



Shabbat Shalom

13 Tishrei 5777
October 15, 2016

Parashat Ha'Azinu

This Week at Beth El Synagogue

Saturday, October 15:

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
Parasha Study with Rabbi Sager	9:30 am
Havdalah	6:56 pm

Sunday, October 16:

Talmud Torah (Pre-K-7th grade)	9:30 am
Weekly Sunday Minyan	9:30 am
MoB "Pizza-in-the-Hut"/Social Action Food Bag Collection	12:30 pm

Monday, October 17:

OFFICE CLOSED	
Sukkot Services	9:00 am

Tuesday, October 18:

OFFICE CLOSED	
Sukkot Services	9:00 am
Finance Committee Meeting	8:00 pm

Wednesday, October 19:

Talmud Torah (2nd-6th grade)	4:40 pm
BE Board Meeting	7:30 pm

Thursday, October 20:

Lunch and Learn with Rabbi Greyber	11:30 am
Rabbi Greyber's Siddur Class	7:30 pm

Friday, October 21:

Candle Lighting	5:47 pm
Kitah Zayin Class	6:00 pm
Kabbalat Shabbat Services (Bar Mitzvah of Jerrod Meltzer)	6:00 pm

Upcoming Events:

- ✧ Sat. 10/22 Shabbat Mishnah Study
- ✧ Sat. 10/22 Shabbat Morning Services (Bar Mitzvah of Jerrod Meltzer)
- ✧ Sat. 10/22 Shabbat Morning Orthodox Kehillah Services
- ✧ Sat. 10/22 B'nei Mitzvah Peer Tutoring
- ✧ Sat. 10/22 Chavurah Minyan
- ✧ Sun. 10/23 Talmud Torah (Pre-K-7th grade)
- ✧ Sun. 10/23 Sunday Minyan-Hoshana Raba
- ✧ Mon. 10/24 Shemini Atzeret (OFFICE CLOSED)
- ✧ Tue. 10/25 Simchat Torah (OFFICE CLOSED)
- ✧ Wed. 10/26 Talmud Torah (2nd-6th grade)
- ✧ Thu. 10/27 Ritual Committee Meeting
- ✧ Fri. 10/28 Fall Kadima Kallah
- ✧ Fri. 10/28 Got Tot Shabbat?
- ✧ Sat. 10/29 Shabbat Mishnah Study
- ✧ Sat. 10/29 Shabbat Morning Orthodox Kehillah Services
- ✧ Sat. 10/29 B'nei Mitzvah Peer Tutoring
- ✧ Sat. 10/29 Shabbat Morning Services
- ✧ Sat. 10/29 "What's Not to Like?" - Yiddish Song Festival

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.



10/15 Ha'azinu Jon Wahl jmwahl@email.unc.edu	919-942-3827
10/17 Sukkot I Isaac Price Isaac@isaacprice.org	919-866-5453
10/18 Sukkot II Roger Perilstein rperilstein@hrc-pa.com	919-286-9814
10/22 Hol Hamoed Sukkot Diane Markoff Diane.markoff@earthlink.net	919-969-8953

This weekend's Kiddush lunch is sponsored by:
Terri & Bob Tyson in memory of Louise D. Kushner, Rachel Werner & Neil Berman, Claire & Howard Rockman, Margaret & Steve Bachenheimer, Susan & Jonathan Breitzer, and Marion & Howard Diamond

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 Ha'Azinu

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

Ha'azinu is remarkable in two respects: what it says, and how it chooses to say it. My focus here will be the latter, but let's note with regard to the former that in this, his final address to the Children of Israel before a set of farewell blessings, Moses reviews all of his people's past, present, and future. He begins by calling on the God who had called Israel into being and called him to God's service. He reminds Israel that God has chosen them and still cares for their well-being. He prophesies that despite all that God and Moses have said and done, Israel will abandon God, as they had in the past. God will punish them, as in the past, but never to the point of utter destruction. In the end, God and Israel will reconcile. Why, Moses pleads, can you not understand the simple truth that YHWH alone is God, YHWH and no other? If you accept that truth and act accordingly, God will save you from your enemies—and if not, not. Remember these words, he concludes, for they are your very life and the length of your days—whereupon, rather peremptorily, God tell Moses that *his* days are over. The time for his words is done. Moses must join the forebears who speak no more (Deut. 32:46-50).

Throughout the Book of Deuteronomy—the Book of Devarim, of words—Moses has strained to convey a message for which no words, including his, could possibly be adequate. He holds out a promise of a kind of Life, a way called “Mitzvah,” such as the world had never known. How can one describe that which has never been? The words we know cannot measure up to the life we do not know. What does wholeness look like? Who can describe perfect relations to other human beings and to God?

The possibility of that Life ever coming into existence has long depended on Moses's ability to persuade his people to cross the Jordan and start living it. All he has in order to accomplish that is words. God's many miracles have never succeeded in changing the hearts and minds of Israel for very long, if they worked at all. Moses's striking of the rock to draw water from it—in frustrated recognition that words alone could not do the job assigned him—resulted in the punishment that now prevents him from crossing the Jordan with the people. Moses cannot show them the new Life; it does not exist yet, and in any case, he must remain on the river's far bank. His language will stop exactly where his feet do, and language is all he has.

It should not surprise us, then, that Moses's final plea to Israel to hear his words takes the form of *poetry*, the mode in which words are both most precious and most powerful. The meter of Ha'azinu is fixed. The language is elevated and highly metaphorical. The verses often rhyme. The fact that the Torah reaches its culmination in poetry causes us to reflect on the nature and limits of even these carefully chosen words.

Like any other poet who seeks to construct a bridge between the known world, available to memory and experience, and the as-yet unknown world that exists only in his imagination, Moses falls back on simile and metaphor. He talks about that which has never been experienced by telling what it would be *like*. All through the book, Moses has tried to convince Israel that this unseen Life is, or could be, as real as what they have known: as real as the voice at Sinai, the manna in the wilderness, the repeated salvation from enemies or starvation. He has struggled to convince them of the reality awaiting them on the Jordan's far side by detailing in the most specific terms possible—the law—what their lives and institutions will be like there. Until now, he has employed a poetry of law. That which people everywhere can know—what happens when oxen gore oxen, debts are due, or sacrifices offered—is used to instruct Israel about a sort of Life as yet unknown to anyone.

Now, in Ha'azinu, Moses employs a poetry of nature—that which is most real, tangible, and enduring—and uses metaphors to get his listeners to feel and touch what awaits them. Heaven and earth, rain and dew, rock, honey, the fruit of the field, milk of sheep, the fat of lambs, the blood of grapes, the eagle and her young, the sun, moon, mountains, hills, sea, iron, brass, corn, wine: all the ageless contours of human existence, the basic givens that surround and ground ephemeral and variable history, are invoked to invest the non-yet-experienced with reality.

But even here, despite the wonder and gratitude that Moses's words arouse, language cannot reach its object. The words strain after a richness of reality that they cannot catch. After all, they are only words. “A poem should be palpable and mute,” wrote the poet Archibald MacLeish. “Dumb ... Silent ... wordless ... A poem should be equal to: not true ... A poem should not mean / But be.” Were poetry able to be that which it “should be,” of course, there would be no poetry. Language which is “dumb, silent, wordless” is not language. If Israel could simply and instinctively have seen and known the possibility for themselves that Moses tries to teach—and, really seeing it, had acted to hear the words into being—there would be no need for Deuteronomy, or for the rest of Torah.

Refuah Shleymah רפואה שלמה

Avigal bat David haLevi (Alice Gold)	Miriam bat Rivka v'Natan (Miriam Sharp)	Sidney Barker
Avram Moshe ben Esther (Alan Mandel)	Miriam Shifra bat Issur (Margaret Sachs)	Anne Boyd
Baracha bat Sarah	Mordechai ben Mathilda (Morty Berkowitz)	Cynthia Brown
Batya bat Shprintza (Barbara Roberman)	Ovadya ben Esther Malkah (Ovadya Fleishman)	Alan Marty
Chana bat Malka	Reuven ben Chanoch v'Dinah (Robert Feurst)	Lorraine Morley
Chana Leah bat Sarah (Anna Crollman)	Sarah bat Hinda (Sylvia Dante)	Ezra Rapport
David ben Sarah (David Leitner)	Sarah Gittel bat Rut (Sue Perlo)	Jack Reich
David Yosef ben Avraham v'Chana (Donald Goldstein)	Shira Batya bat Meirav	Helen Rosenberg
Eliyahu Chanan ben Sarah (Ed Gagnon)	Shmuel ben Shoshana	Richard Roth
Esther bat Yankale Sura	Shraga Feivel ben Leib (Philip Skoletsky)	Lauren Schiro
Esther Malka bat Chaya Fruma (Elinor Fleishman)	Tuvia ben Shmuel v'Tziporah (Tovia Lebovich)	Edward Thompson-Starkey
Malka Chana bat Basha Rachel	Tziporah bat Esther	Christine Walters
Mashah bat Fanny (Marsha Schonberg)	Ty-Esther Tobi bat Tzeryl (Mindy Shapiro)	
M'cor Eyschel bat Esther Tzvia	Yakov ben Sarah (Jacob Schonberg)	
Mishulamit bat Maryam (Marcia Hogan)	Ya'akov Roni ben Margalit	Please contact the synagogue office with any additions or changes to this list.

Yahrzeits יארצייט

May their memory be a blessing

Herbert Herzfeld	Julius Grossman
William Jacob Jackson Jr.	Marya Kirshner
Anna Lipschitz	
Morris Kaplan	
Louise D. Kushner	

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