

DEBAR TORAH by RABBI ROHDE

Give “Blind”: Like an Artisan, Give Your Best - Quality Over Quantity

“And they received from Moses all the offering which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of making the sanctuary withal. And they brought yet unto him free offerings every morning. And all the wise men, that wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his handiwork which they made; And they spoke unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the handiwork, which the LORD commanded to make. And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more handiwork for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. For the work they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and in excess” (Ex. 36:3-7)

According to the Torah, the campaign for contributions towards the building of the Tabernacle was so successful that the project’s directors told Moses that they had more than enough, and Moses had to discourage the people from bringing any more. Can anyone nowadays imagine such a fundraising campaign which was so oversubscribed that contributions had to be actively discouraged?!!! And indeed, couldn’t have they just saved continuing contributions for later, for the general regular operations budget, since regular obligatory sacrifices always have to be kept up and paid, for, or else use the extra for special occasions? But it’s apparent to me that what is largely being spoken of here as being in excess is not contributions of silver and gold but rather the products of handiwork such as cloth and tanned leather pieces. Even the wood brought has been “carved wood,” wood cut into boards, and “quarried stone.” This is why there are continued contributions every morning: The people kept producing more. Metals, especially precious metals, on the other hand, would likely have run out much faster. It is possible to mine and refine metals, but that is a much slower and less continuous process. This is why there is such an emphasis here upon artisanship among the “wise of heart”: We are speaking of artisanal handiwork. The “contributions” themselves are synonymously referred to as “מלאכה”, meaning “work” or “craft” or, more specifically, “handiwork” which is “made,” not merely given. And indeed, the immediately-following section discusses the making of the “curtains” and hanging tarps or tenting materials, all textiles and leathers, which constituted the Tabernacle tent.

Although it takes skill and craft, which is elitist because not everyone is skilled, gifts based upon handiwork production allow for a fuller participation by the entire people. God’s blessing of plenty, satiety, and fullness can be more readily be found when the people give of the fruits of their productive labor. The products of labor are also less easy to quantify than cash. We work hard, and somehow, we reap God’s blessing. This in some ways made the desert Tabernacle ideal, and the more permanent Temple in our Shekalim *haftarah* less so. Worn-out fabrics can simply be replaced. Solid-walled structures, on the other hand, develop cracks and structural problems which require more expert and sophisticated workmanship. Walls require reinforcement; they can’t simply be torn out and replaced. In the solid-structured Temple, professionals are required, and these must be paid for their services. There is no excess of money in our haftarah, and the funds have to be collected carefully and kept track of carefully. Money kept as cash is slippery and can easily disappear: Hence the invention of the first “pushka,” the charity box, in our Haftarah. There never seems to be quite enough money. Money is far too easy to quantify, and those who deal with it are far less likely to reap God’s blessing. Only when the money is hidden away in a box, hidden from the Evil Eye of constant numerical quantification, will God’s Blessing be found, so that there will be adequate resources if not overabundance. One of the “backwards” lessons we learn from the comparison of numerical strength in warfare to monetary wealth is that counting monetary strength is indeed as deceptive as counting manpower strength in war. God’s Blessing in production is what constitutes true wealth, just as God’s Blessing in fortitude, loyalty and courage gives victory on the battlefield. We should give like the wise-hearted artisans, aiming for the best which we can produce in the quality of what we can give. Exact quantities should be shielded from the jealous Evil Eyes of ourselves and others roundabout. When we conceal the quantities, as in the charity box, aiming foremost, like the artisan, upon giving our best, the quality of what we give, then we can also hope to eventually find God’s quantitative blessing of adequacy and satisfaction.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL
The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

Shabbat Vayakhel-Shekalim

March 8-9, 2024 | 29 Adar I, 5784

SCHEDULE

Kaplan: p. 464 | Haftarah: p. 1270 | Shekalim: p. 440

Hertz: p. 373 | Haftarah: p. 992 | Shekalim: p. 352

Candle Lighting | 5:38 pm

Evening Services | 5:45 pm

Friday Night Lights | following services | Rabbi Soloveichik

Shabbat Adar Community Dinner | following Friday Night Lights | *for registered guests* | Levy Auditorium

Zemirot | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary

Shahrit | 9:00 am | Main Sanctuary

Final Year of Hope Lecture | At Morning Services | Rabbi Soloveichik

Tot Shabbat | 10:00 am | Fidanque Youth Room

Youth Groups | 10:00 am | Elias Room

Jr. Congregation | 10:30 am | Little Synagogue

Kiddush | following services

Shabbat Afternoon Class | 4:50 pm | Rabbi Soloveichik | Main Sanctuary

Teen Shiur | 4:50 pm | Baruch-Lev Kelman | Elias Room

Evening Services | 5:35 pm

Habdala | 6:30 pm

Parent-Child Learning | 7:30 pm | Rabbi Rohde | Elias Room

Rosh Hodesh VeAdar begins on Saturday night.

Remember to turn your clocks forward one hour on Saturday night.

Weekday Service Times

Sunday Morning: 8:05 am

Monday-Friday Mornings: 7:05 am

Sunday-Thursday Evenings (**Minha & Arbit**): 6:30 pm

THIS WEEKEND

Parent-Child Learning

Final Session: THIS Saturday night, March 9 | 7:30 pm
Jingle-Writing Workshop with Rabbi Rohde

Bring them Home Now

“150 Days In Hell” - Rally + March

This Sunday, March 10 | 11:00 am

NEW LOCATION: Naumburg Bandshell, Terrace Dr. near W 72 St

REHEARSAL: Women's Megillat Esther Reading

Ages 12-120 | Rehearsal: This Sunday, March 10 | 7:00 pm

Contact Mrs Lisa Rohde at lrohde-csi@yahoo.com to participate.

2024 YEAR OF HOPE

Rabbi Soloveichik's *Year of Hope* Lecture Series

"Judaica and Us: The Story of the Jewish People in Ten Objects"

Final Lecture: THIS Shabbat | At Morning Services

The Incredible Judaica of Early America

Year of Hope Capital Campaign

Replacing our Sanctuary Carpet & Other Vital Repairs

We are now preparing to replace the carpet so that our sacred space reflects the reverence it deserves. Join our growing list of donors, and help us reach our goal of 100% participation!

View the list and donate at shearithisrael.org/giving/year-of-hope.

CSI WOMEN & GIRLS – BECOME A READER!

Teen Girls & Young Women's Shir HaShirim Reading
Shabbat, Hol HaMoed Pesah, April 27

The young women (post-Bat Mitzvah through 20s) of our congregation recite the Song of Songs on Pesah. Preparation and training provided. Newcomers welcome!

For information and to participate, please contact lrohde-csi@yahoo.com.

PURIM AT SHEARITH ISRAEL

Visit shearithisrael.org for the full Purim schedule & activities

A Purim Celebration Like No Other!

Portuguese Pirate Purim Parley with Baruch-Lev Kelman

Saturday Night, March 23 | During Megillah Reading

For Kids of All Ages (under 5 must be accompanied by an adult)

Dropoff in Elias Room at 8:00 pm | Come in costume!

Join Baruch-Lev for an evening of swashbuckling fun and Purim learning, during the first megillah reading!

Purim Breakfast

Sunday, March 24 | Following Megillah Reading

Following the readings of the megillah, join us for a festive Purim Breakfast!

Matanot L'Ebyonim

It is one of the mitzvot of Purim to give charity to the poor. Your online gift or check made out to the "Rabbi's Discretionary Fund," will be distributed by Rabbi Soloveichik on Purim to those in need.

Sisterhood Mishloah Manot Pickup

If you chose to receive a Mishloah Manot package, pickup will take place at the synagogue during Purim. You can pick up your package from the table outside the Levy Auditorium. *Note that packages are only available for pickup at the Synagogue; there will be no package delivery.*

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mazal tob to **Nicole & Raanan Agus**, upon the birth of a grandson, born to their children, Elianna & Alex Agus. Congratulations as well to the great-grandparents, **Renee & Avie Schreiber**.

Mazal tob to **Gilda & Rabbi Marc Angel**, upon the marriage of their grandson, Max Nussbaum, to Rina Feldman.

Mazal tob to **Meryl Jaffe & Adam Hurwich** (CSI Clerk), upon the birth of a granddaughter, born to their children, Talia Hurwich & Leigh Feinman.

Hazak u'Barukh to the **Morning Study group** upon completing the Book of Jeremiah. This dedicated group meets weekdays from 8:30-9:00 am on Zoom. They will start the book of Ezekiel this coming week. Contact Z. Edinger to get the zoom link or for more information.