

Candle Lighting Friday, November 4 5:26 pm

CSH Shabbat Service Schedule

November 4 – Lech Lecha
November 18 – Chayei Sarah

In December , The Conservative Synagogue of the Hamptons and Temple Adas Israel will join together Shabbat morning for services and Torah study.

December 3 – CSH @ Old Whalers
December 10- Temple Adas Israel
December 17 - Temple Adas Israel
December 24 - CSH @ Old Whalers
December 31 - Temple Adas Israel

Shabbat Services

Shabbat Morning 9:30 am
Old Whalers' Church, Sag Harbor



This week's parashat: Lech Lecha

Annual: Genesis 12:1-17:27 (Etz Hayim, p. 69)
Triennial Cycle: Genesis 12:1 – 13:18 (Etz Hayim, p. 69)
Haftarah: Isaiah 40:27 – 41:16 (Etz Hayim, p. 95)

Lech Lecha Musings: “And Melchizedek King of Shalem brought forth bread and wine; and he was priest of God the Most High. And he blessed him, and said: 'Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Maker of heaven and earth; and blessed be God the Most High, who has delivered your enemies into thy hand.' And he gave him a tenth of all.” Gen 14:18-20).

Taken alone, this tiny anecdote does indeed seem strange. The Torah tells us nothing else about this man and his relationship to Abraham.

The ancient *Targumim* (Aramaic interpretive translations) identify Melchizedek as Shem—son of Noah. Shem was one of the links in the chain who transmitted the Godly traditions that originated with Adam. These traditions were carefully handed down from generation to generation, and Shem—who headed an academy—was a key conductor of these teachings. The Midrash tells us that he was so perfect and so spiritually advanced that he was born circumcised.

So why did the priesthood pass from him to Abraham's children? The Talmud explains that this happened as a result of his having blessed Abraham before blessing God in the verses above. This is reflected in the only other place in Scripture where Melchizedek is mentioned: in Psalms 110:4, where we read, ". . . you are a priest forever because of the speech of Melchizedek." Because of Melchizedek's ill-chosen speech, the priesthood was taken from him and given to the seed of Abraham forever.



I have always liked Malchizedek, whose name translates to ‘My King is Righteousness’ and who is the king of Shalem. We just have this fragmentary glimpse of him here in the text, and one reference to him in the book of Psalms where he is referred to as a priest – and that is all. Yet he introduces the use of bread and wine with which to thank God, and he also introduces the idea of giving a tenth (tithing).

Who was he? He is a priest long before the Aaronide priesthood is established. He is a King of a city whose name is close in sound to Jerusalem. He knows God and that God is the Most High who made heaven and earth. He offers blessings.

The Midrash tries to resolve his presence and strains credulity by stating that he is Shem, the son of Noah and a man who officiated as a priest, who taught Torah to Avram within his own academy. (As a rabbinic student I was delighted to be able to take a photograph of Shem’s Torah academy which is, apparently, in a cave in Haifa and had its own benches and books). The Talmud (Nedarim 32b) tells us that “Rabbi Zechariah said in the name of Rabbi Ishmael that God intended to bring forth the priesthood through Melchizedek’s descendants, but because the text says that Melchizedek blessed Abram before he blessed God, God brought the priesthood forth from Abram’s descendants” (i.e. Aaron).

I prefer not to twist logic in order to give Malchizedek such yichus, and instead see him as one of those individuals who wander through the Hebrew bible who know God but who are not within our tradition. Along with Yitro (Jethro) the father in law of Moses who was also a priest of the Most High God and who taught Moses about worship and about organising justice in the community, Malchizedek is a figure who knows God and who teaches us something about God and about worship. We don’t have to make him Jewish, we don’t have to own him at all, he is a human being whose tradition relationship to God is completely valid and is outside our own understanding with God. One of the first lessons Torah teaches is that all humanity is related, and all are created by God. That is why it begins with the creation of the world and of all humanity. Torah is very clear that God is the God of all peoples, that different peoples have their own relationships with God, that ours is only one particular relationship with God. Judaism isn’t the only way to God for people, but it is generally felt to be the best one for Jews.

Malchizedek teaches us that God is bigger than the relationship God has with us. He teaches us that we can learn from other people’s relationships with God, and that we don’t have to diminish them or take them over – we can celebrate that people relate to the Divine in a variety of ways and with a multiplicity of traditions and expressions. That is surely something worth celebrating. And something we should respect and build on.



In Commemoration of "Kristallnacht" - November 9-10, 1938

The Nazi "Kristallnacht", Night of Broken Glass, began 73 years ago today. On this night of terror, which prefigured the Holocaust to come, the Germans brutally orchestrated widespread attacks against Jews, torching Jewish-owned property, demolishing Jewish homes, and burning synagogues to the ground. No complete tally exists of the destruction, but at least 30,000 Jews were arrested (8,000 in Austria) and sent to concentration camps at Sachsenhausen, Buchenwald and Dachau. Scores of Jews were killed and dozens severely injured.

KRISTALLNACHT by Sue SanieI Elkind

Blackness
broken by streamers/of light from trucks
Trembling mothers
hide children/beg them "be still"
others try escape
All the time
marching feet/slam against cement
stopping only as marchers
hurl rocks/leaving shards of bone
Ramrods/ Violate houses people
lie splintered/amid slivers of glass
Their screams become one
Old and young/herded outside
prodded to run
"Jew, jew" following them
Bullets fired/shatter windows of dreams
that will become eternal/nightmares.

From Beyond Lament: Poets of the World Bearing Witness to the Holocaust, ed. Marguerite Striar, published by Northwestern Univ. Press, 1998

<http://www.cdn-friends-icej.ca/antiholo/kristall2.html>



Kol HaKavod

Aaron Weininger has been invited to speak at the opening plenary of the General Assembly 2011 of The Jewish Federations of North America

Quote of the Week

Congratulations!
Today is your day.
You're off to Great Places!
You're off and away!

You have brains in your head.
You have feet in your shoes
You can steer yourself
any direction you choose.
You're on your own. And you know what you know.
And YOU are the guy who'll decide where to go....

KID, YOU'LL MOVE MOUNTAINS!

So...
be your name Buxbaum or Bixby or Bray
or Mordecai Ali Van Allen O'Shea,
you're off to Great Places!
Today is your day!
Your mountain is waiting.
So...get on your way!

Oh, the Places You'll Go! by Dr. Seuss. 1990

Shabbat Shalom.

Stacy