



Shabbat Shalom

9 Tevet 5777
January 7, 2017

Parashat Vayigash

This Week at Beth El Synagogue

Saturday, January 7:

NO B'nai Mitzvah Peer Tutoring
NO Healing Yoga
NO Parasha Study
NO Simchat Tot! Havdallah in Pajamas (rescheduling in process)
Shabbat Mishnah Study 8:45 am
Orthodox Kehillah Services 9:00 am
Main Sanctuary Services 9:30 am
Havdalah 6:00 pm

Sunday, January 8: Everything is schedule as usual. We will notify you by 8:00 am Sunday if anything has changed!

Talmud Torah (Pre-K-7th grade) 9:30 am
Weekly Sunday Minyan 9:30 am
Knitting Chevra 10:00 am

Monday, January 9:

Sisterhood Board Meeting 7:30 pm

Wednesday, January 11:

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

Friday, January 13:

Candle Lighting 5:05 pm
Teen NC-Wide Shabbaton 6:30 pm

Upcoming Events:

- ✧ Sat. 1/14 Shabbat Mishnah Study
- ✧ Sat. 1/14 NO B'nai Mitzvah Peer Tutoring
- ✧ Sat. 1/14 Shabbat Morning Orthodox Kehillah Services
- ✧ Sat. 1/14 Shabbat Morning Services
- ✧ Sun. 1/15 NO Talmud Torah
- ✧ Sun. 1/15 Sunday Minyan
- ✧ Sun. 1/15 MLK Day of Service
- ✧ Sun. 1/15 Sheva Zucker- Yiddish Concert
- ✧ Tue. 1/17 Finance Committee Meeting
- ✧ Tue. 1/17 Ritual Committee Meeting
- ✧ Wed. 1/18 Talmud Torah
- ✧ Wed. 1/18 Sisterhood Movie Night
- ✧ Thu. 1/19 Lunch and Learn with Rabbi Greyber
- ✧ Thu. 1/19 Tish at Rabbi Greyber's
- ✧ Sat. 1/21 Shabbat Mishnah Study
- ✧ Sat. 1/21 B'nei Mitzvah Peer Tutoring
- ✧ Sat. 1/21 Shabbat Morning Orthodox Kehillah Services
- ✧ Sat. 1/21 Shabbat Morning Services
- ✧ Sat. 1/21 Children's Services

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.



1/14 Vayechi David Rubin David_s_rubin@mindspring.com	919-967-7725
1/21 Shemot Bernie Fischer Bernie.fischer@duke.edu	919-493-0306
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

This weekend's Kiddush lunch is hosted by:

Mindy Oshrain & Steve Jaffe, Freya Kamel & Michael Lamvik, Erica & Rob Gringle, Sarah & Scott Bryce, Susan Cohen & Peter Goldberg, Maxine & Alan Stern, Rosalyn Carson-Dewitt & Toby Dewitt, and Herb Carson.

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 Vayigash

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

Our attention as readers of Vayigash is naturally riveted by the dramatic events in the first half of the portion: Joseph's self-revelation to his brothers; the family of Jacob coming to dwell in Egypt; and Jacob's declaration that he "must go and see [Joseph] before I die" (Gen. 45:28). What happens later in Vayigash, however, is to my mind of far greater significance for the future of the children of Israel and the people of Egypt alike. The second half of the portion bears truths about Jewish history and destiny as relevant now as ever before.

Pharaoh sets the plot in motion when he urges Joseph not only to have his family come to Egypt but to have them "come to me; I will give you all the best of the land of Egypt and you shall live off the fat of the land" (45:18)—this, in the second year of the famine already reducing his people to desperation! Joseph understands what his boss has in mind: he knows that "all shepherds are abhorrent to Egyptians" (46:31-34), and that Pharaoh has special need for individuals with that skill set at this moment. Joseph will tell Pharaoh that his brothers "are shepherds; they have always been breeders of livestock," and instructs them to say exactly that when Pharaoh asks their occupation. By so doing, they will gain permission to settle and remain in the region of Goshen.

Right after reading that Joseph settles his family "in the choicest part of the land of Egypt, in the region of Rameses" (47:11), thereby sustaining them despite the famine, we learn that the Egyptians have come to him begging that he allot them some of the grain he had collected from them during the seven years of plenty. Joseph does so—at a steep price. First he "gathered in all the money that was to be found in the land of Egypt," and then, when their money was gone, he orders Egyptians to bring him all their livestock (vv. 13-16). Who will manage all those herds? Who will do the work of shepherding that Egyptians have always abhorred? Who can be trusted with this task? Joseph and his family.

The next year of the famine, the lot of the average Egyptian gets worse still: having given up their money and livestock, everyone but the families of priests (such as Joseph's father-in-law) must now give their lands to Pharaoh. Not only does Joseph have them sell their land, he also has them *leave* it: "And he removed the population town by town, from one end of Egypt's border to the other" (47:21). Rashi, far from being disturbed by Joseph's part in this national tragedy, draws an explicit connection between it and the welfare of the Joseph's immediate family. "Joseph transferred the nation from city to city as a reminder that they no longer have any portion in the land. So he settled the residents of one city in its fellow [city]. Scripture did not have to write this but [did so] to inform you of Joseph's praise—that he intended to remove disgrace from upon his brothers, so that [the Egyptians] should not call [his brothers] exiles." For now, as the Artscroll edition clarifies with reference to a Talmudic passage [BT Hullin 60b], "after their resettlement, the Egyptians, too, were exiles."

This is, to me, a truly incredible commentary on an incredible verse of Scripture. Imagine: Joseph removes the opprobrium of exile from all of his family by rendering every Egyptian an exile! I can understand the lack of distaste among major commentators for Joseph's role, and even their lack of interest. After all, he was merely carrying out the will of Pharaoh, who as the god-king of Egypt had the right to do with his people as he pleased. One does not expect or demand justice of an absolute ruler. What is more, God is the apparent behind-the-scenes mover of all these events. It is God Who has placed Joseph in Pharaoh's court for the purpose of preserving the family of Israel during famine. God has caused the Children of Israel to come to Egypt, having them suffer so as to eventually take them out of there with a strong hand and outstretched arm. With that larger drama in mind, it's hard to fault Joseph for the role he plays. Pharaoh, lord of Egypt, believes that he is running the show, but Joseph knows, as we do, that in truth the Lord of Heaven and Earth is in charge. And besides, it is no surprise that the commentators are not upset at the suffering of the people who soon afterwards (Exodus 1:13) "enslaved the Children of Israel with crushing labor" and presumably acquiesced in Pharaoh's plan for genocide.

But note that, as Rashi himself makes clear, there is a direct connection between the events that transpired in the time of Joseph and the eventual enslavement of his descendants: "A new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph" (Exod. 1:8). Rashi reports the Talmudic opinion that he was the same king who ruled in Joseph's time, but that he issued new edicts, acting *as if* he did not know Joseph. In fact, he knew Joseph all too well. Having used him and his family for his own ends quite effectively, Pharaoh—having no more use for them as retainers—now turns them into slaves. The Pharaoh declared to his nation, in effect, "Remember Joseph, to whom you said (Gen. 47:25), 'You have saved our lives! We are grateful to my lord, and we shall be serfs—*avadim*—to Pharaoh,' this as Joseph's own family settled on the very best land of Egypt, acquiring holdings in it at the very moment you lost your holdings (v. 27)—let's now make them into our *avadim*, our slaves." So, "the Egyptians enslaved the children of Israel" (Exod. 1:13). And—I continue supplying the subtext to Pharaoh's decree—"Remember how Joseph removed you *le'arim*, to cities, while he and his family lived in the Rameses area of Goshen? How about if we put them to work building store-cities, *arei miskanot*, including one in Rameses?" (Exod. 1:11).

The people Israel have an outsized role to play in that story, whether as Israelites in the Pharaoh's house or present-day Jews in the White House. Actions taken by Jewish advisers and Gentile rulers in present circumstances, whatever they may be, will inevitably reverberate far into the future—in ways that are by definition impossible for all concerned to predict. Jacob will die in next week's portion, as will his son Joseph, but the portion is entitled Vayehi—"and he lived"—because God lives, and the Jewish people live, and therefore the story in which Jacob and Joseph once figured, and in which you and I figure today, continues to twist and turn its way through history.

Refuah Shleymah רפואה שלמה

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

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

Yahrzeits יארצייט

May their memory be a blessing

Elias Gadlii	Louis Meyer	Rabbi Josiah Derby
Beulah Goldstein	Daniel Berley	Louis Fridovich
Milton Hausman	Paul Bossard	Bernard Gingold
Norman Bartelmay	Fannie Cramer	J. Everett Levinsohn
Emily B. Gold	Rachel Schindelheim	Irving Saraf
Yigal Gordon	Edward Alpern	Irving Alexander
Morris Nachamson	Rosslyn Koffler Brown	Nathan Mikhalevsky
Bessie Satlof	David Carson	Aaron Rosenblatt

BE Remembered

Beth El Synagogue extends condolences to Jennifer Parkhurst on the death of her mother -- Dorothy Shor Thompson -- who passed away today, January 6, in Durham, NC. Funeral services and burial will take place in Arlington, VA. Information about shiva minyanim will be forthcoming.

Beth El Synagogue extends condolences to Elyza Richmon Halev, Jeff Spinner Halev and their family on the death of Elyza's father, Harry David Richman (Haim David), who passed away on Wednesday afternoon in Raleigh, NC.

Beth El Synagogue extends condolences to Perry Whitted, Caryn Rossi, and their families on the death of Perry's father, Byron Maurice Whitted, who passed away on January 2, 2017 at his home in Statesville, NC.

Beth El Synagogue extends condolences to Alan Rundo on the death of Alan's mother, Selma Rundo, who passed away last week in High Point, NC. Details about shiva will be sent out once they are available.

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

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 Rabbi Emeritus: Steven Sager
 Synagogue President: Noah Pickus