



Shabbat Shalom

23 Av 5776
August 27, 2016

Parashat Eikev

This Week at Beth El Synagogue

Saturday, August 27:

Havdalah—8:30 pm

NO B'NEI MITZVAH PEER TUTORING

NO SHABBAT MISHNAH STUDY

Orthodox Kehillah Services

9:00 am

Main Sanctuary Services

9:30 am

Bat Mitzvah of Devon Fischer

Sunday, August 28:

Monday, August 29:

Tuesday, August 30:

Wednesday, August 31:

Weekly Wednesday Minyan

8:30 am

Synagogue Life Committee Meeting

6:00 pm

Thursday, September 1:

Executive Committee Meeting

8:00 am

Talmud Torah Faculty Orientation

4:30 pm

Friday, September 2:

Candle Lighting—7:07 pm

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. 8/27 USY Kick-off Bonfire
- ✧ Wed. 8/31 Weekly Wednesday Minyan
- ✧ Wed. 8/31 Talmud Torah Faculty Orientation
- ✧ Thu. 9/1 Executive Committee Meeting
- ✧ Thu. 9/1 Synagogue Life Committee Meeting
- ✧ Sat. 9/3 Shabbat Morning Orthodox Kehillah Services
- ✧ Sat. 9/3 Shabbat Morning Services
- ✧ Sun. 9/4 USY/Kadima Wet n' Wild
- ✧ Wed. 9/7 Weekly Wednesday Minyan
- ✧ Fri. 9/9 Kabbalat Shabbat Services, Bat Mitzvah of Avital Hirsch
- ✧ Sat. 9/10 Shabbat Morning Orthodox Kehillah Services
- ✧ Sat. 9/10 Shabbat Morning Services, Bat Mitzvah of Avital Hirsch
- ✧ Sun. 9/11 Yom Beth El
- ✧ Sun. 9/11 First day of Talmud Torah
- ✧ Sun. 9/11 Weekly Sunday Minyan

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.



8/27 Ekev

David Kirsch

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919-286-4516

9/3 Reeh/Rosh Hodesh Elul

Matt Diamond

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919-906-6545

9/10 Shoftim

Stan Levy

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9/17 Ki Tetzei

Shula Bernard

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919-967-9393

This weekend's Kiddush lunch is hosted by:
Devon's Family

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

Parashat Eikev

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

In our parashah this week we find an odd statement masquerading as banal—a revolutionary idea that at first glance seems familiar, but is something else entirely. In Deuteronomy 10:19 the Torah commands: “*Ve-ahavtem et hager ki gerim hayitem be-eretz mitzrayim*” (“Love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt”).

We find very similar statements elsewhere in the Torah, of course, but with a crucial difference. Consider Exodus 22:20, for example: “*Ve-ger lo toneh velo tilhatzenu*” (“Do not wrong a stranger, do not oppress him”). The end of this verse—which provides the reason for the law, or perhaps the reason why the people should take care to follow it—is the same as that in Deuteronomy: for you were strangers in the Land of Egypt. But in Exodus, and in most of the other biblical verses that address this issue, the command is: Do not harm, do not oppress. In Deuteronomy 10:19, we are told: Love. One is a negative injunction—do not act in such a way toward a stranger—while in this week’s parashah we have an affirmative requirement: Seek a *ger* out and show favor to him or her.

It is perhaps the oddity of this that leads Rashi to his interesting comment on this verse. He quotes from the Talmud (BT Bava Metzia 59b): “Do not taunt your fellow with the blemish you yourself have.” This is an unexpected take on the verse—and one that affects the level of difficulty of this mitzvah. After all, not oppressing someone is easier, and takes far less effort, than acting affirmatively to befriend them, to try to understand and love them. While the Exodus version of the command can be followed simply by staying out of the way of a *ger*, this Deuteronomic version in our parashah seems to require the exact opposite: to get in their way such that we can see the *ger*, and the *ger* can see us. Rashi, perhaps sensing this difference, reads the verse as being less about public policy and more about public comity. We all have blemishes, Rashi seems to be saying, and perhaps we should remember that when we are interacting with our neighbors.

Rashi’s reading of the verse seems to indicate that this command is not just about the *ger* but about the way we interact in general with those around us. And indeed, the Talmudic context for the comment that Rashi brings to bear on this verse is noteworthy in that it is all about the power of wounded feelings to bring great harm into the world. The narrative immediately preceding the Talmudic discussion of hurt feelings is the famous story of the oven of Akhnai, the rabbinic debate about the ritual purity of a particular oven that ends with a voice coming forth from heaven to declare, “These and these are the words of the living God.”

This story is often understood as proof of divine pluralism, or perhaps as a programmatic statement about majority rule. But we often stop reading right before the story gets to its ultimate point: Rabbi Eliezer, who holds the minority opinion, is excommunicated, his positions on all legal matters spurned, because of his willingness to disagree with the majority. Many hurt feelings follow, with the result that Rabbi Eliezer prays for the death of his primary antagonist, Rabban Gamliel. His prayer is granted, he is informed by his wife (who also happens to be Rabban Gamliel’s sister!), because “the gates of wounded feelings are always open.”

This is a rather cryptic statement, though it probably means that the prayers of those who have been insulted are allowed to reach heaven and be answered. But perhaps it can be read as more human than heavenly: some wounds do not close. And if that is so, we must be diligent in our ways of speaking to people, careful in how we interact. This is not simply a matter of staying out of everyone else’s way, of not interfering. This is a matter of finding ways to love those with whom we live: our family, our friends, our larger communities.

The Talmud understands that the easiest fault to find in others is that which we find within ourselves. Rashi applies that concept to the law of loving a stranger, and in doing so, he universalizes the command. To each other, we are all strangers, in one sense or another, and we must find ways to reach across the chasms that divide us. To begin, to take the first step, we must not wound, we must not harm. And then, having made our careful first approach, we must come nearer still and find within the other not just the faults we know we bear as well, but the depth of love-worthy humanity that every person carries as a birthright.

The gates of wounded feelings are never closed, and if we try hard to love each other, perhaps we can avoid opening them in the first place.

Refuah Shleymah רפואה שלמה

Avigal bat David haLevi (Alice Gold)	M’cor Eyshel bat Esther Tzvia	(Tovia Lebovich)
Baracha bat Sarah	Mishulamit bat Maryam (Marcia Hogan)	Tziporah bat Esther
Batya bat Shprintza (Barbara Roberman)	Miriam Shifra bat Issur (Margaret Sachs)	Yakov ben Sarah (Jacob Schonberg)
Chana bat Malka	Mordechai ben Mathilda (Morty Berkowitz)	Ya’akov Roni ben Margalit
Chana Leah bat Sarah (Anna Crollman)	Ovadya ben Esther Malkah (Ovadya Fleishman)	Yehuda ben David (Jerry Robins)
David ben Sarah (David Leitner)	Reuven ben Chanoch v’Dinah (Robert Feurst)	Anne Boyd Cynthia Brown Heidi Gross Hill Tom Kronmiller Alan Marty Lorraine Morley
David Yosef ben Avraham v’Chana (Donald Goldstein)	Sarah bat Hinda (Sylvia Dante)	Ezra Rapport Jack Reich Helen Rosenberg Richard Roth Lauren Schiro Edward Thompson-Starkey Christine Walters
Eliyahu Chanan ben Sarah (Ed Gagnon)	Sarah Gittel bat Rut (Sue Perlo)	Please contact the synagogue office with any additions or changes to this list.
Esther bat Yankale Sura	Shira Batya bat Meirav Fruma (Elinor Fleishman)	
Esther Malka bat Chaya Fruma (Elinor Fleishman)	Shmuel ben Shoshana	
Malka bat Leah (Meg Anderson)	Shraga Feivel ben Leib (Philip Skoletsky)	
Malka Chana bat Basha Rachel	Tuvia ben Shmuel v’Tziporah	

Yahrzeits יארצייט

May their memory be a blessing

Irving Hoffman
Ruth Diamond Berman
Bennett Frankel
Hinda bas Iona
Ralph Schonberg
Anna Krepchon
Dorothy Cassell
Howard Weissman

BE Mazel Tov

Mazel Tov to Andree Allen and Larry Kodack on their marriage!

Mazel Tov to Devon Fischer and her family on Devon becoming a Bat Mitzvah!

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