



Shabbat Shalom

26 Sivan 5776

July 2, 2016

Parashat Sh'lach

This Week at Beth El Synagogue

Saturday, July 2:

Havdalah—9:18 pm

NO B'NEI MITZVAH PEER TUTORING

NO SHABBAT MISHNAH STUDY

Orthodox Kehillah Services

9:00 am

Main Sanctuary Services

9:30 am

Sunday, July 3:

Monday, July 4:

Beth El Office Closed

Tuesday, July 5:

Wednesday, July 6:

Rosh Chodesh Tamuz

Weekly Wednesday Minyan

*7:45 am

Thursday, July 7:

MoB Durham Bulls Baseball Game

6:00 pm

Recovery International (RI)

6:30 pm

Support Group at Beth El

Friday, July 8:

Candle Lighting—8:18 pm

Partners for Youth Opportunity

11:30 am

Please note that the following programs have been suspended for the summer: Shabbat Mishnah Study and Sunday Minyan. Shabbat Mishnah Study will resume in September. Sunday Minyan will resume on Sunday, 9/11 at 9:30 am.

Upcoming Events:

- ✧ Sat. 7/9 Shabbat Morning Orthodox Kehillah Services
- ✧ Sat. 7/9 Shabbat Morning Services
- ✧ Sat. 7/9 Healing Yoga
- ✧ Mon. 7/11 Social Action Steering Committee Planning Meeting
- ✧ Tue. 7/12 Ritual Committee Meeting
- ✧ Wed. 7/13 Weekly Wednesday Minyan
- ✧ Thu. 7/14 Recovery International Group
- ✧ Fri. 7/15 Partner for Youth Opportunity
- ✧ Sat. 7/16 Shabbat Morning Orthodox Kehillah Services
- ✧ Sat. 7/16 Shabbat Morning Services
- ✧ Sun. 7/17 PJ Library Story Hour
- ✧ Mon. 7/18 Sisterhood Board Meeting
- ✧ Tue. 7/18 Va'ad Meeting
- ✧ Tue. 7/18 Finance Committee Meeting
- ✧ Wed. 7/19 Weekly Wednesday Minyan
- ✧ Thu. 7/20 Recovery International Group
- ✧ Sat. 7/22 Shabbat Morning Orthodox Kehillah Services
- ✧ Sat. 7/22 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.



- 7/2 Shelach Lekha
David Rubin
david_rubin@unc.edu 919-967-7725
- 7/9 Korach
Bernie Fischer
Bernie.fischer@duke.edu 919-493-0306
- 7/16 Chukat
Jon Wahl
jmwahl@email.unc.edu 919-942-3827
- 7/23 Balak
Shula Bernard
shulabernard@gmail.com 919-967-9393

This weekend's Kiddush lunch is sponsored by:
Beth El Synagogue

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 Sh'lach

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

18 cups flour, 5 eggs . . . yeast, warm water, oil, honey, salt.
 . . . Punch the dough down and let it rest for 10 minutes before doing the mitzvah of separating hallah. Say the blessing, separate a small piece of dough, and set it aside to burn after the hallah loaves have finished baking.
 . . . divide the dough . . . roll into strands . . . braid the strands...

If you're a hallah baker, like I am, you know that all your measuring, kneading, and hours of checking on rising dough are totally worth it when, after the hamotzi at the Shabbat table, your family and friends let out a collective "aaah." When that fluffy, sweet piece of bread melts in their mouths, they know it's really shabbes. Hallah's ritual journey begins in Parashat Shelah Lekha, and it has nothing to do with Shabbat at all. Like the hallah braids, there's a twisted route between a cherished home ritual and a Torah mitzvah contained in barely five verses. How this mitzvah survived the destruction of the Temple and was even exported into the Diaspora (unlike most of the Torah's Land-of-Israel-based mitzvot) is a source for renewed spiritual texture in an already rich experience. The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: "Speak to the Israelite people and say to them: When you enter the land to which I am taking you and you eat of the bread of the land, you shall set some aside as a gift to the Lord. As the first yield of your baking, you shall set aside a round loaf [hallah] as a gift; you shall set it aside as a gift like the gift from the threshing floor. You shall make a gift to the Lord from the first yield of your baking, throughout your generations." (Num. 15:17-21) "Farm to table" is an apt description of how the hallah mitzvah fits into the overall system of agricultural "first offerings" described throughout the Torah. Although human-made, ultimately "bread [is] of the land," and in gratitude "you shall set some aside as a gift to the Lord." There's a bit of theological tension here. The early 19th-century Hasidic master Rabbi Mordechai Yosef Leiner, in his Torah commentary, Mei Hashiloah, resolves this by explaining the same tension where it's found in birkat hamotzi, the blessing over bread: although human power does the labor, God's power makes possible the raw ingredients. This is the truth-claim we assert when we bless God "who brings forth bread from the land" (Mei Hashiloah, Parashat Terumah).

Environmentalists might see this as a terribly wasteful relic of an ancient religious cult, imagining thousands of moldy loaves sitting in a Sanctuary pile for the Levites to take out to the trash. Within the biblical context, we can find here a theological respect for food when we understand the hallah mitzvah as part of the system for restocking the priestly food pantry (see Num. 18:12-13 and Ezek. 44:28-30). Temple service precluded the priests from being responsible for a territory and from being producers of their own food. The rest of the nation fed the service class, who in turn maintained the spiritual center.

Following the Torah's language, "when you enter the land to which I am taking you," the Mishnah's Tractate Hallah limits this mitzvah (albeit with interesting permutations) to the Land of Israel. However, later Jewish law takes the Talmudic line "the instruction [torah] of [the mitzvah of] hallah should not be forgotten" (BT Bekhorot 27a) out of its narrow context and made it into a far-reaching legal principle. Landedness as a defining character of the hallah mitzvah is pushed aside in favor of its universal appeal. Thus, Rabbi Yosef Karo's foundational 16th-century law code, the Shulhan Arukh (YD 322:3) instructs:

Even though, according to the Torah, the mitzvah of hallah is only for the Land of Israel, nonetheless the Sages decreed that hallah should be separated even outside of the Land and with the [recitation of the] blessing, so that the mitzvah of hallah would not be forgotten from [the people] Israel.

I wonder if this opening up of halakhic borders provides justification to the North American Jewish outdoor, food, and environmental education (JOFE) movement's desire to actualize the Torah's agricultural laws, such as the sabbatical year, on farms from rural Connecticut to Northern California. On the other hand, the Arukh Hashulhan—a late 19th-century code by Rabbi Yehiel Mikhel Epstein—teaches that this mitzvah is not like other agricultural mitzvot that are tied to land ownership within the Land; it's more egalitarian than that, as he writes: "Everyone bakes bread." Surely, the transcending of geography here goes a long way toward ensuring the parashah's idea that hallah is a mitzvah to be observed "throughout your generations" (Num. 15:21).

Except for today's DIYers who bake their own hallah, most of us miss out on seeing bread production as a spiritual activity.

Shabbat hallah helps us reclaim this spirit for contemporary Jewish consciousness, even for the non-bakers among us. It's unclear why, over the centuries (the earliest citation was in the 14th century), hallah, meaning "rounded loaf," overtook all other Hebrew words for bread to become the universal name of the two loaves of Shabbat bread—two loaves that represent the double portion of manna delivered before Shabbat during the Exodus (Exod. 16:4-5).

I can think of kavanot to fill this interpretative void. Hallah is technically the symbolic piece of burnt dough that no good Shabbat host would permit on the table. Extending the name hallah to the shiny loaves on the table as well, we take our place as egalitarian members "of the kingdom of priests" (Exod. 19:6) and elevate our homes to the status of Sanctuary.

Hallah's origins as "first yield of the baking" and as "gift to the Lord" teach us to davka think beyond ourselves and our own needs, while the home setting suggests that bonding and intimacy are the primary modes of engagement at a Shabbat meal. Like in the project Challah for Hunger, which donates proceeds from sales of fresh hallah to serve the needy, you might consider putting aside the cost of hallot as tzedakah to help provide food to those who have trouble procuring it for themselves—after all, hallah was originally designed to feed a class of people who, for different reasons, had no direct access to bread and other foodstuffs. That feels to me like a "gift to God."

Refuah Shleymah רפואה שלמה

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

Yahrzeits יארצייט

May their memory be a blessing

Mitchell Bergman	Rivka Rachel Ginton
Zevel Berman	Dennis Hart
Robin and Joshua Berry	Reba Levine
Julius Concors	Samuel Levine
Samuel Cooper	Herman Scherr
Esther Enzer	Akiba Sitron
Isaac Evans	Rose Sugarman
Lottie Frohman	Joseph L. Wechsler
Mollie Gabin	Dalia Frider Weinisman
Eva Gadlli	

BE Mazel Tov

Mazel Tov to the follow community members on their birthdays!
 Edward Balleisen, Barrie Bergman, Lisa Berley, Andrew Bird, Ian Davis, Sue Fishman, Steve Grossman, Sharon Halperin, Judith Herman, Deborah Hirsch, Roger Kaplan, Tom Keyserling, Elliott Mills, Peter Ornstein, Adam Singer, Murray Stollwerk, Gary Zarkin

Mazel Tov to Andrea Ginsburg on The Mad Popper being voted Best Artisan Food Product in Durham Magazine's BEST OF DURHAM 2016!

Mazel Tov to Dan Schnitzer for his work at the Carrboro School District promoting resource conservation and environmental awareness!

Mazel Tov to Michaela Davidai on her grandson, Daniel Davidai, winning first place at Israel's gymnastics championship last week!

Mazel tov to Darryl and Staci Cohen on the naming of their daughter, Mila Sasha.

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