

CSH Shabbat Service Schedule

February 12 | Tetzaveh
February 26 | Vayakhel

Friday, February 4, 2011 Candle Lighting 4:53 pm (Sag Harbor)

This week's Torah reading: Terumah

Annual: Ex. 25:1 – 27:19 (Etz Hayim p 485; Hertz p. 326)
Triennial: Ex. 25:1 – 25:40 (Etz Hayim p 485; Hertz p. 326)
Maftir Numbers 28:9-15 (Etz Hayim p 930; Hertz p. 694)
Haftarah: Isaiah 66:1-24 (Etz Hayim, p. 1220; Hertz p. 944)

Rosh Chodesh Adar I – Friday and Saturday, February 4th / 5th

In addition to being *Shabbat Terumah* this Shabbat is also *Rosh Hodesh Adar I*, the first day of the new month of Adar I (or Adar Aleph in Hebrew). This is a leap year and in Jewish tradition, we add an extra month during a leap year in order to prevent the holidays from continuing to get earlier each year to the point where the spring festival of Passover will take place in the winter or fall.

We add the extra month during what is traditionally the last month of the year, Adar. According to the rules of the calendar, all holidays and other observances, such as birthdays and anniversaries of deaths that normally take place in Adar are to be celebrated during a leap year in Adar II (Adar Bet). Therefore, the second Adar is the real Adar! The only dates that are celebrated in Adar I are the births and deaths of people who were actually born or died during Adar I when it was a leap year.

So, in a sense, Adar I does not even exist. It is a pause. A void. It is not real. And yet, it is very real. We watch it pass day by day. Yet, the only things we remember during these days are the two certainties of human existence: birth and death. So, what is it that we should do during this month? To me, it cries out for some kind of ritual practice.

In the blog “Peeling a Pomegranate” (www.peelapom.com), the author Ketzirah, likens Adar I to the mythic fifth element of “ether.” Ether is an element that is not an element. Plato described it as “that which God used in the delineation of the universe.” In Aristotle’s system, it had no qualities or properties at all. One could say that ether infuses the world and yet it cannot be seen, felt, tasted, categorized nor classified. Yet, it is all around us.

Ketzirah likens this to the Hebrew word *נחל* *chashmal*. Though in Modern Hebrew this means electricity, in the *Tanakh*/Bible, it is the mystical substance Ezekiel describes as illuminating the Chariot of God in the Divine visions. It is untouchable, indescribable, and yet it powerful. This is the world of Adar I. On the one hand, this month is like a void into which we must step, and yet once within we are surrounded by the indescribable, yet potent, world of the ether. We are truly in the realm of the ethereal.

<http://mindfultorah.blogspot.com/>

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**Musings on Terumah -- “*Daber el Bnai Yisrael veyikchu li terumah me’et kol ish asher yidvenu libo tikchu et terumati.*”**

**Speak to the Children of Israel and have them bring Me an offering. Take My offering from everyone whose heart impels him to give” (Exodus 25:2).**

T'rumah the name of the portion means "gift." It is interesting that the people are not commanded to bring gifts for the building of the sanctuary, but rather those "whose heart is so moved" to donate the specified items. There is a difference between t'rumah, a charitable gift given spontaneously because of an immediate need or cause, and tzedakah, commanded giving. The rabbis saw tzedakah as a responsibility while t'rumah was a freewill offering. One must give tzedakah, but t'rumah is a gift of the heart.

Think about the difference between *t'rumah* and *tzedakah*. When have you given *t'rumah*, a gift of the heart and when have you given *tzedakah*? When you give a gift of *terumah* what kind of feelings do you have inside? Are your feelings the same or different when you give a gift of *tzedakah*? Why or why not?

[http://urj.org/holidays/shabbat/intro/exodus/?syspage=article&item\\_id=4264](http://urj.org/holidays/shabbat/intro/exodus/?syspage=article&item_id=4264)

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God asks the Israelites to "take" for Me **Terumah**. An interesting choice of words. Can you "take" a freewill offering? It really means that the Israelites should "give" a gift for the construction of the Tabernacle. But instead it says they should "take."

Rashi seems to connect the use of the verb "take" to the specific type of offering being requested. **Terumah** is defined as a "heave offering"; a special type of offering that is to be "set apart." Therefore it is the individual himself who "takes" the offering voluntarily from his own possessions and designates it as a sacred gift.

But a Yiddish folktale gives another perspective on the difference between "giving" and "taking".

"Yankel the Cheapskate" would not give money to anyone, for any reason. It didn't matter how important the cause. No one could crack him. He just wouldn't contribute. One day, Yankel was crossing the river in a small boat. Suddenly, a huge storm breaks out, and his boat capsizes.

Luckily, another boat approached. The sailor calls out to him: "Give me your hand. Give me your hand."

Yankel can barely hear him over the strong winds and the roaring waves. He hears only one word, over and over: "Give, Give..."
And good old Yankel can't help himself. He yells back: "No. I don't give. I don't give."

Again: "Yankel, give me your hand! Give me your hand." And again Yankel screams: "Never. I don't give."

Finally, in desperation, the rescuer yells: "Yankel, take my hand." And Yankel says: "Oh, take? Sure."

<http://www.kolel.org/pages/5762/terumah.html>

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Drawing on kabbalistic tradition originating in the Zohar, the 19th century Russian rabbi and scholar R. Meir Leibush Malbim in his little known work *Remazay HaMishkan* (Secrets of the Sanctuary) equates the Sanctuary, article by article to the human body. In his analogy, God's presence is compared to breath, which animates every living being:

"And the Lord God formed Adam from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and there was within Adam a communicating spirit" (Bereishit 2:7 trans. Targum Onkles).

Breathing is vital to the art of living. And communicating is vital to the art of living among others. Although breath itself may be an unconscious activity in the healthy body, use of that breath for communication is both conscious and intentional.

This is what the Mishkan represents.

The choice of how we choose to communicate is in our hands. We can give baubles and trinkets with our words or we can experience intense, richly layered conversation and dialogue with those among whom we live and work, when "...the glory of God's presence (in each of us) fills the Sanctuary" (Shemot 40.34) and we are fully communicative in our encounters with those around us.

For Malbim therefore, the Mishkan itself is metaphorical rather than literal. What is being constructed through symbol and ritual is a manifestation of the intentionality of each community member, who is asked to give freely and joyously without reservation.

<http://www.limmud.org/publications/tasteoflimmud/5770/Terumah/>



**Terumah** [and Membership Dues] -- *Parashat T'rumah* is the first fund-raising brochure. Just when we thought that we have been liberated from building campaigns in our own synagogues the *parashah* reminds us that Moses came down from Sinai, carrying a sheaf of blueprints for a portable sanctuary, lists of (expensive) materials, and a powerful campaign slogan: "And let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them." (Exodus 25:8)

If ever there was a portable, movable synagogue, it is surely The Conservative Synagogue of the Hamptons. We don't have our own building. That's not what defines us as a synagogue or as a community. What defines us is how without the glitter and the gold, God dwells among us, within us. It is because of the US that we continue to grow and strengthen our relationship with God and with each other.

Our membership dues letter was emailed earlier in the week. Please give, on a level that you can, from the heart.

**End Quote** --

If there were ever a time to dare,  
to make a difference,  
to embark on something worth doing,  
it is now.  
Not for any grand cause, necessarily-  
but for something that tugs at your heart,  
something that's your aspiration,  
something that's your dream.

You owe it to yourself  
to make your days here count.  
Have fun.  
Dig deep.

Stretch.  
Dream big.

[From a Macintosh computer ad, 1991]

Many of us have at some time dreamt of owning one of those magic purses that would never be empty. No matter how much money we would draw from it, it would remain full! As it turns out, we already have such a contraption in us and this one's worth a lot more than a trillion enchanted wallets. Our heart can love 24-hours a day without ever running empty. As a matter of fact, the more love we pass to others, the more love we'll have!

Author Unknown

Shabbat shalom.

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