

# The Mishkan at Central Synagogue

Rabbi Sarah Berman and Cantorial Intern Jenna McMillan

*Parashat Mishpatim*, 13 February 2021 / 1 Adar 5781

(OOS) Opening Song / *Mi sh'Nichnas Adar*

Morning Blessings of Gratitude / *Birchot HaShachar*

*Waking / Modeh Ani*

(74) Gathering / *Mah Tovu*

*Our Bodies / Asher Yatzar*

(78) Our Souls / *Elohai Neshama*

(80) Everyday Miracles / *Nisim B'Chol Yom*

Songs of Praise / *P'sukei D'Zimrah*

(97) Psalm 145 / *Ashrei - Va'anachnu*

(100) Psalm 150 / *Hallelujah*

The Shema and its Blessings

(108) Call to Prayer / *Bar'chu*

(110) The Wonder of Creation / *Yotzeir Or*

*The Loving Gift of Torah / Ahavah Rabah*

(114) Proclaiming God's Oneness / *Shema*

(116) Love for God's Teaching / *V'ahavta*

(122) Redemption / *Mi Chamocha - Tzur Yisrael*

Standing Prayer / *Tefillah / Amidah*

(124) Open our Mouths / *Adonai Sefatai Tiftach*

(126) God of Our Ancestors / *Avot*

(128) Life-Giving and Powerful God / *G'vurot*

(130) Sanctifying God's Name / *Kedushah*

*We Give Thanks / Modim Anachnu Lach*

*Prayer for Peace / Sim Shalom*

*May Our Prayers Be Heard / Yih'yu L'ratzon*

(124) Prayer for Peace / *Oseh Shalom*

Giving Praise / *Hallel*

(268) Opening blessing / *Hallel B'racha*

(279) Psalm 113 / *B'zzeit Yisrael*

(274-5) Psalm 118 / *Ozi V'zimrat Yah / Pitchu Li*

Torah Learning (86)

Prayer for Healing / *Nachamu (Mi Shebeirach)* (OOS)

Proclaiming God's Greatness / *Merger Poem* (OOS)

Mourners' Prayer / *Kaddish Yatom* (294)

Closing / *V'shamru, Kiddush, Motzi*

*Supplementary Prayers and Songs:*

***Nachamu (Mi Shebeirach) (Elana Arian)***

*Nachamu, nachamu ami, yomar Eloheichem*

Comfort us in our wilderness

Comfort us as we struggle to take care of one another

Comfort us in our wilderness

Comfort us as we struggle with this world

***Merger Poem (Judy Chicago)***

And then all that has divided us will merge

And then compassion will be wedded to power

And then softness will come to a world that is harsh and unkind

And then all people will be gentle

And then all people will be strong

And then no person will be subject to another's will

And then all will be rich and free and varied

And the greed of some will give way to the needs of the many

And then all will share equally in the earth's abundance

And then all will care for the sick and the weak and the old

And then all will nourish the young

And then all will cherish life's creatures

And then all will live in harmony with each other and the Earth

And then everywhere will be called Eden once again.

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Text Study: Reproductive Justice

## Exodus 21:22-25

וְכִי־יִנְצוּ אֲנָשִׁים וְנִגְפוּ אִשָּׁה הָרָה וַיִּצְאוּ יְלָדֶיהָ וְלֹא יְהִי אָסוֹן עָנֹשׁ יַעֲנֹשׁ בְּאִשֶּׁר יִשִּׁית עָלֶיהָ בְּעַל הָאִשָּׁה וְנָתַן בְּפָלְאִים: וְאִם־  
אָסוֹן יְהִי וְנִתְּתָה נַפְשׁ תַּחַת נַפְשׁ: עַיִן תַּחַת עַיִן לָשׁוֹן תַּחַת לָשׁוֹן יָד תַּחַת יָד רֶגֶל תַּחַת רֶגֶל: כְּנִיָּה תַּחַת כְּנִיָּה פֶּצַע תַּחַת פֶּצַע  
חַבּוּרָה תַּחַת חַבּוּרָה:

When men fight, and one of them pushes a pregnant woman and a miscarriage results, but no other damage ensues, the one responsible shall be fined/punished according as the woman's husband may exact from him, the payment to be based on reckoning. But if other damage ensues, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.

□ Question: What situation does this passage describe? What does it suggest about the status of a fetus?

## Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 74a

And concerning this (Ex. 21:22-25) Rabbi Elazar says: The verse is speaking of striving to kill, where each man was trying to kill the other. The proof is that it is written: "But if other damage ensues, then you shall give life for life" (Exodus 21:23), and if there was no intention to kill, why should he be executed? And even so, the Merciful One states: "But no other damage ensues, he shall be punished," teaching that he must pay the monetary value of the fetus to the woman's husband.

□ Question: How does this rabbinic commentary expand your understanding of the life and value of a woman, and the status and value of a fetus?

## Sheila Katz and Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg, "The Jewish Case for Abortion Rights," *Newsweek*, 29 June 2020

...Other authoritative Jewish texts further emphasize that the fetus does not have the status of personhood, describing it as "mere fluid" for the first 40 days after conception and part of the pregnant person's body thereafter. This led some rabbinic authorities to rule that, as Rabbi Jacob Emden did in the 18th century, "there is reason to be lenient [in permitting abortion]... only so as to save her from woe," or as Rabbi Eliezer Waldenberg did in 1978, abortion is a valid choice when not terminating might cause "suffering and emotional pain."

...This is not just a matter of Jewish law, but of Jewish values. We consider *pikuach nefesh*, preserving life, to be one of our most critical commandments, and, more broadly, building a just society to be of ultimate Jewish concern—and, with abortion access, safety, justice, freedom, and lives are at stake.

□ Question: What conclusion do Katz and Ruttenberg draw from Jewish texts about abortion rights? What conclusion do you come to?