



Shabbat Shalom

9 Adar II 5776
March 19, 2016

Parashah Vayikra
Shabbat Zachor

This Week at Beth El Synagogue

Saturday, March 19:

Havdalah—8:09 pm

Shabbat Mishnah Study	8:45 am
Orthodox Kehillah Services	9:00 am
B'nei Mitzvah Peer Tutoring	9:00 am
Main Sanctuary Services	9:30 am
Bat Mitzvah of Sophie Breitzer	
Children's Services	10:30 am
Purim and Violence: A Conversation	1:30 pm
with Rabbi Greyber and Barry Yeoman	

Sunday, March 20:

Weekly Sunday Minyan	9:30 am
NO FORMAL TALMUD TORAH	
Purim Carnival	10:30 am
Purim Play Rehearsal	1:00 pm
Durham CROP Walk	2:00 pm

Monday, March 21:

Sisterhood Board Meeting	7:00 pm
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Tuesday, March 22:

Hebrew Level I with Donna Goldstein	6:00 pm
Hebrew Level II with Donna Goldstein	7:00 pm

Wednesday, March 23: Erev Purim/Ta'anit Esther

Weekly Wednesday Minyan	8:00 am
Talmud Torah (2-6)	4:15 pm
Pre-Megillah Reading Dinner	6:00 pm
Megillah Reading	7:00 pm
Orthodox Kehillah Megillah Reading	7:15 pm

Thursday, March 24:

Minyan and Megillah Reading	8:00 am
Orthodox Kehillah Megillah Reading	7:00 pm

Friday, March 25:

Candle Lighting—7:14 pm
Shushan Purim

This weekend's Kiddush lunch is hosted by:
Susan and Jonathan Breitzer in honor of their daughter, Sophie, becoming a Bat Mitzvah.
Co-hosted by Andree Allen and Larry Kodack

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. 3/26 Shabbat Mishnah Study
- ✧ Sat. 3/26 Shabbat Morning Orthodox Kehillah Services
- ✧ Sat. 3/26 NO B'NEI MITZVAH PEER TUTORING
- ✧ Sat. 3/26 Shabbat Morning Services
- ✧ Sat. 3/26 Chavurah Minyan
- ✧ Sat. 3/26 Dedication of Hudi Gross Library
- ✧ Sun. 3/27 Weekly Sunday Minyan
- ✧ Sun. 3/27 NO FORMAL TALMUD TORAH (PreK-7)
- ✧ Sun. 3/27 Monthly Durham Community Cafe
- ✧ Wed. 3/30 Weekly Wednesday Minyan
- ✧ Wed. 3/30 NO TALMUD TORAH
- ✧ Fri. 4/1 Kitah Zayin Class
- ✧ Fri. 4/1 Kabbalat Shabbat Services, Bar Mitzvah of Jason Koweek
- ✧ Sat. 4/2 Shabbat Mishnah Study
- ✧ Sat. 4/2 Shabbat Morning Orthodox Kehillah Services
- ✧ Sat. 4/2 B'nei Mitzvah Peer Tutoring
- ✧ Sat. 4/2 Shabbat Morning Services, Bar Mitzvah of Jason Koweek
- ✧ Sat. 4/2 Children's Services
- ✧ Sun. 4/3 Weekly Sunday Minyan
- ✧ Sun. 4/3 Talmud Torah (PreK-7)
- ✧ Sun. 4/3 Bible Players Community Performance
- ✧ Sun. 4/3 Chocolate Seder

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.



3/19 Vayikra Zachor
Matt Diamond
mattdiamond@mindspring.com 919-688-0377

3/26 Tzav
Elise Goldwasser
elise.goldwasser@duke.edu 919-956-8871

4/2 Shemini Parah
David Kirsch
dkirsch@dm.duke.edu 919-286-4516

4/9 Tazria/HaChodesh
Bernie Fischer
Bernie.fischer@duke.edu 919-493-0306

Parashah Vayikra

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

Semikhah, ordaining of clergy, is on my mind these days as we move closer to my first JTS ordination as an associate dean. No longer the person receiving semikhah, this time I am privileged to help ordain new clergy.

How do we mark the moment when individuals who have studied Torah seriously for years move from being civilians to being people entrusted with the title Rabbi or Cantor? This meaning of semikhah can be understood as “reliance”: By naming someone a rabbi or cantor, we as a community say we rely upon their judgment, learning, and ethical compass. We name them as our authority for interpreting Jewish law and bringing Jewish tradition to bear in moments of question and crisis.

In Parashat Vayikra we repeatedly encounter a different use of the term semikhah. In this case, a variety of sacrifices are offered, and we are instructed to perform semikhah on an animal about to be sacrificed. This means that the kohen (the priest) places his hands on that animal’s head, with pressure and thoughtfulness. Through this intense individual connection, the intention or sins (depending on the type of sacrifice) of the human are transferred to the animal that will be sacrificed. Through this encounter we pause to let the purpose of the sacrifice sink in. We might even consider ourselves, to use Martin Buber’s paradigm, to be transforming the relationship from an I-It relationship, where the other party is just an instrument for me to obtain what I want, to an I-Thou one, where the other is truly valued and connected to as a unique individual. In this case we understand ourselves to be elevating this offering to being in relationship with us, rather than being the object of whatever type of representative offering we have assigned to it.

Though we usually think of sin-offering semikhah and ordination semikhah as entirely different uses of the word, perhaps they have something in common, something that can inform how we imbue ordination with deeper meaning. Perhaps what we are saying when we give someone semikhah is that we set them aside and, with intention, we turn them into a *keli kodesh*, a holy vessel. We are transforming them from students and objects of education to full-fledged partners and leaders. Together they, through their learning, and we, their teachers and community, transform them into new beings: beings that can bring their learning, judgment, and leadership to the issues of the day.

In other words, there is a choreography of the semikhah of sacrifices that can inform how we perform the semikhah of ordination. It can encourage us to carve out a moment of time—to place the hands on the head—and be together in the brief moment as “I” and “Thou.”

On a weekly basis, when those of us who are parents bless our children at the Shabbat table, we also create this choreography of semikhah. We place our hands on the head of each child and bless the child. When this is done with *kavanah* (intention and focus), the rest of the world evaporates for a moment; we are able to focus on the child before us and on the blessings that call on God to watch over our children, keep them safe, and shine God’s light upon them. We are with them in an I-Thou encounter, gently and lovingly pressing our blessing and love into their head.

We see another I-It turned I-Thou relationship in Megillat Esther, which we will read this coming week on Purim. As Esther frets in the palace, wanting to attract the King’s attention in order to alert him to the fact that Haman plans to kill her people, she stands in the courtyard waiting to be recognized. The way the king indicates that he has seen her and is willing to enter into a relational encounter with her is by extending his golden scepter to her, which she touches (Esther 5:2). For a moment they are held together, focused on each other, in relationship, pausing and addressing (though the King does not yet know it) a sacrifice—this time, the one she is making to save her community.

What all three of these moments of relationship—priest and animal; parent and child; Queen Esther and King Ahasuerus—have in common is that time nearly stands still for the deep encounter. Everything outside of them evaporates for a moment, and there is physical contact—either hands placed on the head or a scepter linking the parties. They separate themselves from the world to concentrate on their connection and purpose.

One thing we know about leadership is that it must be continuously cultivated. To receive ordination semikhah and consider oneself to be a finished leader is foolish and dangerous. One way that we strive to prepare our students to reconnect with their moment of semikhah and reaffirm their commitment to religious leadership is through our field education program. This program includes significant participation in processing and mentoring groups. We train our students to reflect regularly on their own actions, motivations, and behavior. They are paired with mentors, seasoned rabbis and cantors who have their own well-developed reflection practices. We believe that each of us is a work in progress and that the practice of reflecting must be lifelong.

Our hope is that we are training our students to become rabbis and cantors who constantly seek out opportunities to gather with colleagues so they can pause and metaphorically place their intention and attention on each other. I like thinking of this as recommitting to the path of religious leadership and reaffirming the semikhah moment.

Communities can also play a role in enabling their clergy to pause, focus on their leadership, and ensure they can take on the role of community leader fully and healthfully. This can be through creating a framework for them to participate in ongoing supportive programs, or ensuring that they earn and take sabbaticals.

This year as we prepare to gather in the courtyard at JTS, joyfully celebrating that we have trained and helped develop a new generation of religious leaders for the Jewish community, I will be thinking about how we make that moment of semikhah sacred. How can we literally or figuratively press each graduating student’s forehead and convey a sense of strength, support, accompaniment, and clarity? How will we create a moment that will stand frozen in time for them, to which they can return to find their center when leading is difficult? And how can we help them, in that moment, to commit to many other moments of self-discovery and reflection as they continue to serve the Jewish community and the world?

These sacred moments of I-Thou relationship can be the linchpins of a religious life. May this year’s semikhah ceremony be one that inspires many more of these moments for our new rabbis and cantors and for their communities.

Refuah Shleymah רפואה שלמה

Aharon ben David u’Miriam (Alan Goldman)	Malka Hannah bat Basha Rachel Miriam Shifra bat Issur (Margaret Sachs)	Cynthia Brown Elinor Fleishman
Aryeh ben Tziporah	M’cor Eyschel bat Esther Tzvia	Ilene Jacobson Jennifer Krunkosky
Baracha bat Sarah	Ovadya ben Elinor (Ovadya Fleishman)	Inez McFarling
Batya bat Shprintza (Barbra Roberman)	Reuven ben Chanoch v’Dinah (Robert Feurst)	Lorraine Morley Ezra Rapport
Bedonna Riva bat Sara	Rut bat Sarah (Suzanne Furst)	Jack Reich
Ben-Zion ben Sarah	Sara bat Hinda (Sylvia Dante)	Michael Rockman Richard Roth
Chana bat Malkah	Sarah Gittel bat Rut (Sue Perlo)	Carmen Sadowsky
Hannah Leah bat Sarah (Anna Crollman)	Shira Batya bat Meirav	Lauren Schiro
Daronit Esther bat Tuvia v’Leah (Jennifer Greyber)	Shmuel ben Shoshana	Susan Tolchin
David ben Sarah (David Leitner)	Tuvia ben Shmuel v’Tziporah (Tovia Lebovich)	Christine Walters Derick Williams
David Yosef ben Avraham v’Hannah (Donald Goldstein)	Tziporah bat Esther	Orrie Wilner
Eliyahu Chanan ben Sarah (Ed Gagnon)	Yehudit bat Rachel	Amy Wolf
Gershon Yonah ben Tevya haKohen v’Chanah Leah haLevi (Harlan Gradin)	Sonia Berman	Please contact the synagogue office with any additions or changes to this list.
Malkah bat Leah (Meg Anderson)	Anne Boyd	

Yahrzeits יארצייט

Eleanor Barclay	William Hayer
Murray Brandt	Irvin Sachs
Philip Cramer	Pearl Sasson
Sara Nachamson Evans	Martha Veis

BE Mazel Tov

Mazel Tov to Sophie Breitzer on becoming a Bat Mitzvah this Shabbat!

Mazel Tov to Gladys Siegel on being awarded the Hometown Hero Award!

Mazel Tov to the following Beth El members on their birthdays! Naomi Alpern, Ric Bobroff, Steve Cassell, Margaret Donnelly, Susan Hill, David Klapper, Diane Meglin, Doug Merrill, Geoff Pitt, Ann Shachtman, Ralph Snyderman

Beth El Synagogue

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Rabbi: Daniel Greyber

Rabbi Emeritus: Steven Sager

Synagogue President: Rachel Galanter