



Shabbat Shalom

23 Tevet 5777
January 21, 2017

Parashat Shemot

This Week at Beth El Synagogue

Saturday, January 21:

Shabbat Mishnah Study	8:45 am
B'nai Mitzvah Peer Tutoring	9:00 am
Orthodox Kehillah Services	9:00 am
Main Sanctuary Services	9:30 am
Children's Services	10:30 am
Havdalah	6:06 pm

Sunday, January 22:

CANCELED Pancake Palooza	
Talmud Torah (Pre-K-7th grade)	9:30 am
Weekly Sunday Minyan	9:30 am
Shiva Minyan-- at the home of David Bronstein and Carla Fenson	7:00 pm

Tuesday, January 24:

Va'ad HaChinuch Meeting	7:00 pm
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Wednesday, January 25:

Weekly Wednesday Minyan	8:00 am
Talmud Torah (2nd-6th grade)	4:40 pm

Thursday, January 26:

Executive Committee Meeting	8:30 am
Tish at Rabbi Greyber's	7:30 pm

Friday, January 27:

Candle Lighting	5:12 pm
Kabbalat Shabbat	6:00 pm
Community Shabbat Dinner	7:00 pm
"Embracing Imperfections": Rabbi Mark Borovitz	8:00 pm

Upcoming Events:

- ✧ Sat. 1/28 Shabbat Mishnah Study
- ✧ Sat. 1/28 B'nei Mitzvah Peer Tutoring
- ✧ Sat. 1/28 Shabbat Morning Orthodox Kehillah Services
- ✧ Sat. 1/28 Shabbat Morning Services
- ✧ Sat. 1/28 Post Kiddush Talk with Rabbi Mark Borovitz
- ✧ Sat. 1/28 USY Formal
- ✧ Sat. 1/28 Kadima Ice Skating
- ✧ Sun. 1/29 Talmud Torah
- ✧ Sun. 1/29 Weekly Sunday Minyan
- ✧ Sun. 1/29 Shiur with Rabbi Borovitz and Book Signing
- ✧ Sun. 1/29 Talmud Torah Faculty Meeting
- ✧ Sun. 1/29 Rabbi Mark Borovitz Teen Talk: "How To Deal With The Pressures Of Every Day Life"
- ✧ Tue. 1/31 MoB Bowling
- ✧ Wed. 2/1 Weekly Wednesday Minyan
- ✧ Wed. 2/1 Talmud Torah (2nd-6th grade)
- ✧ Thu. 2/2 Synagogue Life Committee Meeting
- ✧ Thu. 2/2 Tish at Rabbi Greyber's
- ✧ Fri. 2/3 Kiotot Bet/Gimel/Dalet Shabbat Services and Dinner
- ✧ Fri. 2/3 USY Shabbat Home Hosted

Gabbai Schedule

Contact the scheduled gabbai if you'd like to request an *aliyah*, other honor, or to volunteer to lead a service in the Main Sanctuary. Gabbaim will try to accommodate requests made on Shabbat morning (by 10:15am, before the Torah service) but we ask for your understanding if all honors have been previously claimed during the week.



1/28 Vaera/RH Sh'vat Jon Wahl jmwahl@email.unc.edu	919-942-3827
2/4 Bo Diane Markoff Diane.markoff@earthlink.net	919-969-8953
2/11 Beshallah-Shira Elise Goldwasser Elise.goldwasser@duke.edu	919-956-8871
2/18 Yitro Roger Perilstein rperilstein@hrc-pa.com	919-286-9814

This weekend's Kiddush lunch is hosted by:

Roy Schonberg & Cheryl Marcus, Charlie van der Horst & Laura Svetkey, Ron Strauss & Sue Slatkoff, Artie Axelbank & Susi Lief, Carla Fenson & David Bronstein, and Marsha Schonberg

Beth El is a welcoming community of members with diverse backgrounds, ideas, levels of knowledge, and observance. We are an egalitarian Conservative congregation, and a member of the Southeast Seaboard district of United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ), and the Orthodox Union.

Parashat Shemot

Adapted from <http://www.jtsa.edu/jts-torah-online>

Among the undercurrents in our portion are the consequences of forgetting and remembering on rescue and liberation, and of seeing and knowing on oppression and death. The Israelites' fortunes are transformed, and transformed again, so rapidly in our portion's opening, it seems the Torah wants to signal the tenuousness of circumstances that seem secure. The Torah goes to the trouble of naming the eleven sons of Jacob who relocate to Egypt (Joseph already having been there) and reports that their entire generation passed away. In the space of 11 words—and seemingly no time at all—their 70-member extended family explodes in number and becomes an innumerable presence to be reckoned with in Egypt (Exod. 1:1-7).

And then we read: "A new king arose over Egypt who knew not Joseph" (Exodus 1:8).

Fear and suspicion, conspiracy dressed up as prudence, and exploitation and oppression follow immediately. It only gets worse.

Why is the king's ignorance of Joseph the arrow that fells Israel's rising fortunes? Why should the king have been expected to know Joseph in the first place? We've only just learned that Joseph and his entire generation had died. The Israelite population had to have grown over time. So Joseph's critical role in saving Egypt, which was the subject of several elaborate chapters at the end of Genesis, was already in the distant past by the time this new king arose. So he wasn't a history buff. So what?

On the other hand, by storing grain and nationalizing land and labor during the famine years, Joseph had been Egypt's savior. How could anyone—a king, no less—be ignorant of this essential history? To know Joseph was to know Egypt's formative past. For a king *not* to know Joseph, then, was not to know Egypt itself. And in the ancient world, the king *was* Egypt.

Rashi cites a debate between Rav and Shemuel in the Talmud (BT Sotah 11a). Rav takes the Torah at its word: Egypt's new king was ignorant of his country's indebtedness to Joseph and his descendants and took a harsh line against alarming developments. Shemuel, noting that the Torah never reported the death of the Pharaoh of Joseph's day, while it *does* report the death of Joseph, understands rather that the same king reversed course and issued new, oppressive decrees. Rav cannot imagine that one who knew Joseph would turn against the Israelites. Perhaps Shemuel, who had access to the Persian court in his day, was more attuned to shifting allegiances. He sees Pharaoh's ignorance, and the decisions he took in consequence of it, as willful.

There is a certain poignant irony in this matter of not knowing Joseph. It's not the first time Joseph has been forgotten to ill effect. We read a few weeks ago that when Joseph was thrown in jail on false charges of assaulting Potiphar's wife, he asked that the steward, whose dream he correctly interpreted, would advocate for him upon his return to Pharaoh's court. But the steward forgot Joseph, who languished in jail (Gen. 40:23).

A little further in our portion, the significance of the king's not knowing becomes apparent. Meanwhile, the oppression has deepened and advanced to appalling infanticide. True, there are the heroine midwives, Shifra and Puah, and the incredible faithfulness and bravery of Yokheved (Moses's mother), Miriam, and Pharaoh's own daughter. But the wretchedness of the Israelites' situation is laid bare when the Hebrew whose life Moses saved repays Moses's act against the state with exposure, and the people resent and reject Moses's attempts at just leadership. Moses flees. We learn in 2:23 that the king dies (for sure, this time) and the Israelites allow themselves to hope. They cry out for relief. God attends on their suffering. The Torah brings an astonishing flurry of verbs: "God *heard* their moaning, and God *remembered* His covenant... And God *saw* the Israelites, and God *knew*" (v. 24-25).

God knew? What did God know? The passage of time is irrelevant for God, and as we affirm on Rosh Hashanah: אין שכח לפני כסא כבודך. There is no such thing as forgetfulness before God's throne.

Rather, the Torah is telling us that *knowing* is what makes relationships intimate, engaged, and compelling. Knowing is the opening of empathy and justice. For God to remember is for God to respond *hineini*, I am here, to the people's cries. This is exactly what God tells Moses when, at the burning bush, He commissions him to undertake the liberation:

"I indeed have seen the abuse of My people that is in Egypt, and its outcry because of its taskmasters. I have heard, *for I know its pain*— ידעתי את מכאוביו. And I have come down to rescue it from the hand of Egypt..." (Exod. 3:7-8)

Pharaoh lays down the challenge to accomplishing the rescue that knowing God would have compelled. When Moses, on God's authority, commands Pharaoh to release his Israelite slaves into God's service as their Sovereign, Pharaoh replies: "Who is the LORD that I should heed His voice to release Israel? I do not know the LORD, nor will I release Israel" (Exod. 5:2). Knowing has consequences and so does not knowing. Bringing Pharaoh to know God is one of the aims of the Exodus.

Bringing ourselves to know God, and living by the ritual, social, ethical, and political implications of that knowledge, are some of the aims of Judaism. The Exodus, together with Creation, is its foundational lesson. We may shake our heads that Pharaoh "knew not Joseph." But I think the Torah is elbowing us at the same time, asking, "Do you?" It's not a matter of being history buffs. It's about owning our past. Pharaoh ought to have known Joseph and acted on that knowledge. Similarly, Judaism expects us to know our own story intimately and also to know the pain of the world today—whether close by or seemingly remote—and to act on that knowledge.

Refuah Shleymah רפואה שלמה

Batya bat Shprintza (Barbra Roberman)	Sachs)	Anne Boyd
Chana bat Malka	OVADYA ben Esther Malkah (OVADYA Fleishman)	Alan Marty
Chana Leah bat Sarah (Anna Crollman)	Sarah bat Hinda (Sylvia Dante)	Christine Walters
David ben Sarah (David Leitner)	Sarah Gittel bat Rut (Sue Perlo)	Ezra Rapport
David Yosef ben Avraham v'Chana (Donald Goldstein)	Shalom ben Sprintze (Stanley Ramati)	Helen Rosenberg
Esther bat Yankale Sura	Shimon ben Shlomo haLevi v'Sheyne (Stuart Levine)	Jack Reich
Esther Malka bat Chaya Fruma (Elinor Fleishman)	Shira Batya bat Meirav	Jeff Shields
Herschel David ben Aharon haKohen u' Bela Miriam	Shmuel ben Shoshana	Joyce Romm
Israel ben Zalman u'Malkah	Shraga ben Devorah Leah (Phillip Samuel Ramati)	Ken Walkers
Malka bat Leah (Meg Anderson)	Shraga Feivel ben Leib (Philip Skoletsky)	Lauren Schiro
Malka Chana bat Basha Rachel	Tuvia ben Shmuel v'Tziporah (Tovia Lebovich)	Netta Boswell
Masha bat Fanny (Marsha Schonberg)	Tziporah bat Esther	Orrie Wilner
M'cor Eyshel bat Esther Tzvia	Yakov ben Sarah (Jacob Schonberg)	Richard Roth
Mishulamit bat Maryam (Marcia Hogan)	Ya'akov Roni ben Margalit	Sidney Barker
Miriam Shifra bat Issur (Margaret)	Alvin Jacobson	

Please contact the synagogue office with any additions or changes to this list.

Yahrzeits יארצייט

May their memory be a blessing

Pat Marcus	Esther Mandel
Jerry Becker	Rolfe Moulder
Mary Hart	Frida Urow
Ann Jackson	Edwin Price
Alfred Korkin	
Jack Gindes	
Irene Lyons	
Arlene Ammerman	

BE Remembered

Beth El Synagogue extends condolences to David Bronstein, Carla Fenson, and Sarah and Joel Bronstein on the death of David's beloved mother, Sarah and Joel's beloved grandmother— Thelma Bronstein— who passed away on Monday, January 16, in Vancouver, Canada. Shiva minyan will take place on Sunday, January 22, at the home of David Bronstein and Carla Fenson.

Beth El Synagogue extends condolences to Sam and Kathy Fuerst and their family on the death of Sam's beloved brother -- Robert Louis Fuerst -- who passed away on Friday, January 6, in Raleigh.

Beth El Synagogue extends condolences to Jennifer Parkhurst on the death of her mother -- Dorothy Shor Thompson -- who passed away on January 6, in Durham, NC. Information about shiva minyanim will be forthcoming.

May the Ever Present One comfort them among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

Beth El Synagogue
 1004 Watts Street
 Durham, NC 27701
 919.682.1238
info@betheldurham.org
www.betheldurham.org
 Rabbi: Daniel Greyber
 Rabbi Emeritus: Steven Sager
 Synagogue President: Noah Pickus