



Shabbat Shalom

18 Cheshvan 5777
November 19, 2016

Parashat Vayera

This Week at Beth El Synagogue

Saturday, November 19:

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	5:16 pm

Sunday, November 20:

Talmud Torah (Pre-K-7th grade)	9:30 am
Weekly Sunday Minyan	9:30 am
Chevra Kaddisha Program	10:15 am
Kitot Gan & Aleph Family Beit Midrash	10:30 am
Talmud Torah Faculty Meeting	12:30 pm

Wednesday, November 23:

Weekly Wednesday Minyan	8:00 am
NO Talmud Torah (2nd-6th grade)	

Thursday, November 24:

OFFICE CLOSED

Friday, November 25:

OFFICE CLOSED

Candle Lighting	4:13 pm
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Upcoming Events:

- ✧ Sat. 11/26 Shabbat Mishnah Study
- ✧ Sat. 11/26 NO B'nei Mitzvah Peer Tutoring
- ✧ Sat. 11/26 Shabbat Morning Orthodox Kehillah Services
- ✧ Sat. 11/26 Shabbat Morning Services
- ✧ Sun. 11/27 NO Talmud Torah
- ✧ Sun. 11/27 Weekly Sunday Minyan
- ✧ Wed. 11/30 Ramah Darom visits Beth El
- ✧ Wed. 11/30 Talmud Torah (2nd-6th grade)
- ✧ Thu. 12/1 Rabbi Greyber's Siddur Class
- ✧ Thu. 12/1 Kli Yakar with Rabbis Bach and Greyber
- ✧ Thu. 12/1 Executive Committee Meeting
- ✧ Fri. 12/2 Kitot Gal/Aleph Shabbat Services and Dinner
- ✧ Fri. 12/2 USY Dinner at the Greybers'
- ✧ Sat. 12/3 Shabbat Mishnah Study
- ✧ Sat. 12/3 B'nei Mitzvah Peer Tutoring
- ✧ Sat. 12/3 Shabbat Morning Orthodox Kehillah Services
- ✧ Sat. 12/3 Shabbat Morning Services
- ✧ Sat. 12/3 Parasha Study
- ✧ Sat. 12/3 Teen Takeover Shabbat

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.



11/19 Vayera David Kirsch dkirsch@md.duke.edu	919-286-4516
11/26 Hayyei Sara Bernie Fischer Bernie.fischer@duke.edu	919-493-0306
12/3 Toldot Bernie Fischer Bernie.fischer@duke.edu	919-493-0306
12/10 Vayetze David Rubin David_s_rubin@mindspring.com	919-967-7725

This weekend's Kiddush lunch is sponsored by:

Jon & Sean Meltzer, Diane & Mark Pozefsky, Evelyn & Michael Reed, Margie Satinsky, Kelly & Gary Asher, and Laura Lieber & Norman Weiner

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 Vayera

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

He was our Bob Dylan and Dylan Thomas: a Yiddish troubadour and hard-drinking lyric poet who wrote in regular rhymes and rhythms about the lives and unrequited loves of the downtrodden. His name was Itzik Manger, and the Bible was the book he loved most in the world, especially those parts that told an inside, personal story.

Starting in 1935, he began to capture them in verse by breaking down each biblical episode into a three-part drama. The capstone of Manger's love affair with the Bible, perhaps not surprisingly, is the poem reserved for his namesake, Isaac. In this he joined a proud line of Jewish writers named Saul (Tchernichowsky), David (Pinsky, Frischmann), and (Yokheved Bat-) Miriam, who also wrote of their biblical counterlives. Manger had no need to tread lightly across the biblical story: so far as he was concerned, he, his parents, and his grandparents were the biblical story. No need for him to reimagine the ancient Near Eastern setting: eastern Galicia was the biblical setting. No need to study Scripture and midrashic commentary because Yiddish language and folklore were the sacred texts.

So the shtetl imaginary, the East Galician shtetl arrested in time at the turn of the twentieth century, became the setting for Manger's remarkably compressed retelling of the Akedah; the most famous biblical narrative was recast into nine four-line stanzas that rhymed exactly the way that Yiddish folksongs do:

Abraham Takes Itzik to the Sacrifice

The gray light of the dawning
Touches the earth with dawn.
Eliezer, the loyal servant, puts
The black team's harness on.
Taking the child in his arms,
Old Abraham shuts the door.
Over his ancient roof, there gleams
A blue and pious star.
"Up, Eliezer"—the whip rings out,
The road has a silvery look.
"Sad and lovely," the poet says,
"Are the roads of the Holy Book."

The only real landscape, for Manger, is a poetic landscape. So the biblical *baboker*, "early next morning" (Gen 22:3), Manger renders as *demerung*, a German loan word that means twilight or dawn, to signal the ideal state of transition, from darkness to light. With midrashic sleight of hand, the poet turns the nameless two servants into Eliezer, the loyal servant whom Abraham addresses in Ukrainian, and the Middle Eastern asses are replaced with two ordinary horses. The blue morning star shining above Abraham and Sarah's house adds another domestic touch. If, at this point, the patriarchal landscape ("old" and "ancient") seems both "sad and lovely," as Act I draws to a close, our primary sense of the scene surely comes down on the side of loveliness.

But how lovely can it be if Mother Sarah has been left behind to guard an empty cradle? Once the trip has begun, the die is cast.

The graying willows on the way
Run to the house again
To see if his mother weeps beside
The cradle of her son.
"Daddy, where are we going now?"
"To Lashkev—to the Fair."
"Daddy, what are you going to buy
At Lashkev—at the Fair?"
"A soldier made of porcelain,
A trumpet and a drum;
A piece of satin to make a dress
For mother who waits at home."
Abraham feels his eyes grow moist
And the steel knife pressing, where
It scalds the flesh beneath his shirt ...
"It's going to be some Fair."

Absent Mommy, it's up to the father to allay his son's fears. Every Jewish parent knows the lullaby "Daddy's Away at the Fair," as surely as every Jewish parent has read and reread the story of Abraham taking Isaac to the Akedah. The one adds pathos and tension to the other because something has already gone wrong: in every Yiddish lullaby it is the mother who stays home with the child, and here, not only does the cradle stand empty, but Daddy has even taken the innocent child along on the fateful journey. Why—and where are they really headed? The two middle stanzas of the poem, moreover, don't read like a mere paraphrase of your standard lullaby. They read like a desperate dialogue. "It's going to be some Fair," the father mumbles under his breath as he presses the sacrificial knife to his chest.

The father-son dialogue that lies at the heart of the second act is suffused with death and foreboding, exactly as in the celebrated German Romantic poem "Erking," Goethe's ballad of a father driving his only son into the hands of death. Reread as a ballad, the Akedah is the most fateful journey of all, for it is the archetypal Jewish narrative.

"Eliezer, stop at the water mill.
Stop for a while and wait.
Isaac, my son, and I will go
Alone from there on foot."
Eliezer sits on the driver's seat
And casts an anxious look.
"Sad and lovely," the poet says,
"Are the roads of the Holy Book."

By now, the balance has measurably shifted to the sad side of the scale. Sad, but by no means terrifying, either in comparison to the biblical account of the sacrifice or in comparison to Goethe's "Erking." Manger's midrash domesticates God's terrible test of faith and Goethe's sexual and supernatural overtones. The Yiddish midrash ends not with the angel staying the executioner's hand or with the Erlking claiming his innocent victim, but with three benign figures: Old Abraham, determined to carry out God's difficult command; the loyal Ukrainian servant, Eliezer, who is quietly apprehensive; and the poet, who has every reason to believe that the story will end well.

What, then, is the road that Itzik must travel? It is a road in which Scripture and life are one, in which the natural landscape is suffused with the biblical past—not only because "the poet" says so, but also because that fusion is inscribed into the Yiddish language itself. In Yiddish, the (Slavic) word for road is *shlyakh*, which, as Manger was the first to discover, makes a perfect rhyme with *Tanakh*. With this Slavic-Hebraic rhyme, Manger marks the end of the poem's first and last acts. (Alas, even the master translator Leonard Wolf cannot capture this in English. Like classical midrash, Manger's must be read in the original as well.) Throw in the *demerung*, the magical moment of lyric dawning, and you have a perfect triptych of the Slavic landscape, the Hebrew Bible, and the poetic imagination.

Thanks to Goethe's inspiration, Manger was able to reread the Akedah as a journey. The very title (in the Yiddish) presages a journey—"Avrom Ovinu fort..." means "Abraham the Patriarch travels..."—as does the fourfold repetition of the word "road." On this road, little Itzik, always the child, became Manger, the Bible-intoxicated Jew. Henceforth, the Bible—not German Romanticism, not the ballad revival—was to be his muse, but he would circle back to the Bible through his dual commitment to modern poetry and Jewish continuity. A Jewry that did not engage its own myth as preserved in Scripture, he would write in 1939, was doomed to self-destruct. Only that engagement, that willingness to embrace one's biblical counterlife, would ensure that the Jewish journey went on forever.

Refuah Shleyimah רפואה שלמה

<i>Avigal bat David haLevi</i> (Alice Gold)	<i>Miriam Shifra bat Issur</i> (Margaret Sachs)	<i>Yakov ben Sarah</i> (Jacob Schonberg)
<i>Avram Moshe ben Esther</i> (Alan Mandel)	<i>Mordechai ben Mathilda</i> (Morty Berkowitz)	<i>Ya'akov Roni ben Margalit</i>
<i>Baracha bat Sarah</i>	<i>Ovadya ben Esther Malkah</i> (Barbara Roberman)	<i>Alvin Jacobson</i>
<i>Batya bat Shprintza</i> (Barbara Roberman)	<i>Rachmiel Daniel ben Nachama u'Pinchas</i> (Roger Perilstein)	<i>Sidney Barker</i>
<i>Chana bat Malka</i>	<i>Reuven ben Chanoch v'Dinah</i> (Robert Feurst)	<i>Anne Boyd</i>
<i>Chana Leah bat Sarah</i> (Anna Crollman)	<i>Sarah bat Hinda</i> (Sylvia Dante)	<i>Cynthia Brown</i>
<i>David ben Sarah</i> (David Leitner)	<i>Sarah Gittel bat Rut</i> (Sue Perlo)	<i>Alan Marty</i>
<i>David Yosef ben Avraham v'Chana</i> (Donald Goldstein)	<i>Shalom ben Sprintze</i> (Stanley Ramati)	<i>Ezra Rapport</i>
<i>Eliyahu Chanan ben Sarah</i> (Ed Gagnon)	<i>Shira Batya bat Meirav</i>	<i>Jack Reich</i>
<i>Esther bat Yankale Sura</i>	<i>Shmuel ben Shoshana</i>	<i>Helen Rosenberg</i>
<i>Esther Malka bat Chaya Fruma</i> (Elinor Fleishman)	<i>Shrage ben Devorah Leah</i> (Phillip Samuel Ramati)	<i>Orrie Wilner</i>
<i>Malka Chana bat Basha Rachel</i>	<i>Shraga Feivel ben Leib</i> (Phillip Skoletsy)	<i>Richard Roth</i>
<i>M'cor Eyshel bat Esther Tzvia</i>	<i>Tuvia ben Shmuel v'Tziporah</i> (Tovia Lebovich)	<i>Lauren Schiro</i>
<i>Mishulamit bat Maryam</i> (Marcia Hogan)	<i>Tziporah bat Esther</i>	<i>Christine Walters</i>
<i>Miriam bat Rivka v'Natan</i> (Miriam Sharp)		<i>Please contact the synagogue office with any additions or changes to this list.</i>

Yahrzeits יארצייט

May their memory be a blessing

Arthur Concors	Shirley Shane	Celia Shatzman
Midred Sass	Eric Ivan Pas	Benjamin Ellman
Reuven ben Eliezer	Hattie Singer	Fannie Romick
Joseph Poss	Sarah Behar	Larry Katz
Sylvia Shane	Marvin C. Goldstein	
Yetta Rockman	Arnold Klapper	

Mazel Tov

Mazel Tov to Josh Zarkin, son of Abby and Gary Zarkin, and Allison Griffith on their wedding!

Mazel Tov to Tamar Ariel, daughter of Rachel and Ya'akov Ariel, and Matt Kravitz on their wedding!

Be Remembered

Beth El Synagogue extends condolences to Ivy and Vince Wingate and their family on the death of Ivy's father, Jack Poncher, who passed away on Saturday, in Los Angeles, CA. Funeral services, burial and shiva will take place this week in Los Angeles.

Beth El Synagogue extends condolences to Keri and Casey Baker and their family on the death of Keri's grandfather, Seymour Lubchansky, who passed away yesterday morning in Boynton Beach, FL. Funeral services and burial will take place on Monday, November 21 in New Jersey. Shiva minyanim will also be held in New Jersey.

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