

# Ha Shavuah B' Sha'arey Israel

August 13 – August 20, 2009

23 Av – 30 Av 5769



Candle lighting time 8:04 pm  
Friday August 14

Friday Evening Kabbalat Shabbat Services begin at 6:15 pm  
Saturday morning Shabbat Services begin at 9:30 am

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## PARASHAT RE'EH - BIRKAT HAHODESH (Commentary on Page 3)

Annual: Deuteronomy 11:26 – 16:17 (Etz Hayim, p. 1061)

Triennial: Deuteronomy 12:29 – 14:29 (Etz Hayim, p. 1068)

Haftarah: Isaiah 54:11 – 55:5 (Etz Hayim, p. 1085)

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**We wish a Happy Birthday this week to:**

Ed Vogel, Israel Benn, Jeff Lehman, Sharon Purcel, Laura Ilan, Seth Hirsh and Steve Schwartz

**And Happy Anniversary to:**

Allison & Scott Brody, Dorothy & Burt Haskins, Terri & David Frolich and Shelley & Steve Kruger

**This week we remember the Yahrzeit of:**

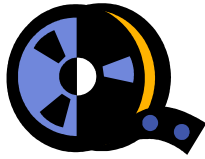
Joseph Galkin, Jacob Lachterman, Morris Potosky, Walter Turner, A.H. Zeldin, Isadore Shier,  
Herschel Barry Kemper

**The deadline to submit the form for the Book of Remembrance to the CSI office is  
August 21, 2009.**

***Please Note:* If your loved ones were listed in the Special Section last year, they will be listed again this year unless you advise us that you do not want to participate.**

***CSI 5770 Campaign***

Next month we start the Jewish New Year 5770. It is a time of reflection and recommitment to our heritage and faith. Our synagogue has been the center of this Jewish community for over 100 years and has prospered from the commitment of many during those years. We ask you to join them in that commitment by making a generous donation to our 5770 Campaign.



**Movie Night**  
**Sunday, August 23 at 4:30pm.**  
at the home of Terri & David Frolich

The movie is **Defiance** directed by Daniel Zwick, an epic tale of family, honor, vengeance and salvation in WWII. Daniel Craig, Liev Schreiber and Jamie Bell star as brothers who turn a primitive struggle to survive into a way to avenge the deaths of their loved ones by saving thousands of others. **It is a GREAT movie!**

Bring a covered dish and let's start off our year with a great film, wonderful food and good friends! Look forward to seeing you.

Please RSVP to Stephanie Kross, [skross@cox.net](mailto:skross@cox.net)

***Family Shabbat Dinner***

***Friday - August 28th***

*Services begin at 6:15 pm with dinner to follow*



***Adults - \$10 Children - \$7 Kids under 3 – free***

***Please call 745-4571 or email:  
[secretary@csimacon.org](mailto:secretary@csimacon.org) to make a reservation***

Marc & Meredith Lipson invite you to join them for the  
simcha of their daughter Anna's Bat Mitzvah

Friday – September 4 – 6:15 pm  
Saturday – September 5 – 9:30 am

## LUNCH AND LEARN IS RETURNING!!!



The Rabbi has been working hard on many ideas to make this an interesting and informative curriculum. We are planning to meet at Harpin's on Tuesday mornings at 10:00am beginning Oct. 20th.

We would love to know what you think!  
If you are interested in participating, please let us know.  
Send an email to Stephanie Kross at [skross@cox.net](mailto:skross@cox.net)

*Don't forget the CSI Gift Shop for all your gift needs.*

Weddings - Housewarming Gifts

Birthdays - Anniversaries - B'nai Mitzvahs

**20% Off on all  
Rosh Hashanah Gift Items  
& Rosh Hashanah Toys  
thru the Holidays**



*Free gift wrapping and local delivery.*

Call Terri or Deborah to help you with your shopping needs

## Parashat Re'eh

**Be Yourself** - The gifts brought to the Temple for the Pilgrimage festivals teach us the importance of preserving our unique identities.

*This week's torah commentary is by Rabbi Bradley Artson*

Social pressure to conform is a steady and soul-deadening force. With relentless enticements, cultures seek ways to impose similarity of worldview, of behavior, even of thought upon their members. Even contemporary society, with its laudable commitment to individuality, imposes subtle mandates through the media, through the movies, through advertisements and in countless other ways.

Small wonder, then, that the truly free soul is rare. Indeed, for many who practice religion (and for many who flee religion), that conformity and habit are nowhere more imposing than in the realm of faith and ritual.

Is it really that hard to be free? Is it really that impossible to be ourselves? Can it be that God wants us to conform?

Today's Torah portion speaks with great joy of the three Pilgrimage Festivals of the Jewish calendar: "Three times a year--on the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Pesah), on the Feast of Weeks (Shavuot), and on the Feast of Booths (Sukkot)--all your males shall appear before the Holy One your God in the place that God will choose. They shall not appear before the Holy One empty-handed, but each according to their own gift, according to the blessing that the Holy One your God has bestowed upon you."

The Torah presents a fascinating three-fold series of descriptions of our offerings: 1) We are to appear not empty handed, 2) we are to give according to one's own gift, 3) our gift is to be according to God's blessing. What do these three qualifications tell us about our place in society, the place for our personality and distinctiveness in God's world?

On the surface, these three statements are parallel, reiterating that we are to give in joy, and to give within our means. As the medieval sage, Saadia Gaon reminds us, they teach a person to offer, "what his hand can afford, according to that which God has bestowed upon you." Similarly, the Talmud insists on limiting our charitable contributions: "If one wishes to spend generously, one should not spend more than one-fifth of one's income."

The *p'shat* (simple meaning) of the Torah, most traditional sources agree, intends to regulate our voluntary religious gifts, so that they are joyously given, and given within our financial capacities. This insight is no small advance. Imagine how differently we might celebrate b'nai mitzvah, wedding parties, and Jewish communal celebrations with these stipulations in mind!

As profound as this contextual reading is, I'd like us to explore a deeper approach. Perhaps these three guidelines are meant not only as synonymous phrases, but as three plateaus, each adding a layer of meaning to extend and complement its partners.

During our joyous celebrations, we must not come empty handed. To celebrate in God's presence one must not focus only on taking, not only on our own personal joy. To celebrate in the fullest sense is to harness our private triumphs to contribute to the repair of God's world. Whether that means using a party to feed the hungry, or to link a personal milestone to some communal cause, we transform moments of self-congratulations into occasions to heal wounds and to right wrongs (and to show true gratitude) when we connect our *simchas* to *zedakah*, our parties to justice.

The second biblical qualification is that the offering we bring must be "according to his own gift." That is to say that no two people may bring precisely the same thing. Each must bring an offering reflective of one's own special talents and passions, something that illumines our own uniqueness. That gift should be, in the words of the Talmud (Gittin 59a), "in accordance with one's own acumen."

The third qualification is that the offering be "according to God's blessing." Here one can see the Torah as recognizing that human individuality is a reflection of divine love and bounty. God's greatness is reflected not in some numbing conformity, but precisely in the stunning diversity of human character, interest, and talent. As the Mishnah affirms,

"A single person [Adam] was created to proclaim the greatness of the Holy Blessing One for when people stamp many coins from the same seal, the coins are all alike. But the Holy Blessed One has stamped every human with the seal of the first person, but no two descendants are alike. Therefore everyone is required to say, 'the world was created for my sake.'"

Knowing that God wants us to be who we are--unique, special, and distinctive--can provide a desperately needed tool for fighting social conformity and thoughtless habit. We dare not appear before God empty handed, but what we bring must reflect our unique gifts and personalities if it is to reflect God's blessings, and to bless, in turn, the lives of others.

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**For other commentaries on this week's Torah portion check out these sites:**

[Aish.com](http://Aish.com)

[ISJL Taste of Torah](http://ISJL Taste of Torah)

[JTS](http://JTS)

[MyJewishLearning.com](http://MyJewishLearning.com)

[USCJ Torah Sparks](http://USCJ Torah Sparks)

**There are still two easy ways for you to help  
Congregation Sha'arey Israel can make a little extra money...**

**1. visit [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com) for your online searches. This won't cost you anything but CSI makes a penny each time you search.**

every time you



CSI earns



**2. for all your online shopping needs go to [csimacon.org](http://csimacon.org) and click on our Amazon.com link.**

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*Ways & Means* - Scott Bayme - [scottbayme@kaybeeofmacon.com](mailto:scottbayme@kaybeeofmacon.com)

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**Quick links:**

- [CSI Macon Online](#)
- [United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism \(USCJ\)](#)
- [JTS Podcast - this week's Parsha](#)
- [Audio Siddur](#)
- [Jewish Telegraphic Agency \(JTA\)](#)
- [Israeli News Broadcast – in English](#)
- [The Jewish Ethicist](#)
- [Synagogue 3000](#)
- [Learn through USCJ online](#)
- [The William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum](#)
- [United Jewish Communities \(UJC\)](#)
- [American Jewish University](#)

**For the children (or the young at heart):**

- [Torah Portion Coloring Pages](#)
- [Babaganews Torah Parasha of the week movie](#)

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