



Shabbat Shalom

13 Sh'vat 5776
January 23, 2016

Parashat Beshallah

This Week at Beth El Synagogue

Saturday, January 23:

Havdalah—6:15 pm

NO B'NAI MITZVAH PEER TUTORING

NO MONTHLY PARSHA STUDY

NO HEALING YOGA

Shabbat Mishnah Study 8:45 am

Orthodox Kehillah Services 9:00 am

Main Sanctuary Services, 9:30 am

I.L. Peretz Course with Sheva Zucker 1:00 pm

Kitah Gimel Family Beit Midrash 5:15 pm

Sunday, January 24:

Hebrew Level I with Donna Goldstein 8:30 am

Weekly Sunday Minyan/Shiva Minyan 9:30 am

Hebrew Level II with Donna Goldstein 9:30 am

Talmud Torah (PreK-7) 9:30 am

Kitah Vav Family Beit Midrash 10:15 am

Walking with Mitzvot #2 10:15 am

AlephBet Movies 12:30 pm

Ice Skating with Kadima 1:00 pm

Monthly Durham Community Café Dinner 5:30 pm

Monday, January 25:

Tuesday, January 26:

Va'ad Meeting 7:00 pm

Wednesday, January 26:

Weekly Wednesday Minyan 8:00 am

Talmud Torah (2-6) 4:15 pm

Thursday, January 28:

Friday, January 29:

Candle Lighting—5:21 pm

Kitah Zayin Friday Class 5:00 pm

Kabbalat Shabbat Services 6:00 pm

(Bat Mitzvah of Qiuhu Louie)

USY Shabbat Dinner at Davis Family 6:00 pm

This weekend's Kiddush lunch is hosted by:

*Tobin Fried and Scott Schwartz,
Andrea and Kevin Ginsberg,
Debbie Goldstein and Steve Prince, Caitlyn and Dan
Hirschman, Sharon and Eric Lipp,
& Marni and Howard Wizwer*

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.

Upcoming Events:

- ✧ Sat. 1/30 Shabbat Mishnah Study
- ✧ Sat. 1/30 Shabbat Morning Orthodox Kehillah Service
- ✧ Sat. 1/30 B'nai Mitzvah Peer Tutoring
- ✧ Sat. 1/30 Shabbat Morning Services (Bat Mitzvah of Qiuhu Louie)
- ✧ Sat. 1/30 Children's Services
- ✧ Sat. 1/31 I.L. Peretz Course with Sheva Zucker
- ✧ Sun. 1/31 Hebrew with Donna Goldstein
- ✧ Sun. 1/31 Weekly Sunday Minyan
- ✧ Sun. 1/31 Talmud Torah (PreK-7)
- ✧ Sun. 1/31 Annual Blood Drive
- ✧ Sun. 1/31 Walking with Mitzvot #3
- ✧ Sun. 1/31 Community Tu B'Shevat Celebration
- ✧ Tue. 2/2 Synagogue Life Meeting
- ✧ Wed. 2/3 Weekly Wednesday Minyan
- ✧ Wed. 2/3 Talmud Torah (2-6)
- ✧ Fri. 2/5 Kabbalat Shabbat Services
- ✧ Fri. 2/5 Community Shabbat Dinner

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.



1/23 Beshalach
Diane Markoff
diane.markoff@earthlink.net 919-969-8953

1/30 Yitro
Bernie Fischer
Bernie.fischer@duke.edu 919-493-0306

2/6 Mishpatim
Roger Perilstein
rperilstein@hrc-pa.com 919-286-9814

2/13 Terumah
Alan Mandel
andelcpa@gmail.com 917-589-5673

Parashat Beshallah

Adapted from <http://www.learn.jtsa.edu>

From the air Eretz Mitzrayim, “the narrow land” of Egypt, reveals itself as a vast expanse of sand and stone broken only by the twisting dark line of the Nile. I saw this first hand as a student in 1985, but you can look as well through satellite photos. On either side of the great river, a thin strip of green extends for a few kilometers to the east and west. The Nile looks like a mighty green cobra whose tail points at the first cataract near Sudan, and whose broad triangular head is the delta fanning out to strike the Mediterranean Sea.

The splitting of the sea, bekiat Yam Suf, is a mirror image of Mitzrayim. Instead of a vast expanse of desert with a river running through it, a vast expanse of water with a pathway of land magically leads from one side to the other, me'avdut l'heirut, from slavery to freedom. The split sea is an instant inversion of Israel's captivity in Egypt; the passage is a reversal of fortune and a moment of national rebirth.

The splitting of the seas certainly dramatic and worthy of its famous song. But the thrill quickly passes, yielding to the terrifying solitude of the desert. In the growing swell of murmurs, the essential questions bubble up. They come out as complaints—what will we eat or drink? Are we going to die here? Why did we ever leave Egypt? Behind these complaints lies the greatest question of the Torah—what follows freedom? How do we survive? Now that we are free, what purpose will we find in life beyond mere survival? Thousands of years later, these remain the core questions of Jewish identity.

Exodus 16 offers two responses to the challenge of freedom. According to Professor Stephen Geller, one response can be called “covenantal” and the other “cultic” (“Manna and Sabbath: A Literary-Theological Reading of Exodus 16,” Interpretation (Jan. 2005, 59/1)).

The covenantal tradition in our portion is concerned with the testing of Israel. God wants to know whether these people are worthy heirs of the ancestors, and whether they can be entrusted with the Torah and the Promised Land. Early indications are not good. These people, including Moses, are always second-guessing God. As such, the story of the manna and of Shabbat is about God testing Israel to see if they will finally obey Adonai. We read:

If you will heed the LORD your God diligently, doing what is upright in God's sight, giving ear to God's commandments and keeping all of God's laws, then I will not bring upon you any of the diseases that I brought upon the Egyptians, for I the LORD am your healer. (Ex. 15:26)

The covenantal version of the manna story can be understood in this regard as a course of obedience training. Israel's food supply is tightly regulated by God—they are allowed a one day supply; any attempts to hoard for tomorrow turn rancid and wormy. On Shabbat, the rule is reversed—now they have to collect a two-day supply, and any attempts to gather on Shabbat are viewed as disobedience. First they must work, then they must rest, precisely as instructed.

According to this narrative, the developmental task of the desert generation is to mark the transition from being servants of Pharaoh to becoming servants of the LORD. The point of Shabbat is to test Israel's acceptance of divine sovereignty, and to trust in God's beneficence.

This theme becomes an important aspect of Jewish spirituality throughout the ages. Rabbi Shlomo Efraim Luntshitz (16th century) writes, “One who has bread in his basket and still asks “what will I eat tomorrow” is of little faith, and so the people who desist from going to gather food on Shabbat demonstrate trust that what they collected yesterday will suffice. And if so, then they can follow God's teachings, for whoever is not whole in trust will spend all of his days pursuing wealth, and when will he turn to focus on God and the Torah?”

Shabbat then is about obedience, but perhaps also about asserting confidence in God and liberating oneself to pursue spiritual goals in addition to material ones. While obedience is not a popular mode of religious expression in our day, there is still a form of liberty that emerges from the acceptance of the command to stop gathering and rest.

However, there is another, cultic mode of spirituality evident in the Manna narrative. In this thread, the gift of daily bread and the ritual of Sabbath rest is a human reenactment of the divine drama of creation. In our portion, the daily bread is doubled on Friday, just as, in Genesis 1, the sixth day is doubly blessed and called “tov me'od”.

The weekly ritual of stopping in our gathering of food is a human counterpart to the divine pause in creation. Geller says that the seventh day pause from labor is a way of demarcating the prior labors to bless them. The collection of manna is an act of partnership between God and Israel, and so too is the cessation of collection on Shabbat. Shabbat is a “brit” and an “ot,” a sign of partnership between God and Israel, as we read later in Exodus 31:

It shall be a sign for all time between Me and the people of Israel. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day God rested from work and was refreshed. (31:17)

The significance of this version of the manna story is that Israel is being cultivated as God's partner in creation. The point becomes not so much about obedience as it is about parallelism between human and divine creativity.

So, we have two manna traditions. The testing mode teaches Israel that it must accept limits on its autonomy in order to make sense of freedom. Without such limits life will be a ceaseless search for food and wealth. The command not to collect too much, and sometimes to stop collecting altogether reminds us to curb our anxious accumulation of resources and to live together with God.

Refuah Shleymah רפואה שלמה

Adelah bat Avrom v'Chenya (Adele Abramowitz)	Ovadya ben Elinor (Ovadya Fleishman)	Cynthia Brown Elinor Fleishman
Aharon ben David u'Miriam (Alan Goldman)	Reuven ben Chanoch v'Dinah (Robert Feurst)	Ilene Jacobson Jennifer Krunkosky
Aliza Chana bat Leah	Rut bat Sarah (Suzanne Furst)	Inez McFarling
Baracha bat Sarah	Sara bat Hinda (Sylvia Dante)	Ezra Rapport
Bedonna Riva bat Sara	Sarah Gittel bat Rut (Sue Perlo)	Jack Reich Michael Rockman
Ben-Zion ben Sarah	Shira Batya bat Meirav	Pearl Rohde
Chana bat Malkah	Shmuel ben Shoshana	Richard Roth
Hannah Leah bat Sarah (Anna Crollman)	Sprinya Simcha bat Yehudah v'Chana (Susan Rosefielde)	Carmen Sadowsky Lauren Schiro
Daronit Esther bat Tuvia v'Leah (Jennifer Greyber)	Tuvia ben Shmuel v'Tziporah (Tovia Lebovich)	Susan Tolchin Christine Walters
David ben Sarah (David Leitner)	Eliyahu Chanan ben Sarah (Ed Gagnon)	Orrie Wilner Amy Wolf
Gershon Yonah ben Tevya haKohen v'Chanah Leah haLevi (Harlan Gradin)	Yisrael Yitzhak ben Yosef u'Malka (Ronald Cumin)	
Malka Hannah bat Basha Rachel	Lucretia Bell	
M'cor Eyshel bat Esther Tzvia	Sonia Berman Anne Boyd	

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

Yahrzeits יארצייט

Ada Lou Carson	Elaine Perilstein
Ruth Goldberg	Walter Schlesinger
Anita Halberstadt	Sue Speier
Arnold Korn	Carol Stollwerk
Rabbi Nathan Levinson	Mary Zeitune de Szulik
Teresa Man	Jim Wells, Sr.
Ben Ornof	

BE at Beth El

Beth El Synagogue welcomes the following new members to our community: Natalio "Danny" and Christine Budasoff

Beth El Synagogue
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Rabbi: Daniel Greyber
Rabbi Emeritus: Steven Sager
Synagogue President: Rachel Galanter