



Shabbat Shalom

14 Elul 5776
September 17, 2016

Parashat Ki Teitzei

This Week at Beth El Synagogue

Saturday, September 17:

Havdalah—7:50 pm

Shabbat Mishnah Study	8:45 am
B'nai Mitzvah Peer Tutoring	9:00am
Orthodox Kehillah Services	9:00 am
Main Sanctuary Services	9:30 am
Parasha Study	9:30 am
Children's Service	10:30 am
Marc Brettler: "The Biblical Root of Forgiveness" followed by a discussion with Rabbi Greyber	1:00 pm

Sunday, September 18:

Talmud Torah	9:30 am
Weekly Sunday Minyan	9:30 am
MoB Kickoff Brunch with Alon Tal	10:15 am
Sisterhood Welcome Brunch	12:30 pm

Monday, September 19:

Tuesday, September 20:

Va'ad HaChinuch Meeting	7:00 pm
Finance Committee Meeting	7:30 pm
Ritual Committee Meeting	7:30 pm

Wednesday, September 21:

Weekly Wednesday Minyan	8:30 am
Talmud Torah	4:40 pm
Interfaith Outreach Meeting	7:00 pm

Thursday, September 22:

Lunch and Learn with Rabbi Greyber -Chapel Hill Public Library	11:30 am
Rabbi Greyber's Siddur Class	7:30 pm

Friday, September 23:

Candle Lighting—6:31 pm

This weekend's Kiddush lunch is prepared by:
Adam SaNogueira

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

Upcoming Events:

- ✧ Sat. 9/24 Shabbat Mishnah Study
- ✧ Sat. 9/24 Shabbat Morning Orthodox Kehillah Services
- ✧ Sat. 9/24 B'nei Mitzvah Peer Tutoring
- ✧ Sat. 9/24 Shabbat Morning Service
- ✧ Sat. 9/24 Chavurah Minyan
- ✧ Sat. 9/24 NC Pride Durham
- ✧ Sun. 9/24 Selichot Service
- ✧ Sun. 9/25 Talmud Torah
- ✧ Sun. 9/25 Weekly Sunday Minyan
- ✧ Sun. 9/25 Kitah Zayin Family Beit Midrash (T'fillin)
- ✧ Sun. 9/25 Jon Levinson Lecture in memory of Hudi Gross
- ✧ Wed. 9/28 Weekly Wednesday Minyan followed by Shiur
- ✧ Wed. 9/28 Talmud Torah
- ✧ Thu. 9/29 Rabbi Greyber Siddur Class
- ✧ Sat. 10/1 Shabbat Mishnah Study
- ✧ Sat. 10/1 Shabbat Morning Orthodox Kehillah Service
- ✧ Sat. 10/1 B'nei Mitzvah Peer Tutoring
- ✧ Sat. 10/1 Shabbat Morning Service

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.



9/17 Ki Tetzzei	
Bernie Fischer	
Bernie.fischer@duke.edu	919-493-0306
9/24 Ki Tavo	
Bernie Fischer	
Bernie.fischer@duke.edu	919-493-0306
10/1 Nitzavim	
Diane Markoff	
Diane.markoff@earthlink.net	919-969-8953
10/8 Vayelech Shuva	
David Kirsch	
David.kirsch@dm.duke.edu	919-286-4516

Parashat Ki Teitzei

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

When was the last time you memorized a phone number? In the age of Gmail, iPhones, and Facebook, remembering has become a passive activity. But at the end of this week's parashah, the Torah commands us to actively "remember what Amalek did to you... do not forget." But what did Moses command Israel to remember and why?

The two accounts of Amalek's attack—the first in Exodus 17 and the second in Deuteronomy 25—have quite different focuses. Along with the commandment to bear a grudge, the account in Deuteronomy suggests an answer to the question of what Amalek did to the Israelites such that they—out of all the hostile parties Israel encountered on their 40-year journey—are singled out for special *active* remembrance: they attacked the tired, weak, and wary Israelite stragglers, and they did not fear the Lord. This, though, is not an adequate answer for Rashi, because it does not account for the odd phrase "that [Amalek] happened upon you on the way," ("*asher karekha baderekh*").

Rashi's first interpretation of what "happened upon" might mean reminds the reader of the suddenness of Amalek's attack. Indeed, in the Exodus narrative, Amalek appears out of nowhere, seemingly unprovoked. This interpretation suggests that Amalek is singled out for special remembrance because of the apparent randomness of their attack—a manifestation of their essential wickedness. This accords with later Jewish explanations of Israel's eternal enmity with Amalek, whoever they may be.

There is a second interpretive possibility, though, beyond the command to bear an eternal grudge. Deuteronomy is often preoccupied with what might happen after Israel is settled in the land. Israel might intermarry with the daughters of the seven nations and be drawn to worship their gods (chapter 7). Israel might think that the food that they grow is only the result of their own hard work and eventually forget that it is God who brings forth bread from the ground (chapter 8). And Israel also might forget that it was God who protected them in their long sojourn against their attackers, the first of whom was Amalek.

These commandments to "remember," "erase the memory of," and "not forget" Amalek come into force, according to these verses, "[w]hen the Lord your God grants you rest from all your surrounding enemies in the Land the Lord your God is giving you." That is, after Israel is peacefully settled in the land. The key to understanding this commandment as more than just a divinely prescribed grudge is in this timing. As Moses delivered his final speeches to the remaining Israelites on the plains of Moab at the end of their 40-year journey, he was worried that they might forget God's protection. After all, the entire generation of Israelites who survived the battle with Amalek had passed on. And so Moses bid their children remember what Amalek did to their parents' generation *after they are settled in the Land* so that they might also remember God's protection in the desert.

We find support for this second interpretive possibility in a comment of Rashi's from the beginning of the earlier account of Amalek's attack. In the Exodus narrative, the reader is struck by Amalek's appearance seemingly out of nowhere. At this point in the biblical narrative, the Israelites had just set out on what should have been a short journey, first to Sinai to receive the Torah and then on to Canaan. Just before Amalek's attack, they complained of hunger, and so God gave them manna. Then they complained of thirst, so God had Moses bring water forth from a rock. Then suddenly, Amalek is battling with Israel at Rephidim. Echoing earlier midrashic traditions, Rashi here suggests that Amalek's attack was the result of Israel's lack of awareness of God's provision—and perhaps ingratitude—in the first weeks after the Exodus:

It is as if God said, "I am always with you [Israel] and prepared to provide for your needs." And you say, *Is the Lord in our midst or not?* I [God] swear it, a dog is coming, and it will bite you, and you'll cry out to me, and then you'll know where I am! An allegory: It is like a man who put his son up on his shoulders and goes out on his way. The son sees something he wants, and he says "Abba, grab that object and give it to me," and the father gives it to him. And a second time, and a third time. And they come upon another man, and the son says to him, "Have you seen my father?" At which point, the father says, "You don't know where I am?!", takes his son off of his shoulders, and a dog comes and bites him [the son].

This second interpretation suggests that Amalek's "dog bite" was an effort to teach Israel an important lesson about trust, gratitude, and God's protection. This, though, is quite an Israel-centric interpretation of Amalek's attack and, in a way, suggests that Israel was at fault for Amalek's attack. It ignores Amalek's own wicked intentions and cowardly military strategy. And whereas the Deuteronomic account stresses Amalek's cowardice, the Exodus account focuses on the miraculous nature of Israel's victory over the Amalekites, which, according to this interpretation, should have led Israel to realize that God was there with them. Perhaps, then, this commandment to actively "remember" means to learn the lessons of the event: gratitude and trust.

It follows from this explanation that Deuteronomy's commandments to "remember," "erase the memory of," and "not forget" Amalek contain also at least a partial element of national introspection. Alongside a commandment to destroy the remnant of evil—however we might understand that commandment—we also find a commandment to actively remember the lessons of an earlier time when our Israelite ancestors learned the hard way about trust, gratitude, and God's protection. Perhaps this week's parashah can help us to remember these vital lessons—even without setting a reminder on our phones.

Refuah Shleymah רפואה שלמה

Avigal bat David haLevi (Alice Gold)	Mishulamit bat Maryam (Marcia Hogan)	Yakov ben Sarah (Jacob Schonberg)
Avram Moshe ben Esther (Alan Mandel)	Miriam bat Rivka v'Natan (Miriam Sharp)	Ya'akov Roni ben Margalit
Baracha bat Sarah	Miriam Shifra bat Issur (Margaret Sachs)	Yehuda ben David (Jerry Robins)
Batya bat Shprintza (Barbara Roberman)	Mordechai ben Mathilda (Morty Berkowitz)	Anne Boyd
Chana bat Malka	Ovadya ben Esther Malkah (Ovadya Fleishman)	Cynthia Brown
Chana Leah bat Sarah (Anna Crollman)	Reuven ben Chanoch v'Dinah (Robert Feurst)	Alan Marty
David ben Sarah (David Leitner)	Sarah bat Hinda (Sylvia Dante)	Lorraine Morley
David Yosef ben Avraham v'Chana (Donald Goldstein)	Sarah Gittel bat Rut (Sue Perlo)	Ezra Rapport
Eliyahu Chanan ben Sarah (Ed Gagnon)	Shira Batya bat Meirav	Jack Reich
Esther bat Yankale Sura	Shmuel ben Shoshana	Helen Rosenberg
Esther Malka bat Chaya Fruma (Elinor Fleishman)	Shraga Feivel ben Leib (Philip Skoletsky)	Richard Roth
Malka bat Leah (Meg Anderson)	Tuvia ben Shmuel v'Tziporah (Tovia Lebovich)	Lauren Schiro
Malka Chana bat Basha Rachel	Tziporah bat Esther	Edward Thompson-Starkey
M'cor Eyshel bat Esther Tzviva	Ty-Esther Tobi bat Tzeryl (Mindy Shapiro)	Christine Walters

Please contact the synagogue office with any additions or changes to

Yahrzeits יארצייטן

May their memory be a blessing

Melvin Shimm	Yaakov ben Leib
Abraham Fischer	Carol Hart
Martin Fischer	Adele Kaplan
Selma Fischer	William King Keyserling
Emma Hirsch	Lewis Klein
Karl Hirsch	Charles Barker
Nettie Shapiro	Lee Ray Bergman
Shirley Convissor	Ester Kaplan

BE Remembered

Beth El Synagogue extends condolences to Steve and Shula Bernard and their family on the death of Steve's mother -- Zelda Bernard - Zelda bat Shmuel v'Chaia-- who passed away on September 6th.

BE Mazel Tov

Mazel Tov to Rabbi Greyber on the publication of his essay "If Only Some May Bless, Can All Be Blessed?" in the Mesorah Matrix series Birkat Kohanim!

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