

SAVE THE DATE!
CHANUKAH @ CSH Dec. 23 – 24
with Rabbi Jan Uhrbach & Aaron Weininger

RSVP if you plan on joining us!

Friday Night Services and Shabbat Dinner
Shabbat Morning Services
Havdalah / Chanukiah Lighting

Candle Lighting Friday, December 2nd 4:05 pm

CSH Shabbat Service Schedule

December 3 – CSH @ Old Whalers 9:30 am
Kiddush Following

December 10- Temple Adas Israel

December 17 - Temple Adas Israel

December 24 - CSH @ Old Whalers (Chanukah)

December 31 - Temple Adas Israel



This week's parashat: Vayitzei

Annual: Genesis 28:10 - 32:3 (Etz Hayim p. 166)

Triennial: Genesis 30:14 - 31:16 (Etz Hayim p. 176)

Haftarah: Hosea 12:13 – 14:10 (Etz Hayim, p. 189)

Vayitzei Musings: *Once at the time of the wheat harvest, Reuben came upon some mandrakes [duda'im] in the field and brought them to his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes." But she said to her, "Was it not enough for you to take away my husband, that you would also take my son's mandrakes?" Rachel replied, "I promise, he shall lie with you tonight, in return for your son's mandrakes." (Gen. 30:14-15)*



Gen. 30:14 relates that Reuben found mandrakes, which are prophylactic, in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. When Rachel saw them, she asked Leah to give them to her [because of her barrenness]. In return, Leah requested that Rachel forgo her right to be with Jacob that night. The Rabbis did not view this exchange between the sisters favorably. Some criticized Leah, for by her actions she exhibited ingratitude to Rachel. God asked Leah: "Is this the reward for a good deed? Is this the reward of your sister Rachel, who gave you her signs with her husband on your wedding night, to spare you embarrassment?" As punishment for this behavior, Leah was caused even greater mortification with the episode of Dinah (Gen. Rabbati, Vayishlah, p. 168).

Other Rabbis found fault with Rachel and maintained that because Rachel made light of her right to lie with the righteous Jacob, which she sold for the mandrakes, she was punished by not being buried together with him. The exegetes holding this view find Rachel's words (Gen. 30:15) to be somewhat prophetic: "I promise, he shall lie with you tonight"—"with you" he will lie [in the grave], but with me he will not lie [in the grave].

The Rabbis commented on the sale of the mandrakes: "This one lost and the other one lost, this one was rewarded and the other one was rewarded." Leah lost the mandrakes and was rewarded with tribes; Rachel lost burial, and was rewarded with the birthright (Gen. Rabbah 72:3). This

midrash incorporates several aggadic traditions according to which Leah gave birth to Issachar and Zebulun by merit of the mandrakes that she gave her sister. Rachel lost being buried next to Jacob because of her dealing with Leah, but she thereby merited having her son Joseph receive the birthright.

<http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/rachel-midrash-and-aggadah>

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An intriguing incident is recorded about Leah's son Reuben who found 'mandrakes' - a sexually and fertility enhancing fruit - which he presents to his mother. Rachel requests her sister for them. Leah bitterly responds to this request 'is it not enough that you taken my husband's [love]'. Jacob, it appears, has stopped sleeping with Leah. Rachel offers to have Leah sleep with the husband they share that same night (30:14-16)! Rachel, the Adam One personality, trades mandrakes to allow her sister, Leah to sleep with her own husband. Leah says to our patriarch Jacob, 'you must come into me, for I have hired you with my son's mandrakes' (30:16). Jacob does not respond, he simply obeys the sisters and sleeps with Leah. Despite the lack of mandrakes, God blesses this union and Leah once again conceives. One wonders how Rachel reacted to her sister becoming pregnant, as though she - Leah - had eaten the mandrakes. Leah subsequently gives birth to two sons (Issachar and Zebulun) and a daughter (Dinah). This is the only conversation we have heard from Leah and Rachel.

There is a similarity between this event and Jacob's selling his lentils to Esau. Esau gives up his birthright for soup. It is the first part of his losing the blessing. Leah gives up the mandrakes which represent fertility, but she becomes pregnant. Rachel who wins the mandrakes does not become pregnant as a result. (Her pregnancy with Joseph is later.)

To read this commentary in its entirety, go to:  
[http://www.moshereiss.org/messenger/04\\_jacobandesau/04\\_jacobandesau.html](http://www.moshereiss.org/messenger/04_jacobandesau/04_jacobandesau.html)

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What a tangle of emotions she must feel! She has a husband who comes between her and her sister, and at the same time her sister comes between her and her man. The Torah summarizes this turmoil in two words: va-tekane be-akhota, she envied her sister.

Kina, envy, is a complex emotion. The great danger of envy is that it causes us to view others as less than human. We have all known Rachels in our lives. They may appear, beautiful, popular, and successful. (Think back to high school.) Too often we fail to realize that Rachel the beautiful, Rachel, the beloved wife, experiences tremendous pain. Who would have imagined this? Think of the many times you have felt a twinge of jealousy at someone who is successful and for whom everything just seems to fall into place. Then think of Rachel. No one has it easy. Life scars everyone.

Then there's Leah. We want to be loved and appreciated for who we are, the beautiful soul that may at times be obscured from view. (Think high school and beyond.) Leah was the mother of half the tribes of Israel, yet she had to woo her husband with mandrakes. Was Rachel able to see Leah's pain or did jealousy blind her to it?

http://blog.kolel.org/2009_11_01_archive.html

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**Keith and Judy Benkov**

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**Aaron Weininger's senior sermon can now be read in its entirety:**

[http://www.synagoguehamptons.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Aaron\\_Weiningers\\_Senior\\_Sermon.pdf](http://www.synagoguehamptons.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Aaron_Weiningers_Senior_Sermon.pdf)

**End Quote**

"The challenge of *Hamakom* [*the place or one of the Rabbinic terms for God*] is to recognize God in the ordinary and every day. Our inclination to be awed only by the extraordinary, dulls our senses to the miracles that surround us... All that exists flows from a single source."

*Ismar Schorch*

Sisters, sisters  
There were never such devoted sisters....

Lord help the mister who comes between me and my sister  
And lord help the sister, who comes between me and my man  
*Irving Berlin*

Shabbat Shalom.

Stacy