

Ha Shavuah B' Sha'arey Israel

August 27 – September 3, 2009

7 Elul – 14 Elul 5769



Candle lighting time 7:47 pm
Friday August 21

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

PARASHAT KI TETZE (Commentary on Page 3)

Annual: Deuteronomy 21:10 – 25:19 (Etz Hayim, p. 1112)

Triennial: Deuteronomy 23:8 – 24:13 (Etz Hayim, p. 1123)

Haftarah: Isaiah 54:1 – 10 (Etz Hayim, p. 1138)



We wish a Happy Birthday this week to:

Sylvia Burke, Cindy Burstein, Joshua Cohen, Chrissy Crabtree, Harold Goodrich, Alisa Gribbins,
Melissa Schwaber, Carole Karlins and Sharon Elowitz

And Happy Anniversary to:

Reeda & Doug Katz and Harriette & Marty Carter

This week we remember the Yahrzeit of:

Shirley Abromowitz, Hyman Bennett, Ralph Bobo, Meyer Mendelson Schneider, Sam Slotchiver,
Renee Benn, Joseph Klein, Abby Hirsch, Bea Marshall, Samuel Kahn, Lena Divinsky Strumar

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

The Religious School principal this Sunday will be Marc Lipson

Junior Congregation is Sunday, September 12

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.

Important Notes ~

The September Shofar will include the New Years Greetings of all members. \$5.00 will be billed per family. If you do not wish to participate, you must call or email the synagogue office no later than Noon this Friday, September 28.

The Shofar will be sent to everyone by email only, except for those members who do not have email or notified the office that they need a hard copy.

Your Synagogue account statement will also be sent via email, except for those members without email or who notified the office that they require a hard copy. We are requesting that you reply to the Synagogue Statement email to confirm that you received it. To ensure a smooth transition we will also mail the statements as well as sending them by email this first time.

You may now pay your Synagogue bill with a credit card and there will be a section on your statement for you to submit your credit card information.

If you need Guest High Holiday Tickets
Please contact Deborah Adler

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

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

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Parashat Ki Tetze

Our God, Our Matchmaker - Nurturing Marriage

This week's commentary is by Rabbi Ismar Schorsch

It takes courage to get married. Divorce statistics attest to the high risk of failure. Yet ours is not the first generation to appreciate the demanding complexity of matrimony. A charming rabbinic tale suggests that the rabbis already deemed every successful marriage a miracle, the blessed product of divine intervention.

The following dialogue, one of many, is reported in the name of R. Yosi ben Halaftha, one of the Mishnah's most prominent sages, and an unnamed Roman woman of rank. She asked R. Yosi, "In how many days did God create the world?" "In six," he answered. "And since then," she asked, "what has God been doing?" "Matching couples for marriage," responded R. Yosi. "That's it!" she said dismissively. "Even I can do that. I have many slaves, both male and female. In no time at all, I can match them for marriage." To which R. Yosi countered, "Though this may be an easy thing for you to do, for God it is as difficult as splitting the Sea of Reeds."

Whereupon, she took her leave. The next day the aristocrat lined up a thousand male and a thousand female slaves and paired them off before nightfall. The morning after, her estate resembled a battlefield. One slave had his head bashed in, another had lost an eye, while a third hobbled because of a broken leg. No one seemed to want his or her assigned mate. Quickly, she summoned R. Yosi and acknowledged. "Your God is unique and your Torah is true, pleasing and praiseworthy. You spoke wisely" (*Bereshit Rabba*, 68:4).

Beyond the obvious self-validating intent of this tale, it does weave a profound view of marriage. The institution is always in jeopardy. Even God is rattled by the odds against sustained success. The ordinary, crafting of a good marriage, is as demanding as the extraordinary, rescuing of the Israelites at the Sea of Reeds. Put differently, matrimony is the extension of creation. God did not finish the task in six days. Marriage is creation in another mode. Without it, the world would be altered and diminished. Hence, God's ongoing involvement. As part of the fabric of the creative process, marriage requires divine

attention. By freighting marriage with cosmic weight, the rabbis gave poetic expression to the daunting difficulty of making it work. No need for prosaic analysis. Because the ideal often exceeds our grasp, we wait for moments of grace.

What prompts me to cite this fragment of rabbinic theology is a seldom noticed marriage prescription in this week's parashah. Though not given to easy implementation, its underlying sensitivity cautions against any mechanistic approach to the universal challenge of procreation. The law reads: "When a man has taken a bride, he shall not go out with the army or be assigned to it for any purpose; he shall be exempt for one year for the sake of his household, to give happiness to the woman he has married" (Deuteronomy 24:5).

Interestingly, the law follows directly on the heels of several injunctions dealing with divorce (Deuteronomy 24:1-4), as if to suggest that divorce might be averted by nurturing the marriage, especially at the outset. The obligation to do so devolves explicitly on the husband. During the first year of marriage, he is to be unencumbered by responsibilities that would remove him for any length of time from his household. His task is transitive, as Rashi stresses, to make his wife happy and not merely to live happily with her.

In his medieval compilation of the Torah's 613 commandments in order of appearance in the Torah, entitled *Sefer ha-Hinukh* (a halakhic primer), the unknown Spanish author lists this particular commandment as number 582. He explains that freed from distractions, the groom is expected to become physically compatible with his bride, to focus his sexual desires solely on her and to implant her image and deeds in his heart. According to the author, two benefits would accrue from such bonding: the groom would be habituated to regarding other women as off-limits and together, bride and groom would create a wholesome environment for filling God's earth with good children.

I don't think the *Sefer ha-Hinukh* misstates the intent of the biblical legislation. Whatever economic arrangements attended marriage in the Torah and Talmud, there is no doubt that for the institution to flourish, it requires a large infusion of mutual respect and considerateness. We should not blithely assume that all arranged marriages of an earlier age were loveless. By envisioning a year of uninterrupted courtship after the wedding, the Torah was seeking to blend two distinct personalities into a harmonious union for life.

And that is precisely the goal the Torah had set for itself when it coupled marriage with creation at the beginning. After recounting the formation of Eve, the Torah resoundingly declaims: "Hence a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife so that they become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). Marriage is a form of restoration. A partnership based on utilitarian considerations can never end our existential loneliness. Yet for husband and wife ever to merge into one, their relationship must be cemented by love.

In this spirit, we are told later, and not by accident, that Isaac's love for Rebecca, his bride from abroad, welled up only after they were married (Genesis 25:67). A love that does not deepen and expand with shared experience is destined to wither.



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

Aish.com

ISJL Taste of Torah

JTS

MyJewishLearning.com

USCJ Torah Sparks

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Congregation Sha'arey Israel can make a little extra money...**

1. visit www.goodsearch.com for your online searches. This won't cost you anything but CSI makes a penny each time you search.

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2. for all your online shopping needs go to csimacon.org and click on our Amazon.com link.

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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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