



# Shabbat Shalom

27 Iyyar 5776

June 4, 2016

*Parashah Bechukotai*

## This Week at Beth El Synagogue

### Saturday, June 4:

*Havdalah—9:11 pm*

NO B'NEI MITZVAH PEER TUTORING

Shabbat Mishnah Study 8:45 am

Orthodox Kehillah Services 9:00 am

Main Sanctuary Services 9:30 am

### Sunday, June 5:

YOM YERUSHAYALIM

Board Retreat 8:30 am

### Monday, June 6:

Committee Calendaring Meeting 7:00 pm

### Tuesday, June 7:

### Wednesday, June 8:

Weekly Wednesday Minyan 8:00 am

### Thursday, June 9:

### Friday, June 10:

*Candle Lighting—8:14 pm*

\*\*Please note that the following programs have been suspended for the summer: Sunday Minyan. Sunday Minyan will resume on Sunday, 9/11 at 9:30 am.\*\*

### Upcoming Events:

- ✧ Sat. 6/11 Shabbat Morning Orthodox Kehillah Services
- ✧ Sat. 6/11 Shabbat Morning Services
- ✧ Sat. 6/11 Tikun Leil Shavuot with Rabbis Greyber and Bach
- ✧ Sun. 6/12 Shavuot Day 1 Services
- ✧ Mon. 6/13 Beth El Office Closed-Day 2 Shavuot
- ✧ Mon. 6/13 Shavuot Day 2 & Yizkor Services
- ✧ Wed. 6/15 Weekly Wednesday Minyan
- ✧ Sat. 6/18 Shabbat Morning Orthodox Kehillah Services
- ✧ Sat. 6/18 Shabbat Morning Services
- ✧ Sat. 6/18 Healing Yoga
- ✧ Mon. 6/20-Fri. 7/1 Israel Trip
- ✧ Mon. 6/20 PJ Library Family Movie Night
- ✧ Wed. 6/22 Weekly Wednesday Minyan
- ✧ Sat. 6/25 Shabbat Morning Orthodox Kehillah Services
- ✧ Sat. 6/25 Shabbat Morning Services
- ✧ Sun. 6/26 Social Action Wrap-Up
- ✧ Sun. 6/26 Monthly Durham Community Café Dinner

### 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.



6/4 Behukkotai  
Roger Perilstein  
rperilstein@hrc-pa.com 919-286-9814

6/11 Bamidbar  
Jon Wahl  
jmwahl@email.unc.edu 919-942-3827

6/12\* 1 st day Shavuot  
Matt Diamond  
mattdiamond@mindspring.com 919-688-0377

6/13\* 2 nd day Shavuot  
Alan Mandel  
andelcpa@gmail.com 917-589-5673

This weekend's Kiddush lunch is sponsored by:  
*Elisabeth Albert and Eric Gerson,  
Sheila and Sol Levine, Emma and Ethan Rasiel,  
Claire and Howard Rockman, Louis Sawyer,  
Tami and Daryl Spinner, & Ivy and Vince Wingate*

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 Bechukotai

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

Blessing comes to fruition through journey. The journey may be as simple as lighting Shabbat candles or it may be as complicated as leaving the comfort of one's home to discover new worlds. Either way, that which is familiar is left behind, and a new reality challenges one to grow and thus to earn God's blessing. Such is the challenge of this week's parashah.

Parashat Behukkotai, which forms the epilogue of Vayikra (Leviticus), opens with a promise of God's blessing and the imagery of a journey: "If you walk in My laws" [im behukkotai telekhu]," says God to the Jewish people, "and faithfully observe my commandments, I will grant your rains in their seasons, so that the earth shall yield its produce" (Lev. 26:3-4). The theme and language of this verse evoke God's call to an individual, Abraham, in Genesis 12. There, God also makes a promise of blessing, and Abraham, responding to God's command, lekh lekha, leaves his homeland. When one remains in the same physical place, the promise of blessing remains just a promise. Physical movement is intimately connected to spiritual movement. Indeed, Abraham must journey from his land, his birthplace, and his father's house to realize the promise of God's blessing.

In explaining the opening verse of our parashah, Rashi queries:

Could it be that this verse refers solely to upholding God's commandments? This, one can understand from the second clause, "and faithfully observe My commandments." But what is the meaning of the first clause, "if you walk in My laws"? This means that one should labor, even painfully, in Torah.

For Rashi, then, the journey alluded to by our verse resembles the physical journey of Abraham. This journey of the mind and soul entails the same investment of self and departure from routine. One sacrifices time and other activities to become worthy of the blessing of learning. Mere obedience to the commandments is inadequate; one must invest oneself in discovering their deeper essence. The process of learning then becomes an indispensable part of observance. Precisely through learning Torah, one leaves the familiar and becomes challenged in ways previously not conceived of. It is no wonder that Judaism refers to its system of law as halakhah—"the way" or "path." Through physical and spiritual journeys, we become worthy not only of God's blessing but also God's closeness.

The Hebrew word lalekhet, "to walk" or "to embark on a journey," becomes a motif of the parashah. As a consequence of walking in God's ways, we are given a powerful promise by God: "I will walk about in your midst" (Lev. 26:12). Rashi explains that God's presence will be felt so strongly that it will be as if God is literally dwelling among us. Responding to the human willingness to embark on a journey, God promises to take action. In the third appearance of walking in our parashah, God declares, "I made you walk upright" (Lev. 26:13). Here, lalekhet refers to God's freeing the Israelites from Egypt and guiding them on a path to Torah and the Land of Israel. For it is God-given freedom—along with Torah—that allows one to walk upright. But how do we walk together with God?

A fascinating midrash weaves together our walking and God's walking:

Rav Hama, son of Rav Hanina, said: "After the Lord your God shall you walk" [Deut. 13:5]. But is it possible to walk right behind the Presence?! . . . What the verse means is that you are to follow the ways of the Holy One. He clothed the naked: "The Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skin and clothed them" [Gen. 3:21]. So should you clothe the naked. The Holy One visited the sick: "The Lord appeared unto him in the terebinths of Mamre" [Gen. 18:1]. So should you visit the sick. The Holy One buried the dead: "He buried Moses in the valley" [Deut. 34:6]. So should you bury the dead. The Holy One comforted mourners: "And it came to pass after the death of Abraham that God bestowed blessing upon Isaac his son" [Gen. 25:11]. So should you comfort mourners. (BT Sotah 14a)

This midrash gives us beautiful insight into what it truly means to walk in the way of God. Observing mitzvot such as clothing the naked, visiting the sick, burying the dead, comforting mourners, and learning Torah are some of the opportunities we are given to walk in God's ways. Yet, just as God gives us the ability to draw near through God's ways (halakhah), our acts of lovingkindness have the ability to draw God into our midst.

As we approach Shavuot, one can think of no better heroine for undertaking such a journey than the character of Ruth. Ruth declares to her distraught mother-in-law, Naomi, "For wherever you go, I will go [ki el asher tilkhi elekh]" (Ruth 1:16). Ruth's absolute selflessness and loyalty in the path she chooses are reflected by the passion and awareness underlying these words. Her declaration is personal, in the singular first person, I will go.

Such is the challenge of Parashat Behukkotai. Like Ruth, we must be willing to embrace the halakhah, the way that God sets before us—following God and walking with God. And may each of us, like Ruth, have the power to declare, "I will go," and to begin our journey.

## Refuah Shleymah רפואה שלמה

Aharon ben David u'Miriam (Alan Goldman)	Reuven ben Chanoch v'Dinah (Robert Feurst)	Lorraine Morley Martha Phipps
Baracha bat Sarah	Sarah bat Hinda (Sylvia Dante)	Ezra Rapport
Chana bat Malka	Sarah Gittel bat Rut (Sue Perlo)	Jack Reich
Chana Leah bat Sarah (Anna Crollman)	Shira Batya bat Meirav	Richard Roth
David ben Sarah (David Leitner)	Shmuel ben Shoshana	Lauren Schiro
David Yosef ben Avraham v'Chana (Donald Goldstein)	Tuvia ben Shmuel v'Tziporah (Tovia Lebovich)	Edward Thompson-Starkey Susan Tolchin
Eliyahu Chanan ben Sarah (Ed Gagnon)	Tziporah bat Esther	Christine Walters
Esther Malka bat Chaya Fruma (Elinor Fleishman)	Ya'akov ben Sarah (Jacob Schonberg)	Derrick Williams
Malka bat Leah (Meg Anderson)	Ya'akov Roni ben Margalit	Orrie Wilner
Malka Chana bat Basha Rachel	Anne Boyd	Please contact the synagogue office with any additions or charges to this list.
M'cor Eyshele bat Esther Tzvia	Cynthia Brown	
Miriam Shifra bat Issur (Margaret Sachs)	Sammy Follodor	
Ovadya ben Elinor (Ovadya Fleishman)	Riki Friedman	
	Alan Marty	
	Inez McFarling	

## Yahrzeits יארצייט

May their memory be a blessing

Harry Bergman	Benjamin Pudolsky
Nathan Henry Brandt	Harold Rose
Ann Feldman	Mary Rosenstein
Howard Jaffe	Lorraine Carol Rossi
Toba Man	Rose Sawilosky Roemer
James Moulder	Sarah Goldberg Sody
Daniel Parker	Joan Tetel-Hanks
Morton Pizer	Luan Walker

## BE Mazel Tov

Mazel Tov to the follow community members on their birthdays!  
Keri Baker, Cheryl Berkes, Erica Brody, Alexander Fearman, Linda Frankel, Kevin Ginsberg, Lynne Grossman, Steve Herman, Sam Horowitz, Larry Kodack, Charlotte Koren, Kevin Leibel, Howard Margolis, Eric Meyers, Claire Payton, Mark Sendak, Gabriel Szulik

Mazel Tov to Elisabeth Albert and Eric Gerson on their forthcoming wedding!

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