



Shabbat Shalom

20 Adar 5777
March 18, 2017

Parashat Ki Tisa

This Week at Beth El Synagogue

Saturday, March 18:

Shabbat Mishnah Study	8:45 am
B'nai Mitzvah Peer Tutoring	9:00 am
Orthodox Kehillah Services	9:00 am
Main Sanctuary Services (Bar Mitzvah of Robert Gross)	9:30 am
10th grade Midrasha visits Beth El	9:30 am
Healing Yoga	10:00 am
Children's Services	10:30 am
Havdallah	8:08 pm

Sunday, March 19:

Talmud Torah (Pre-K-7th Grade)	9:30 am
Weekly Sunday Minyan	9:30 am
Talmud Torah Faculty Meeting	12:30 pm

Monday, March 20:

Sisterhood Board Meeting	7:30 pm
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Tuesday, March 21:

Va'ad HaChinuch Meeting	7:00 pm
Finance Committee Meeting	7:30 pm
Ritual Committee Meeting	7:30 pm

Wednesday, March 22:

Weekly Wednesday Minyan	8:00 am
Talmud Torah (2nd-6th Grade)	4:40 pm
Interfaith Committee Meeting	7:30 pm

Thursday, March 23:

Passover Food Drive	
Lunch and Learn with Rabbi Greyber	11:30 am
Tish at Rabbi Greyber's	7:30 pm

Friday, March 24:

Passover Food Drive	
Sisterhood Shabbat Dinner and Services	6:30 pm
Candle Lighting	7:13 pm

This weekend's Kiddush lunch is hosted by:
The Gross Family and Lebovich Family in honor of Robert Gross's Bar Mitzvah

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. 3/25 Shabbat Mishnah Study
- ✧ Sat. 3/25 B'nei Mitzvah Peer Tutoring
- ✧ Sat. 3/25 Shabbat Morning Orthodox Kehillah Services
- ✧ Sat. 3/25 Gabbaim Shabbat Morning Services
- ✧ Sun. 3/26 Weekly Sunday Minyan
- ✧ Sun. 3/26 Talmud Torah (Pre-K-7th Grade)
- ✧ Sun. 3/26 Simchat Tot!
- ✧ Sun. 3/26 Morning with Author Mary Fillmore
- ✧ Sun. 3/26 MoB BBB&M
- ✧ Wed. 3/29 Talmud Torah (2nd-6th Grade)
- ✧ Thu. 3/30 Tish at Rabbi Greyber's
- ✧ Fri. 3/31 Kitah Zayin Class
- ✧ Fri. 3/31 Kabbalat Shabbat Services (Bar Mitzvah of Liam Spinner)
- ✧ Fri. 3/31 USY Shabbat at the Greybers'
- ✧ Sat. 4/1 Shabbat Mishnah Study
- ✧ Sat. 4/1 B'nei Mitzvah Peer Tutoring
- ✧ Sat. 4/1 Parasha Study
- ✧ Sat. 4/1 Children's Services
- ✧ Sat. 4/1 Shabbat Morning Orthodox Kehillah Services
- ✧ Sat. 4/1 Shabbat Morning 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.



3/25 Vayakhel Pekude-HaHodesh Jon Wahl jmwahl@email.unc.edu	919-942-3827
4/1 Vayikra Diana Markoff Diane,markoff@earthlink.net	919-969-8953
4/8 Tzav Hagadol Isaac Price Isaac@isaacprice.org	919-866-5453
4/11 Pesach I Matt Diamond mattdiamond@mindspring.com	919-906-6545

Parashat Ki Tisa

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

Parashat Ki Tissa covers many topics. They include fashioning utensils for the Tabernacle, constructing the golden calf, and Moses seeing God's image. Sandwiched in between these weighty matters are some very famous verses about the Sabbath.

Following the instructions for preparing incense for future offerings, six verses speak of the Sabbath (Exod. 31: 13-18). Two of them appear in our siddur and are sung in most synagogues on Friday night and Shabbat morning (vv. 16-17). Probably because the words are so familiar, I have tended to overlook their precise meaning.

When I did pay attention to these six verses recently, I noticed two peculiarities. The first is that v. 14 says that those who desecrate the Sabbath will be put to death, but then goes on to say that an individual who performs labor (*melakhah*) on the Sabbath will be "cut off from his people." These two different punishments appear in the same verse for essentially the same transgression. Even if we don't know the exact meaning of "being cut off" (*karet*), it is surely not the same as being put to death.

The second peculiarity is found in v. 16, which first says "the people of Israel will observe the Sabbath" (*veshameru . . . et hashabbat*) and then goes on to say that they will "make" or "do" the Sabbath (*la'asot et hashabbat*). The verb *la'asot* appears several other times in these six Sabbath verses and consistently means "to perform labor," or "to create," as in "God created the heavens and the earth in six days" (v. 17). How are we supposed to "do" or "create" the Sabbath?

Traditional and even contemporary commentators all say that the phrase *la'asot et hashabbat* means that we must perform work before the Sabbath so that we benefit from it on the Sabbath. To my mind, such an interpretation does not do justice to the simple meaning of the words. My interpretation of this unusual phrase is that we "do" or "perform" the Sabbath by giving it positive content. Yes, the Mishnah's list of 39 forbidden Sabbath labors is very well-known (Shabbat 7:2). It says no plowing, no harvesting, no baking, no building, no sewing, and so on. And there are not just 39 forbidden labors but many, many more. The Rabbis add, for example, no cooking and no laundering, also called "labors" in Mishnah Ketubot (5:5), which records the tasks a wife is expected to perform for her husband.

So what does it mean to "do" the Sabbath? Unlike the traditional commentators, I think there is great ingenuity in using the same verb, *la'asot*, to describe what we are told *not* to do on the Sabbath and what we are told *to do*. Far too often the Sabbath gets a bad reputation among Jews and non-Jews because it has so many restrictions. To counteract that perception, we need to stress how to actively "do" the Sabbath. Many of these acts are already suggested in the Talmud and might even represent how the rabbis understood the phrase "*la'asot et hashabbat*." Here they are: Recite Kiddush over wine Friday night (M Berakhot 8:1); eat a lavish Friday night meal by candlelight (M Shabbat 2:6, BT Shabbat 118a); engage in sexual activity (BT Ketubot 62b); attend prayer services at which the Torah is read (M Meg 4:2); attend a study session in the afternoon (M Shabbat 16:1); have three meals on the Sabbath, not just the standard morning and evening meals (BT Shabbat 118a ff.); recite Havdalah at the end of the Sabbath over a cup of wine with spices to smell and a lamp to light (M Berakhot 8:5). These kinds of activities can aptly be described as "doing" or "performing" the Sabbath. They turn the Sabbath into a period of pleasure and holiness rather than a day of denial.

Returning to the first peculiarity, why does v. 14 prescribe two different punishments for a person who violates the Sabbath? The great commentator Rashi claims that the severe punishment of the first part of the verse is for those who violate the Sabbath after being warned not to do so, whereas the more lenient punishment of the second part of the verse is for those who violated the Sabbath but were not previously warned. Here is another possibility: God says that one who desecrates (חללם / [*mehallel*]) the Sabbath, who turns it into an ordinary day (לוח [hol]), should be put to death. The reason for this punishment appears in the next part of the verse: because someone who does so cuts herself off from the Jewish people. The ways to "do" the Sabbath—meals, prayer, study—all involve others. One who avoids engaging with others on the Sabbath is, in effect, distancing herself from them. It is as if God first says, *a Sabbath violator should be put to death*, but then goes on to say, *no need to execute her. She has already left the community by performing labor on the Sabbath, by turning her back on "doing" the Sabbath together with fellow Jews.*

So these six verses about the Sabbath encapsulate two great ideas: a Jew needs to actively celebrate the Sabbath, and the celebratory acts need to be performed together with other Jews. These concepts perhaps explain the comment of the great essayist Ahad Ha'am in an 1898 article ("Shabbat and Zionism"): משישראל שמרו את השבת "כי יותר" שמרה השבת אותם, more than the Jews have preserved the Sabbath, the Sabbath has preserved the Jews".

Refuah Shleymah רפואה שלמה

Batya bat Shprintza (Barbra Roberman)	Mishulamit bat Maryam (Marcia Hogan)	Tziporah bat Esther Ya'akov Roni ben Margalit
Chaim Michael ben Flora (Howard Margolis)	Miriam Shifra bat Issur (Margaret Sachs)	Alvin Jacobson
Chana bat Malka	Moshe Yosef ben Vishka Elka (Michael Perkins)	Anne Boyd
Chana Leah bat Sarah (Anna Crollman)	Ovadya ben Esther Malkah (Ovadya Fleishman)	Alan Marty
David ben Sarah (David Leitner)	Sarah bat Hinda	Caitlin Evans-Jones
David Yosef ben Avraham v'Chana (Donald Goldstein)	Sarah Gittel bat Rut (Sue Perlo)	Christine Walters
Esther bat Yankale Sura	Shalom ben Sprintze (Stanley Ramati)	Ezra Rapport
Esther Malka bat Chaya Fruma (Elinor Fleishman)	Shimon ben Shlomo haLevi v'Sheyana (Stuart Levine)	Helen Rosenberg
Herschel David ben Aharon haKohen u'Bela Miriam	Shira Batya bat Meirav	Jack Reich
Israel ben Zalman u'Malkah	Shmuel ben Shoshana	Jeff Shields
Leah bat Miriam (Eileen Abramson)	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
M'cor Eyshel bat Esther Tzvia		Netta Boswell
		Orrie Wilner
		Richard Roth
		Sidney Barker
		Please contact the synagogue office with any additions or changes to this list.

Yahrzeits יארצייט

Beatrice Deutsch	Ruth Leeb	Irving Sosensky
Jace Kendrick	Eloise Johnson Poe	Erna Stolzenberg
Sadie Lipton	Gussie Becker	Blume Pas
Rachelle Malley	Bernard B. Bellman	William Borman
Jacob Most	Harry Brown	Donna Gindes
Morris Saltz	Florence Rosenstein Moel	Nathan Greene
Stephen Fisher Alexander	Saura Bartner	David Moskovitz
Shirley Becker	Rita Sager	
Julius Kramer	Ben Segal	

BE Remembered

Beth El Synagogue extends condolences to:

Harold and Susan Kudler and their family on the death of Harold's father—Harvey Kudler, Chaim ben Aharon—who passed away this morning, March 17, in Queens, New York. Burial and shiva minyanim will take place in Queens.

Lois Price and her family on the death of Lois's beloved aunt, Livia Silver, who passed away on March 3; and her beloved cousin, Jeffrey Schwartz, who passed away on March 13.

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

Beth El Synagogue
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Rabbi: Daniel Greyber
Rabbi Emeritus: Steven Sager
Synagogue President: Noah Pickus