm

Kabbalat Shabbat Services 6:30 pm
followed by Shabbat dinner and talk with
Scholar in Residence Zvi Gitelman

100 Redwood Road, Sag Harbor
All are invited to services
Reservations for dinner necessary

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
Scholar in Residence Zvi Gitelman

Old Whaler's Church

Kiddush sponsored by Rabbi Jan Uhrbach in celebration of her father's milestone birthday

Parashat Vaetchem --Shabbat Nachamu

Annual: Deuteronomy 3:23 - 7:11 (Etz Hayim, p. 1005)

Triennial: Deuteronomy 5:1 - 6:25 (Etz Hayim, p. 1015)

Haftarah: Isaiah 40:1 – 26 (Etz Hayim, p. 1033) **chanted by Lorna Michaelson**

Torah Thoughts on Parashat Vaetchem

It's not fair. How often do we hear that from our children? It's not fair that I practiced so much but didn't get picked for the team. It's not fair that my brother can stay up late and I can't. It's not fair that all my friends are allowed to see this movie but I'm not. Lots of things aren't fair in the world of children. Fortunately, children grow up and learn there are actually good reasons for the perceived unfairness of youth.

This is when things begin to get difficult. Adults find out that many things aren't fair, and that these things have far greater repercussions than a curfew or a missed activity.

Such is the case in this week's parasha. The very first word of the portion, va'etchanan (I pleaded), cries out: It's not fair. Moses implores God to be allowed to enter the Promised Land: ***I pleaded with the Lord at that time, saying, "O Lord God, You who let Your servant see the first works of Your greatness and Your mighty hand, You whose powerful deeds no god in heaven or on earth can equal! Let me, I pray, cross over and see the good land on the other side of the Jordan, that good hill country, and the Lebanon." But the Lord was wrathful with me on your account and would not listen to me. The Lord said to me, "Enough! Never speak to Me of this matter again! Go up to the summit of Pisgah and gaze about, to the west, the north, the south, and the east. Look at it well, for you shall not go across yonder Jordan.*** Deuteronomy 3:23-27

Moses, whose life was devoted to leading the people through the Wilderness to the Promised Land, who intervened between God and Israel, who shouldered responsibility he did not seek, will not get the reward he desired. It's not fair.

Rashi, basing himself on Sifre, explains that the root of the word va'etchanan is one of ten words used for prayer in Hebrew. Here we have a prayer, a request, a plea from our greatest leader, the one who spoke with God face to face; and the answer is "no." It's not fair.

Moses is undergoing one of the most painful experiences of life. It is the moment when life punches you in the stomach and leaves you dazed, gasping for breath, wondering what you did to deserve this. It is the news from the doctor that you've got a chronic condition, a debilitating disease, or a terminal illness. You never smoked, you ate right, and you tried to be a good person. Why me? It's not fair.

It is the realization that life will never be the same. It will be filled with frustration and pain, your appearance could change, your abilities will deteriorate, and limitless opportunities have suddenly come to an end. It's not fair. <http://www.kolel.org/blog/2008/08/shabbat-nachamu-parashat-vaetchanan.html>

The discrepancies between the Asseret Ha-dibberot (Ten Commandments) as presented in parashat Yitro and in parashat Va-etchanan raise several issues for us. First, there are what we might call the contextual issues. Second, there are the internal textual issues. In other words, let us try first to assess the context applying to the second set of Ten Commandments, and then let us focus more specifically on the actual texts. But before doing so, let us just point out what are the most salient differences.

Seven Discrepancies

1. In the earlier version, we are commanded to "Remember the Shabbat," while in the later version we are commanded to "Guard the Shabbat."
2. In the first account, the rationale for Shabbat is to remember the Divine creation; in the second, to commemorate the exodus from Egypt.
3. In the second account, the mitzvot of Shabbat and honoring parents include the phrase, "as the Lord your God has commanded you," which is absent from the first account.
4. The designation of a person who offers improper testimony changes from "eid sheker" (false testimony) to "eid shav" (vain testimony).
5. The prohibition against coveting a friend's possessions employs the phrase "lo tachmod" twice in Yitro but shifts once to "lo titaveh" in Va-etchanan.
6. In the earlier version, not coveting your neighbour's house comes first, while in the latter version, not coveting his wife appears first.
7. In the earlier version, the last five commandments are distinct and independent commandments, whereas in the later version they are each linked with the conjunction 'and'.

Given the two texts, and these discrepancies, we are faced with two obvious questions: What message did God give Moshe on that momentous day at Sinai, a few months after the exodus from Egypt? Did He teach the first version, the second version, or some type of combination? And which version was actually inscribed on the tablets?

<http://www.pinnerynagogue.com/religious/dvartorah.php?id=75>

When Rabbi Shimon came he said, **Surely the Ten Commandments are indicated in the passage of Kriat Sh'ma, as has been explained.** It is surely so. "And these words" (Devarim 6:6) are the essence of the Ten Commandments. Hence there are ten commandments here that correspond to the Ten Commandments in the Torah. They are, **"and you shall teach them diligently to your children 1), and shall talk of them 2), when you sit in your house 3), and when you walk by the way 4), and when you lie down 5), and when you rise up 6).** And you shall bind them for a sign upon your arm 7), and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes 8). **And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house 9), and on your gates 10)"** (Devarim 6:7-9). So here are ten that correspond to the Ten Commandments. Therefore these passages are a great rule in the Torah. Happy is the portion of he who recites them fully twice a day, since the Holy Name is properly sanctified by his mouth.

<http://www.kabbalah.com/k/index.php/p=zohar/zohar&vol=46&sec=1677>

Tu b'Av --The 15th of Av - Full Moon Musings

The full moon of Av is associated with relationships. On this day, "the daughters of Jerusalem would go out ... and dance in the vineyards," and "whoever did not have a wife would go there" to find himself a bride (Talmud, Taanit 26b). But why is this so, why is this day associated with finding a soulmate?

Judaism teaches that every person has a 'beshert' - the other half of their soul for whom they search in order to marry. Forty days before a person is born, a heavenly voice announces their 'beshert.' The 15th of Av is forty days before the 25th of Elul which is the first day of Creation. That is why the full moon of Av celebrates relationships (B'nei Yissachar).

The moon teaches us three fundamental lessons about successful relationships:

1. The moon knows how to be humble and even invisible. It is not consumed with its own ego. That is lesson #1 in relationships: Be humble, be powerful enough to know when to defer.
2. Even when it shines, the moon knows that its light is not its own. Its power comes from another place, its strength is reflecting and channeling light from a higher place.
3. The moon illuminates the darkness. It does not try to eradicate the night but rather shines light into the darkness. Moonlight does not deny or eradicate weakness, difficulty and pain, it acknowledges it and despite the pain, it continues to shine. A healthy relationship is not about perfection alone; it is about sensitively recognizing and knowing how to cope with and illuminate our weaknesses, even our darker sides.

You can truly love only when you are not consumed with yourself. When you are full with yourself, with your own sunlight, you may achieve many good things, but not love. Become a moon, a receptacle, and you can contain and love another. The full moon means being full with another. Your feeling of lack and incompleteness allows you to become the most complete.

http://www.meaningfullife.com/torah/holidays/11c/Moonlight_ShabbatCOLON_Full_Moon_Musings.php

Donations

In Memorium – Sarah Engel in memory of Murray Benkov

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.

Quote of the Week

Affirm your faith in yourself:

I believe that I am very important in God's eyes.

I believe that I can return, no matter how far I've strayed.

I believe that I have the inner strength to change.

I believe that I can become truly devoted and close to God.

— Rebbe Nachman of Breslov in *The Empty Chair*

Shabbat Shalom.

Stacy

Stacy Menzer
President
The Conservative Synagogue
of the Hamptons

631 725-8188

www.synagoguehamptons.org