



Shabbat Shalom

8 Nisan 5776

April 16, 2016

PARASHAT METZORA
SHABBAT HAGADOL

This Week at Beth El Synagogue

Saturday, April 16:

Havdalah—8:32 pm

Shabbat Mishnah Study	8:45 am
Orthodox Kehillah Services	9:00 am
B'nei Mitzvah Peer Tutoring	9:00 am
Shabbat Morning Torah Blessings Class	9:00 am
Main Sanctuary Services	9:30 am
High School Senior/New Drive Shabbat	
Shabbat Morning Torah Blessings Class	1:00 pm

Sunday, April 17:

Weekly Sunday Minyan	9:30 am
Talmud Torah (PreK-7)	9:30 am
Walking with Mitzvot	10:15 am
Pinwheels for Prevention	12:00 pm
Voter Registration Training	1:00 pm
PJ Library Launch Party	3:00 pm
Sicha: Beyond Belief Series	3:30 pm
Belonging to the Passover Hagaddah	
Sisterhood Potluck and Election	6:00 pm

Monday, April 18:

Sisterhood Board Meeting	7:00 pm
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Tuesday, April 19:

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

Wednesday, April 20:

Weekly Wednesday Minyan	8:00 am
Talmud Torah	4:15 pm

Thursday, April 21:

Friday, April 22: Erev Pesach

Candle Lighting—7:37 pm

Minyan and Siyyum/Burning Chametz	8:00 am
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This weekend's Kiddush lunch is sponsored by:
*Trudi Abel and Noah Pickus, Janine and Kirk Beeson,
Harold Kohn, Cheryl and Mort Malkin,
Jack and Diane Sasson, Jennifer Sosensky and David Dreifus*

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:

- ✧ Pesach I
- ✧ Sat. 4/23 Shabbat Mishnah Study
- ✧ Sat. 4/23 Shabbat Morning Orthodox Kehillah Services
- ✧ Sat. 4/23 NO B'NEI MITZVAH PEER TUTORING
- ✧ Sat. 4/23 Shabbat Morning Services
- ✧ Pesach II
- ✧ Sun. 4/24 Sunday Minyan/Passover Services
- ✧ Sun. 4/24 NO TALMUD TORAH
- ✧ Mon. 4/25 Pesach III
- ✧ Tue. 4/26 Pesach IV
- ✧ Wed. 4/27 Pesach V
- ✧ Wed. 4/27 Weekly Wednesday Minyan
- ✧ Thu. 4/28 Pesach VI
- ✧ Fri. 4/29 Pesach VII
- ✧ Fri. 4/29 Passover Morning Services
- ✧ Sat. 4/30 Pesach VIII
- ✧ Sat. 4/30 Shabbat Mishnah Study
- ✧ Sat. 4/30 Shabbat Morning Orthodox Kehillah Services
- ✧ Sat. 4/30 B'nei Mitzvah Peer Tutoring
- ✧ Sat. 4/30 Shabbat Morning Services
- ✧ Sat. 4/30 Chavurah Minyan
- ✧ Sat. 4/30 Healing Yoga

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.



4/16 Metzora HaGadol Isaac Price isaac@isaacprice.org	919-886-5453
4/23 Pesach Roger Perilstein rperilstein@hrc-pa.com	919-286-9814
4/24 2-day Pesach David Rubin david_rubin@unc.edu	919-967-7725
4/29* 7-day Pesach Matt Diamond mattdiamond@mindspring.com	919-688-0377
4/30 8-day Pesach Elise Goldwasser elise.goldwasser@duke.edu	919-956-8871

Parashah Metzora/Shabbat HaGadol

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

Most of us, at one time or another, have asked the question about the Passover seder that the Haggadah attributes to the “wicked son”: What is the point of all this? At such moments of skepticism, we probably understand why an annual family gathering is worthwhile; we perhaps remember fondly the seders of our youth, and we may even confess to being moved by the rituals reenacted at the seder table year after year: reciting the four questions, dripping wine from cup to plate at the recital of the ten plagues, singing Had Gadya. But really, we ask: Why is the event of Israelite slaves leaving Egypt over 3,000 years ago (if it ever happened in the first place) so important that an entire holiday is devoted to it (not to mention countless daily prayers)? Why does the story have to be told and retold at the seder year after year?

One excellent reply to this excellent question is that, in fact, the Haggadah is not all that interested in retelling the story of the Exodus. That is not the point of the seder or of Passover as a whole. Very few of the details recounted in the Book of Exodus are ever mentioned in the Haggadah. No historical chronology of any sort is presented. Moses never appears in the text. The plagues are named but never discussed. Perhaps the Haggadah does not bother to retell the Passover story because it assumes we know it already (otherwise why would we be observing the Passover holiday?). Or—as I believe—the absence of detail about the Exodus is another clue that the point of the seder is not to remember what happened in Egypt long ago, but rather to pay closer attention to what is happening here and now. The purpose of the seder is not to recall the past. It is to heed the Torah’s call to action in the present—action that transforms, and redeems, the future.

In some respects the call to action is straightforward. In the very first paragraph of the Haggadah, we identify the matzah on the table with the matzah eaten by our ancestors in Egypt, and thereby identify ourselves with those ancestors. We then resolve not to let others suffer as the ancestors did. “Let all who are hungry come and eat. Let all who are needy come and celebrate Passover with us.” We must treat strangers well, the Torah says at several points, because we were strangers in the land of Egypt. Former slaves, now liberated, must use their freedom to help liberate those still in bondage.

Abraham Joshua Heschel took this message to heart when he declared at a 1963 conference on “Religion and Race” that Jim Crow oppressors were the Pharaoh of our day and African-Americans struggling for civil rights were the ancient Israelites. That application of the Passover story to present circumstances seems, in retrospect, uncontroversial. But when Heschel attacked the War in Vietnam in the name of God and Torah, I needed to know—as do we all, at any age, on any issue—what gave him the right to apply scripture in that way. Many of the people who quote scripture to their purpose in our day quite frankly scare me to death. One can predict confidently that Passover seders in America this year will feature references to various presidential candidates and arguments as to why the Exodus narrative requires us to support or oppose their policies. Before we can responsibly answer the Haggadah’s call to action, then, we have to figure out what inferences about, and applications to, our situation we are justified in gleaming from the Haggadah and Judaism’s other sacred texts. The Haggadah itself, I think, offers several guidelines for doing so.

First, it leaves no doubt that something is required from us, here and now. The Exodus led to Sinai: the giving of Torah, the making of covenant. God took the Israelites out of Egypt because God wants partners in the work of making the world more just and more compassionate: that is, less like the Egypt in which Israel was enslaved. Not everyone agrees that the world can be made better, of course, let alone that you and I, with the guidance of Torah, can help to make it so. The Passover seder, however, insists this is the case: “In every generation a person must look upon oneself as if he or she had personally come out of Egypt.” It is therefore our duty to thank God for that freedom, and—the inference seems clear—to work with God to free other human beings made in God’s image.

Second: The Haggadah tells us the general direction in which we need to move ourselves and the world (slavery to freedom; hunger to plenty), even while not specifying how exactly we are meant to get there. The conditions in which change must occur are too varied for prescription once and for all. The Torah provides a blueprint, reinforced by the Haggadah, but contemporary experience and wisdom are needed to figure out how to move God’s agenda forward in our particular circumstances. Disagreement among us on that score is inevitable. We must not let it paralyze us.

I believe that the Haggadah implicitly offers basic instruction about being human in the world that transcends differences of politics or policy: Your life matters, it insists. The world matters. Don’t give up on it or on yourself. Don’t accept the verdict of the Roman general who declares defiantly, in a story recounted in the Talmud, that if God cares about the poor, let Him take care of them! (BT Bava Batra 10a). If there are poor people in this world, the general implies, God must want it that way. The Haggadah, by contrast, calls on us to ponder what it means to be enslaved—politically, economically, personally—and what it means to be free, and then demands that we think together at the seder about how to move ourselves, our society, and our world from slavery to freedom.

The work seems endless. We are confronted in 2016 with a refugee crisis greater than any since World War II. One is tempted in the face of such challenges to rest content with a ritual reminder at Passover that it would be good if fewer people were hungry. That is the added force, I think, of the specific actions suggested by the Haggadah from the first words of Maggid onward: Alleviate the suffering of some who are needy. Consider, as well, larger systems of oppression like Pharaoh’s Egypt, and not only the fate of this or that individual. The Haggadah’s object is not guilt but responsibility and generosity. Once we realize that Egypt is not far away and long ago but around the corner and today, and the more we begin to remember in this way, focusing on the present and not the past, we come to understand that there is much we can do, and therefore must do, not just next year “in the Land of Israel” but this year, here, wherever we are. This is a lesson that we are tempted to forget, because of how much it demands of us. That is why the seder is required year after year: to remind us.

People who are as happy and well-fed as we are, especially at Passover, are more likely to take on these responsibilities. In the face of a world that often treats people badly, trivializes life, and smothers hope, we know that we can seize opportunities, every day, to do and be the opposite. Let’s get up from the seder table with the resolve that we will.

May your Passover, and that of the neighbors you love as yourself, in this coming year be sweet.

Refuah Shleymah רפואה שלמה

Aharon ben David u’Miriam (Alan Goldman)	Ovadya ben Elinor (Ovadya Fleishman)	Inez McFarling
Baracha bat Sarah	Reuven ben Chanoch v’Dinah (Robert Feurst)	Lorraine Morley
Batya bat Shprintza (Barbra Roberman)	Rut bat Sarah (Suzanne Furst)	Faye Davis Rapp
Bedonna Riva bat Sara	Sara bat Hinda (Sylvia Dante)	Gordon Rapp
Ben-Zion ben Sarah	Sarah Gittel bat Rut (Sue Perlo)	Ezra Rapport
Chana bat Malkah	Shira Batya bat Meirav (Anna Crollman)	Jack Reich
Hannah Leah bat Sarah (Anna Crollman)	Shmuel ben Shoshana	Michael Rockman
Daronit Esther bat Tuvia v’Leah (Jennifer Greyber)	Tuvia ben Shmuel v’Tziporah (Tovia Lebovich)	Richard Roth
David ben Sarah (David Leitner)	Tziporah bat Esther	Carmen Sadowsky
David Yosef ben Avraham v’Hannah (Donald Goldstein)	Yitzhaka Zissel bat Avram haKohen u’Malka (Jane Gabin)	Lauren Schiro
Eliyahu Chanan ben Sarah (Ed Gagnon)	Sonia Berman	Susan Tolchin
Malkah bat Leah (Meg Anderson)	Anne Boyd	Christine Walters
Malka Hannah bat Basha Rachel Miriam Shifra bat Issur (Margaret Sachs)	Cynthia Brown	Derick Williams
M’cor Eyshe bat Esther Tzvia	Elinor Fleishman	Orrie Wilner
	Jennifer Krunkosky	Amy Wolf

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

Yahrzeits יארצייט

Joan August	Ruth Leeb
Edna Clifford	Rebecca Shapiro Ornof
Louise Clifford	Marion Poleski
Richard Clifford	Bernard Shane
Leo Friedman	Catherine Shawn
William Ginsburg	William Shecter
William Golden	Marcella Silver
Anne Goldstein	Nathan Strauss
Emma Cohen Kresses	Mary Weaver

BE Mazel Tov

Mazel Tov to the following Beth El members on their birthdays! Andree Allen, Kavanah Anderson, Joel Fleishman, Rob Gringle, Roni Liberman, Kenneth Poss, Steve Rose, JoAnn Rubin, Kim Sampson, Maxine Stern

To all of you who sponsored me in Crop Walk, my many many thanks. I set a goal of \$2000.00 and exceeded that goal. Hugs, Gladys

BE Remembered

Beth El Synagogue extends condolences to Jon Bellman, Pamela Mund and family on the death of Berny Bellman, father of Jon Bellman. Funeral services were held on Sunday, 4/3 in West Palm Beach, Fl.

Beth El Synagogue
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Rabbi: Daniel Greyber
Rabbi Emeritus: Steven Sager
Synagogue President: Rachel Galanter