

# Bulletin Fall 2019

### Message from Rabbi Greyber:



# Wresting a Blessing from the Land and the Summer Sun

It is Thursday morning, August 1st. In a few minutes, I will have breakfast and drive north to my family in Herzalya; later tonight, I will take a cab to the airport to return home to North Carolina. But now, I'm sitting on the מרפסת /mirpeset/porch of my room at Kibbutz Ketura in the south of Israel in late summer. I'm wearing my tallit and tefillin, and I recite the first blessing of the Sh'ma that acknowledges God as "המאיר לארץ ולדרים עליה ברחמים" / "the One who brings light to the world and all who dwell upon it with compassion." I love that phrase.

After a dark, cold night, the sun rises, and we experience the light of the sun as an act of God's compassion and love for the world and for us<sup>1</sup>. We fear the dark; we suffer the cold. Light helps us be less afraid and to see the world we inhabit more clearly. Sunlight provides needed warmth in the coldest part of the night after the campfire has gone out and as the morning begins. We experience God's compassion through the light and warmth of each morning's sun. But as I say the blessing, I realize sunlight works differently here.

In a few minutes, I will move inside to my dark, air conditioned room because exposure to the sun in the south of Israel can be dangerous and uncomfortable. In front of me, the kibbutz has planted a patch of green grass that was watered overnight (during the day, the water would have uselessly evaporated within two to three minutes in the scorching sun). But beyond the small patch of grass planted for hotel guests is dirt. Dusty desert nothingness. Terrain baked barren and brown by a searing sun. So I ponder the fittingness of this phrase of the blessing I love so much. Is God's sunrise an act of compassion even in this place, especially in the summer season? It also occurs to me that I am saying this blessing in a Middle Eastern climate far closer to the experience of the human author (for even the most traditional Jew acknowledges that the prayers were written by human beings, not God, based upon their very human experience of the world). What was the author of the blessing thinking if, for half the year, God's sun was to be suffered and fled from rather than embraced and enjoyed?

I am on Kibbutz Ketura for two reasons. One is to spend some time with Benjamin, La Bomze and Levi Price's group on Ramah Israel Seminar during their time in the south of Israel. The Hartman program finished last Wednesday and I went to Herzalya for the weekend to celebrate my uncle Michael's 75th birthday, and am spending Monday through Thursday down south before

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### JOIN US!

Beth El Synagogue's Snyderman Building Dedication Celebration

Sunday, September 22, 2019 10:30 am—12:30 pm (Talmud Torah students will join the celebration at 11:30 am)

The program will include:

Donor Recognition Music Mezuzah Affixing Light Lunch

RSVP at betheldurham.org/dedication by September 15.

We look forward to seeing you and celebrating in our newly renovated building!

<sup>&</sup>quot;The light being referred to in this blessing was sunlight, not a divine or ethereal light. When the later rabbis added to the end of the blessing the phrase, "אור חדש על ציון תאיר" ("shine a new light on Zion" referring to a redemptive light, not a physical light, Sa'adai Ga'on banned saying the line as a wrongheaded innovation. He lost. The Jewish people love seeing messianic redemption everyone and what was a radical innovation became a tradition nobody would ever dare think of changing! And so the story continues...

#### (continued from page 1)

returning home. I've been invited by the director of the seminar to teach a session or two and visit with the kids. The second reason I'm here is because Yosef Abramowitz described Kibbutz Ketura as "the most beautiful place in the world" and the pool as "his happy place."

I rented a room from Yossi Abramowitz and Rabbi Susan Silverman during my stay in Jerusalem for the Hartman program. They are both extraordinary people. Rabbi Silverman gave the Rudnick Lecture at Duke in February 2019; she is an activist and Executive Director of *Second Nurture: Every Child Deserves a Family -- And a Community*, a program to find loving families for waiting children (she'd love to partner with our congregation in helping us create a culture of adoption for the many foster children and orphans in need of supportive homes. Anyone interested?) Yossi was a candidate for President of Israel in the last election, was a candidate for the Knesset even before he made aliyah, and is currently CEO of Energiya Global, an Israeli company whose mission is to bring solar energy to sub-Saharan Africa. Yossi and Susan made aliyah in the mid 2000s to Kibbutz Ketura, got out of the taxi and, feeling the heat, Yossi said to a member of the kibbutz, "this whole place must run on solar, right?" "What?" the person replied, at which point Yosef set out to develop the solar industry in Israel.

Ketura now has a huge solar field that powers the kibbutz and helps supply electricity to Israel's Arava region. It's a Jewish solar field so, based on Yossi's vision, they observe the mitzvah of *pe'ab*, of leaving the corners of the field to benefit the poor: the kibbutz donates proceeds from each of the corners of the solar field to four local non-profits. While the kids were still here, I accompanied them on a tour of an "Off-the-Grid Technology Village," a project of the Arava Institute that field tests technologies to help more than 600 million people in sub-Saharan Africa who live "off-the-grid." One technology from NUF Filtration uses dialysis blood filters (more than 250 million are thrown away each year after a single use) to filter dirty water into clean water; it is a portable device that can be wheeled from place to place, is powered with a hand pump, and requires no electricity. Another design is a hut that places used water bottles and a small solar panel in a thatched roof, providing day and night light and electricity.



Another innovation is a simple machine that converts compost and human waste into cooking fuel and fertilizer, helping with sanitation and food production. Yossi told me over coffee one morning at their apartment: "Israel is on the verge of becoming a superpower of goodness in Africa. What people need there is clean water, clean energy, and food, and Israel is the world's expert in clean water, solar energy, and water efficient farming." A superpower of goodness in Africa. Wow.

I think about these things as I struggle to understand the words of the blessing that describes the hot summer sun as an expression of God's love and compassion. On the one hand, I need to make space for saying that sometimes God's gifts don't feel like an expression of love. Life hurts and burns; sometimes what we need is patience to help us realize that while the summer sun burns, the desert it creates is not only a place of death, but home to types of life and living of a different kind. A few drops of water in the desert and date palms rise to majestic heights and produce the sweetest of fruits. Solar panels now harness the sun's powerful energy to provide clean energy for tens of thousands of people. Scorching heat and evolution create tough animals and plants that survive and thrive in conditions we otherwise would have given up on. Patience in the desert can give us hope, can show us not only how much more we can withstand,

#### (continued from page 2)

but places and types of beauty that we risk missing if we just stay away in summer time (I've always visited the south of Israel in winter, not summer, before).

Maybe long ago, a human author wrote a blessing for God's sun in winter time when the nights were cold and the morning sun was a relief. Eventually though, summer time came; I like to think s/he kept the same blessing for summer not only out of faith that the summer would end and winter would return, but rather as a challenge for us to find God's presence when it's not perfectly evident, to wrestle with the desert sun and wrest from it a blessing, like our ancestor Jacob with his angel long ago.

My first month in the seventh cohort of the Rabbinic Leadership Initiative (Rabbi Sager was in Cohort 1) at the Shalom Hartman Institute was extraordinary. I have many stories and teachings to share. Perhaps it is strange that I've devoted this space to observations and experiences outside of the official program, but that itself is a reminder of something of which Rabbi David Hartman (z"l) was acutely aware: that the land, State, culture, and history of Israel are themselves a challenge to responsibility, an invitation to relationship and a text, like the Torah itself, to be studied, with which we must wrestle and, with patience and love, from which we can wrest a blessing, even from the summer sun.





### From the Desk of Board President Debbie Goldstein

We are headed into the Fall, one of my favorite times at Beth El, and this year promises to be very special. On September 22, we will dedicate the Snyderman Building, and I cannot wait to celebrate with

everyone who put their heart and soul into the renovation of our space. It has been a treat this summer to come to services every week and see the finishing touches come together-- from the memorial board, to the sliding glass doors between the Beit Midrash and the main sanctuary, to the new Ark, it is very exciting to see our dreams come together and become a home for our congregation.

Soon after, we will hold our first High Holidays in the new building, facing east, with a new High Holiday Ark, new chairs!, and many more details. For many years, my family would arrive late at services and find ourselves

Staff

Rabbi: Rabbi Daniel Greyber Rabbi Emeritus: Rabbi Steve Sager Executive Director: Alan Friedman Education & Youth Director: Elisabeth Gerson Director of Youth Engagement: Averyl Edwards Congregational Services Coordinator: Sheri Hoffman Communications & Marketing Associate: Rachel Greene Program & Membership Coordinator: Jenna Hyland Kitchen Manager: Sandy Fangmeier Head of Building Maintenance: Zachary Marshall B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator: Rachel Albert

#### **Board of Directors**

President: Debbie Goldstein 1st VP: Leslie Winner 2nd VP: Dan Schnitzer Treasurer: Syd Miller Recording Secretary: Richard Hart Financial Secretary: Marjorie Satinsky Immediate Past President: Noah Pickus

Meg Anderson, Karen Burns, Valerie Glassman, Donna Goldstein, Hope Hartman, David Klapper, Michael Kornbluth, Kim Bardy Langsam, Lois Price, Herman Sperling, Jesse Summers, Tal Lewin Wittle

#### (continued from page 3)

far in the back wrestling with folding chairs and straining our necks to see the bimah, so I am especially excited that our new format will allow many of us to be much closer and hopefully improve our ability to participate.

Our board will meet next week to convene for the year, and we have already begun a process of sharing our hopes and plans for the congregation and our activities in 2019-2020. If you have ideas of programs or efforts you'd like to see, please don't hesitate to share them with a board member. Now is also a great time to join that committee that you've been thinking about or raise your hand to help with efforts to make our congregation more welcoming and inclusive. We welcome more participation, and the start of the year at Beth El is a great time to get involved.





### A Note from Executive Director Alan Friedman

Wow....it's September already! It's hard to believe the summer has come and gone. It's only been three short months since we marched the Torahs back from our home away from home, Trinity Avenue Presbyterian Church, on May 19. We continue to "welcome home" our congregants and guests to our newly renovated and expanded building.

Since the Torahs arrived home, so much has happened. The building is now 99% complete, with just a few punch list items left to go. Both the main and High Holiday Arks have been completed, and the gates have been returned. Talmud Torah continues to see unprecedented

growth, and they are enjoying being in their new space. The teens love their new lounge; they have already started to paint a mural and a chalkboard wall!

Programming continues to expand in the new building. Lifelong Learning offers many classes and programs each month: Sunday morning is Hebrew I and Walking with the Jewish Calendar with Rabbi Greyber meets for 14 sessions now through May. Plus, we have our Author Series, various Shabbat shiurim, and many guest speakers throughout the year.

In addition to our weekly Saturday Shabbat services in both the main sanctuary and the Orthodox Kehillah, we have many different worship opportunities available such as: First Fridays Shabbat, our new Chavurah monthly service, the Chanting service, Musical services on both one Friday night and Saturday morning a month, and Healing Yoga. Don't forget our weekly minyanim on Wednesday and Sunday mornings.

You can find more information about all of these opportunities on our website www.betheldurham.org and in our Wednesday weekly e-mail blast.

Another wonderful thing happened this summer—we moved our synagogue database system to ShulCloud. Many of you have already experienced this when you completed your membership renewal, enrolled in Talmud Torah, signed up for classes, or set up payment plans. This new database system allows you to stay on top of billing, donations, enrollments, and much, much more through your ShulCloud log-in and, eventually, on an upcoming app for your mobile phone.

We look forward to "welcoming you home" at both our dedication ceremony on September 22 and for the High Holidays that begin on Sunday night, September 29.

AL

### Talmud Torah



It is hard to believe that the time has come for our school to move into the newly renovated Snyderman Building! Since I started as the Education Director at Beth El in 2013 (and for many many years prior to that!), we have been based in the Freedman Center. It has been a familiar, comfortable (albeit slightly outdated) home for weekly Talmud Torah classes, special programs, Shabbat dinners, indoor Gaga games and more. Yet these last two years have been a bit cramped, to say the least. While our school and youth programming has continued to expand, we have experienced some real growing pains.

Everyone has eagerly awaited this day and, as it quickly approaches, I sit in the new Youth/Education office brainstorming about all the new opportunities this beautiful space opens up for us. I'm reminded of a time two years ago, when a number of new families reached out to me about joining the school.

"What grade is your child in?" I would ask. "1st grade" they would ALL say. Our community was expanding and more families with young children were joining Beth El. Any congregation will tell you this is the path to long term sustainability and growth, but I couldn't help but think to myself, "Where will we put all of these 1st graders?! Sure, we could order more chairs, but there isn't room to put more tables in the classrooms for the kids to sit at!" This was truly a great problem to have.

So we crowded into the small, awkwardly shaped classrooms and brought in more co-teachers and Madrichim (teen assistants) to help maintain our wonderful teacher-student ratio, and continued to create exciting lessons and programs that fostered strong Jewish education and relationships among our students and families. But it was a tight fit (especially during those warm North Carolina fall and spring days with no air conditioning or fans).

Fast forward to today. Every day, I take a few moments to wander downstairs and look at the new classrooms. They are so spacious and bright! Four of them have pocket doors so that two rooms can be easily combined into one, making it possible for grades to come together for special lessons and activities without feeling uncomfortably snug.

Perhaps even more exciting than having room to spread our arms out is that we will all be under one roof. Not only does this make everything logistically simpler, but this allows for the school and youth programs to be visible to the rest of the community. Our youth faculty works extremely hard to come up with unique, creative, engaging ways to bring Judaism to life, yet not many people have had the chance to witness it in action. We look forward to showing off each week as we flood the halls with students and teachers, weaving in and around everyone else at Beth El on any given Sunday (and Wednesday). We invite you to take a stroll downstairs and catch us in action.

B'Shalom,

Plesavar Gene

Elisabeth Gerson Education & Youth Director

### Youth Engagement





#### **Our Things Considered**

What do the things you have say about you?

According to a class I took at UNC called "American Jewish Material Culture," the answer is "quite a lot." It's not that far of a jump; we buy/own things that we like, which appeal to our tastes, which reflect aspects of our personalities.

But what had never occurred to me before I took this class was that, just as much as we shape our objects, our objects also shape us. For instance, do you ever feel more confident when you're wearing an outfit that you like? Or feel "more Jewish" on days when you're wearing your *magen david* or hamsa necklace? That's because the interactions we have with our things are a form of two-way communication: we buy/acquire a thing because it reflects something in us, so then seeing it or interacting with it reinforces that quality/identity within ourselves.

So what do you do when you have a brand new teen lounge, with completely blank floors, walls, and no furniture? The things we choose to fill the teen lounge with have the power to reflect ourselves and shape who we want to be/how we want to feel when we're in that space.

The first step is to **make it a space that we're comfortable being in.** I mean that literally: we're loading the room with squishy couches, soft rugs and floor cushions, and a giant multi-person memory foam beanbag chair. We'll have a minifridge and "nosh station" with snacks and drinks available for people to take care of their bodies' needs, too. Being physically comfortable is an important part of feeling at ease and most like ourselves. We're also being attentive to ambiance, using string lights as an alternative to the harsh fluorescent lights for when we're looking for a more relaxed tone.

**Once we feel comfortable in the space, we need to make it** *ours.* This year for our USY and Kadima kickoff event we will be collectively painting a wall mural designed by one of our very own teens, La Bomze (Class of 2020). As I write this, the design is still a little in flux, but the current plan is that it will have a hamsa with the Durham skyline at the top as the fingers, and will be lined with various Jewish quotes that resonate with our teens, such as *tzedek tzedek tirdof* ("Justice, justice you shall pursue," D'varim 16:20), the *shema*, and *im tirtzu ein zo agada* ("If you will it, it is no dream," from Altneuland, Theodor Herzl). The design of the Durham skyline hamsa combines our identities as both Durhamites and Jews, an important affirmation as teens navigate their schools as some of the only Jews in their classes. It says that we belong here, and that we are proud of who we are. The quotes surrounding the hamsa remind us of the values that help us define who we are and whom we want to be: pursuing justice, loving Jewish ritual, and dreaming of a future of peace for all and the safety of the Jewish people.

So stay tuned, we have exciting ~things~ to come!

Averyl Edwards

Averyl Edwards

Director of Youth Engagement

#### My Bar Mitzvah Project

As part of becoming a bar or bat mitzvah, Beth El students do a project in which they do something to help a local organization. For my Mitzvah Project, I chose to hold a book drive to benefit the Durham Literacy Center (DLC). The DLC does tutoring and provides other services to help promote teen and adult literacy in the Durham area. I got a list of books that the DLC wanted and sent emails to friends and family asking for help.

My Mitzvah Project was really important to me because I wanted to help share the gift of reading with others and help change people's lives for the better. In all, I collected over 100 books. It was so rewarding to see how happy the DLC was when they received the books and to know that the books will go to such good use. I am very grateful to everyone who donated all of those books and made this possible.

Just as one becomes an adult in the eyes of the Jewish community when they become a bar or bat mitzvah, I feel like the Mitzvah Project is starting to become an adult in the larger community. You do something to help out the community, becoming an active member in society. The Mitzvah Project is an important part of the b'nei mitzvah process, and it was an eye-opening and gratifying experience.

Thank you to Beth El for giving me the opportunity to help our community.

Noah Andrews



Left: Noah with a few of the books he collected



Above: The Durham Literacy Center was so excited to receive over 100 books!



#### Proud to be Life & Legacy Donors

JoAnn and David Rubin joined Beth El in 1973 and have been devoted members of our synagogue family for over four decades. Their three children—Becca, Deb and Seth—attended Talmud Torah and celebrated their b'nei mitzvah in the sanctuary. And in 2017, their granddaughter Catherine became a bat mitzvah on Shabbat Vayera.

In David's words, "Beth El has been an important part of three generations of our family's lives for over 45 years. One of the most important things we learned from my father was that we have a responsibility to nourish the communities and institutions that have nourished us, and that responsibility extends to future generations."

We are grateful to members like JoAnn and David who have already made a legacy gift to Beth El as part of the Life & Legacy initiative (see names on the next page), but we still have a long way to go. By making a legacy gift to Beth El, you can share your hopes and dreams with your family, make a statement about the importance of our synagogue in your life and ensure that a strong and vibrant Jewish community exists for the future.

For more information about signing a Letter of Intent, please contact Norma Gindes at nomagindes@gmail.com or Bob Gutman at ragutman@thegutmans.net.



Above: A gathering of three generations of the Rubin family

From left to right: Catherine Meurer, Emma Meurer, Jan Meurer (Becca's husband), Noah Meurer, Rebecca (Becca) Rubin Meurer, David Rubin, JoAnn Rubin, Genevieve Hutchison (Seth's wife), Seth Rubin, Deborah (Deb) Rubin, Matthew Neglay (Deb's husband)



### Thank you to our Life and Legacy donors!

Anonymous (6) Leah Austin Rachel and Nathan Bearman Linda Frankel and Lewis Margolis Jane Gabin and Richard Cramer Norma and Bob Gindes Valerie and Matthew Glassman Beth and Adam Goldstein Debbie Goldstein and Steve Prince Donna Goldstein Sheila and Donald Goldstein Galia Goodman Jennifer and Rabbi Daniel Greyber Laura and Robert Gutman Sharon Halperin Hope Hartman Carol and Jimmie Haynes Susan and Robert Hill Annette Kirshner Susan and Joel Leeb Sheila and Sol Levine Anita and Arie Lewin Elaine and Lee Marcus

Evelina Moulder Elizabeth Null Marilyn and Peter Ornstein Michele Pas Trudi Abel and Noah Pickus Jacki and Michael Resnick Laura and Barak Richman Marion Robboy JoAnn and David Rubin Alex and Dan Schnitzer **Gladys** Siegel Judy and Lew Siegel Rhoda Silver Ellen and Phil Singer Susan and Matt Springer Maxine Stern Deborah and Jonathan Wahl Bob Wechsler Ivy and Vincent Wingate Leslie Winner Tal and Eric Wittle Abby and Gary Zarkin Sheva Zucker and Sandy Kessler

#### Meet Your Committee Leadership

Art Committee: Hunter Levinsohn	Lifelong Learning: Donna Goldstein and Barton Cobert
BE Modernization and Expansion:	Life & Legacy: Bob Gutman and Norma Gindes
Sandy Berman and Drew Langsam	Membership: Kim Bardy Langsam
Chevra Kaddisha: David Klapper	Men of Beth El (MoB): Mike Resnick
Community of Caring: Karen Burns and Melissa Segal	Orthodox Kehillah: Phillippe Chemla
Development: Norma Gindes	Ritual: Randi Smith
Finance: Syd Miller	Sisterhood: Tal Lewin Wittle
House: Dan Schnitzer	Social Action: Hope Hartman and Rachel Bearman
Interfaith Working Group: Manny Spira and Lisa Berley	Synagogue Life: Tal Lewin Wittle
Kol Koloteinu: Krisha Miller	Va'ad HaChinuch: Michael Kornbluth

### Social Action Committee

The goal of the social action committee is to help inform and engage the Beth El community of emergent and ongoing needs in our community. Through direct action and allocations made from donations to the Mitzvah Fund, we have supported organizations that focus on hunger relief and nutrition, child poverty, safe and affordable housing, child literacy, economic justice, and immigration and refugees. We have partnered with organizations within and throughout our community, including Trinity Avenue Presbyterian Church, Urban Ministries, Families Moving Forward, the Jewish Federation, Judea Reform Congregation, SEEDS, Iglesia Hispana Emanuel Food Bank, Walltown Food Pantry, West End Community Center, Porch, Table, Partners for Youth Opportunity, StepUp, Durham Congregations in Action (DCIA), Interfaith Council of Chapel Hill (IFC), Habitat for Humanity Durham, and Faith Connections on Mental Illness.

This coming year we will be focusing on education and action related to immigration and refugees as a HIAS Welcoming Community, continuing our work with Habitat for Humanity on Interfaith builds to support safe and affordable housing in Durham (our next build is Sunday, November 24th!), and developing a Beth El Day of Action on Sunday, April 26th for all members of the Beth El community to connect to, and volunteer with, local organizations doing direct service work in our community. New Steering Committee members are always welcome! If you are interested in joining, please contact either Hope Hartman at hhccny@gmail.com or Rachel Bearman at rbearman@mebtel.net. Join our google group to stay informed on the many and varied opportunities to engage https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/beth-el-social-action.

Thank you to all those who have supported the Mitzvah Fund this past year and to all Beth El members who have participated in social action activities. Together we are simultaneously helping to strengthen our Beth El and larger Durham-Chapel Hill communities!

Annual Red Cross Blood Drive. Contact Carla Fenson, carla.fens@gmail.com.

Yiddish Song Fest benefitting Urban Ministries. Contact Beth or Gary Berman, hspeakup@aol.com.

Knitting Chevra makes hats, sweaters, and other items for those in need. Contact Andree Allen, andreemallen@gmail.com.

Serving food at IFC Men's Shelter in Chapel Hill. Contact Hunter Levinsohn, hunter.levinsohn@gmail.com.

Serving food at Urban Ministries' Community Café in Durham. Contact Bob Wechsler, rwex@rcn.com.

Hope Hartman and Rachel Bearman Committee Co-Chairs

#### Beth El Welcomes the Following New Members to our Community

Julia Mays & John Rees Jessica Sperling Smokoski & Graham Smokoski Sara & Jared Weiss Jonah Yesowitz

There are a number of long-standing Beth El social action initiatives that occur throughout the year that are not directly planned through the Social Action Committee. See below for a list of these activities along with the appropriate contact to learn more and get involved.

### Lifelong Learning

Book Festival March 22-29, 2020 at the Levin JCC



- Sunday, March 22, 2020 1:00 pm - Kristen Fermaglich, "A Rosenberg by Any Other Name: A History of Name Changing in America"

> Monday, March 23, 2020 1:00 pm - Mark Cohen, "Not Bad for Delancey Street: The Rise of Billy Rose" 4:00 pm - Aimee Ginsburg Bikel, "The City of Light" 7:00 pm - Marra Gad, "The Color of Love: A Story of a Mixed Race Jewish Girl"

Tuesday, March 24, 2020 1:00 pm -Jeremy Benstein, "Hebrew Roots, Jewish Routes: A Tribal Language in a Global World" 7:00 pm - Jaime Bernstein, "Famous Father Girl: A Memoir of Growing Up Bernstein"

> Wednesday, March 25, 2020 1:00 pm - Meg Waite Clayton, "The Last Train to London: A Novel" 7:00 pm - Jenna Blum, "The Lost Family"

Thursday, March 26, 2020 4:00 pm - Howard Reich, "The Art of Inventing Hope: Intimate Conversations With Elie Wiesel" 7:00 pm - Joy Ladin, "The Soul of A Stranger: Reading God and Torah from A Transgender Perspective"

> Friday, March 27, 2020 2:00 pm - Laura Limonic, "Kugel and Frijoles: Latino Jews in the United States"

> Sunday, March 29, 2020 1:00 pm - Marcia Berneger, "A Dreidel in Time: A New Spin in an Old Tale" 4:00 pm - Yousef Bashir, "The Words of My Father: Love and Pain in Palestine"

\*Check the Beth El calendar, as new speakers will be added!



### Men of Beth El (MoB)

The Men of Beth El, better known as the MoB, has planned several fun and enlightening events for the coming year. The MoB contributes to the well-being of our synagogue through fellowship and service in a spirit of "Schmooze, Have Fun, Help the Community." Included among the activities for the coming year are talks, movie night, a whiskey tasting event and Durham Bulls MoB night. The annual MoB brunch will be held on Sunday, October 13, and will include a talk by Dan Schnitzer, all followed by the Sukkah raising. On Sunday, October 20, the annual Sukkot Pizza-in-the-Hut lunch will be hosted by the MoB. In November, we will have a bowling night, and in December, the annual latke event will take place in combination with the Men-of-Oil. If you have questions, please contact one of the following individuals: Scott Smith, MoB Communicator (scott.m.smith100@gmail.com), Bob Wechsler, MoB Sportsman (rwex@rcn.com), or Mike Resnick, MoB Boss (michresnick@gmail.com).

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### **BE** Modernization and Expansion (BEME)

Fall is in the air, and as you read this update we are ready for the dedication of the Snyderman Building, the new name of our beloved home. All the pieces have come together, and our village has created this beautiful space with time, expertise, dollars and sweat. The support of the community has been fantastic and there are so many people responsible for getting us to this moment.

As we live in the space, we continue to learn the little things, and we will continue to enhance and improve the building. We are humbled by the gift of your trust and patience as we work through the final details. We hope you love this new building as much as we do, and that future generations will enjoy it as much as we do today.

With gratitude and pride, Drew Langsam and Sandy Berman



### Kol Koloteinu

#### Kesher l'Keshet: Beth El's Rainbow Connection

In June, you all participated in a survey about where Beth El stands on the inclusion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and other (LGBTQ+) folks in our community. We've been poring over the data, and have come to the following conclusions:

1. Generally, people feel like LGBTQ+ folks are welcome and included at Beth El, but,

2. There is a lot of room for growth in terms of having our policies and image reflect this community's acceptance of LGBTQ+ people, and

3. There is a need for programming led by members of the LGBTQ+ community that proactively welcomes and celebrates LGBTQ+ people in the Beth El community, as well as learning opportunities for interested allies of LGBTQ+ folks.

In response to these findings, we have assembled an Action Committee within Kol Koloteinu ("All Our Voices"), an alliance within Beth El dedicated to the support and inclusion of all sexual orientations and gender identities. With a team of folks ranging in ages and identities, we are busy designing programming for the upcoming year and meeting with other Beth El committees to discuss areas for further support of LGBTQ+ folks in our community, from Talmud Torah to the bimah to the larger Durham community.

Change can be a slow process, but we're energized to be working to build something lasting and sustainable for our community. Thanks for your continued help in making Beth El the vibrant, accepting place that we want out of a synagogue community. To get involved, please reach out to Krisha (krishasong@gmail.com) and/or Averyl (averyl@betheldurham.org).

Krisha Miller and Averyl Edwards



### Community of Caring

Have you ever wondered how to make a big difference in the Beth El community in a short amount of time? The Community of Caring has many options for you! You could make a phone call to a home bound member, send a card of well wishes, cook a meal for someone who is ill or a new parent, and/or visit someone who is recovering from surgery. No time commitment is too small; you can volunteer as much or as little as your schedule allows (and no committee meetings!). Every action strengthens our community and our connections to each other.

Please fill out the survey to specify how (and how often) you might like to be involved in the Community of Caring. If you have trouble accessing the survey, please email Melissa Segal at <u>segalmiller@gmail.com</u>.

#### https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CP3NX88

If you or someone you know needs support from the Community of Caring, please contact Sheri Hoffman, <a href="mailto:sheri@betheldurham.org">sheri@betheldurham.org</a> or 682-1238.

Melissa Segal & Karen Burns Committee Co-Chairs



# High Holidays 5780 Schedule of Events

#### SELICHOT SERVICES

Motzei Shabbat, September 21 Selichot Service 8:30 pm —at the Levin JCC

#### **EREV ROSH HASHANAH**

Sunday, September 29 Orthodox Kehillah Services 6:00 pm Services 7:00 pm

#### **ROSH HASHANAH DAY 1**

Monday, September 30 Services 8:30 am Orthodox Kehillah Services 8:30 am Tot Service 10:00-10:45 am Babysitting 11:00 am Family Service 11:00 am-12:00 pm Tashlich- Chapel Hill 4:30 pm Tashlich- Durham 4:30 pm Orthodox Kehillah Services 7:00 pm

#### **ROSH HASHANAH DAY 2**

Tuesday, October 1 Services 8:30 am Orthodox Kehillah Services 8:30 am Tot Service 10:00-10:45 am Babysitting 11:00 am Family Service 11:00 am-12:00 pm

#### **KEVER AVOT**

Sunday, October 6 Sunday Minyan 9:30 am Durham Hebrew Cemetery Visitation 10:30 am Betheldurham.org/cemetery

#### KOL NIDRE

Tuesday, October 8 Services 6:00 pm Orthodox Kehillah Services 6:00 pm Candle Lighting 6:30 pm

#### YOM KIPPUR

Wednesday, October 9 Morning Services 8:30 am Orthodox Kehillah Services 8:30 am Tot Service 10:00-10:45 am Babysitting 11:00 am Family Service 11:00 am-12:00 pm Study Sessions 3:30 – 4:30 pm Minchah 4:30 pm Orthodox Kehillah Minchah 4:45 pm Babysitting 5:30 pm Ne'ilah 5:30 pm Orthodox Kehillah Ne'ilah 5:45 pm Havdallah 7:29 pm Break-Fast following services

Be sure to read the High Holiday Guide at betheldurham.org/ high-holidays A Guide for the Yamim Noraim (Days of Awe) 5780



Beth El Synagogue 1004 Watts Street Durham, NC 27701 919-682-1228



#### High Holiday Melodies by Eric Meyers

As usual, at this time of year I am getting ready for my 50th year at Beth El and 49th as High Holiday cantor. Rabbi Greyber asked me to write something this year as we celebrate in our wonderful, newly reconfigured synagogue. And our prayers this year have a special urgency with so much hate and disarray around us. But I wanted to say something about the liturgy and melodies I have been singing these many years. I had three cantorial mentors along the way—let me introduce them to you now. First, meet Cantor Israel Rabbinowitz, who was my childhood cantor in Norwich, Connecticut, in whose choir I sang from age eight until I went away to college. Many of his melodies I have adopted and changed from SATB (four voices) to solo baritone, which, as you might imagine, took a bit of effort. He was born and trained in Moscow and preferred a venerated and traditional Ashkenazic repertoire. He was a huge stickler for nussach too, and I simply adored his lyric tenor refined approach to davening. He was also a very kind and considerate Hebrew School teacher, my favorite. Among my favorite melodies from Norwich are his "Ya'aleh" from Kol Nidrei, an adaptation of an old Russian folk song.

When I went to Dartmouth College and was invited by the Hillel Director to be the High Holiday cantor, I was forced to do some quick adjustments to all my choral arrangements. But because I had some connections at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York where my late uncle, Rabbi Marshall Meyer, had been a student, I contacted the head of the cantorial school, Rabbi Morty Leifer, who sent me a couple of tapes to help me prepare, and I even found time to get to study with him in person in the next years. Believe me, without the connection of my uncle, I would not have gotten to first base. My "uvechens" come from Morty, and he told me that this sort of musical punctuation not only alerted the sleepy congregant where s/he was in the service but allowed the cantor to be a sort of guide to the liturgy with familiar sounds and nussach. After Dartmouth, I became the cantor at the Conservative congregation in Pelham, NY for High Holidays and special occasions.

It was in Boston that I met Cantor Gregor Shelkan, Auschwitz survivor and distinguished cantor and opera singer from Berlin. At first, he was just my voice teacher, but he soon invited me to be his backup for overflow services at Temple Mishkan Tefilah in Newton. I began my studies with him as a grad student at Brandeis, but later transferred to Harvard where I received my PhD there in 1969, exactly 50 years ago. After a year in Israel, the senior rabbi there, Israel Kazis, asked me to start and administer a Hebrew High School, meeting one afternoon during the week and Sunday mornings. At Mishkan Tefilah for the High Holidays, I sang with organ accompaniment in a large tent outside; services were directed to young adults. Since my congregation was "young," the emphasis was on communal singing and, since I knew the nussach well already, what we worked on was picking melodies that were easy to learn and sing. Among the melodies I took from him were "Ki anu amecha," with its Germanic eloquence and hints of Lutheran hymnology, and his refined nussach for Neilah that haunts me every time I sing it. There are many more that you can hear on Beth El's CD that I made some years ago with a long narrative and explanation.

An admission: except for my rendition of El Nora Alilah in Neilah, I have not found Sephardic music that might work in our community. But I am thankful for this gorgeous melody and piyyut that goes back to the 11th c. The melody is Moroccan.

I'd like to also say a few words about the relationship between text and melody. The nussach and melodies are intended to create a mood and receptivity to the holy or what one considers to be holy or wholly different from the routine. When possible, the melody supports the liturgical text. But one must remember that the liturgy dates back a millennium and a half to antiquity and many concepts are simply ones most of us cannot accept today. How about resurrection of the dead (tehiyat hametim)? I certainly don't believe it, but I use and utter the words seemingly with conviction. How about the belief in a Davidic messiah? I don't believe in it, but I say it proudly. What I hope to convey to you by this disjunction between words and melody is that there is a place for everyone of us in the liturgy, perhaps in the interstices where we might find ourselves some of the time.

#### (continued from page 16)

But in keeping ourselves tied and committed to the traditional text, while at the same time permitting ourselves some leeway on meaning, we align ourselves with the long and distinguished Jewish past in which we participate with song, pride, and emotion. Try and understand the text of Kol Nidrei and then compare how you feel about the traditional melody: there's no comparison. The melody wins out. And what comes to mind when we say kaddish, not the words so much but the memory of the loved one(s) we commemorate. No need then to get caught up in the text: let the sounds of the melodies bring us together as a very special community that is proud of its glorious past. And when the rabbi and I get to Sim Shalom, let the text overwhelm us as we shout out for PEACE!







### Sukkot, Shmini Atzeret & Simchat Torah at Beth El

#### SUKKOT DAY 1

Monday, October 14 Services 9:00 am Shaking the Lulav and Etrog

#### SUKKOT DAY 2

Tuesday, October 15 Services 9:00 am Shaking the Lulav and Etrog

#### HOSHANA RABA

Sunday, October 20 Services 9:30 am

PIZZA-IN-THE-HUT Sunday, October 20 12:30 pm

Right: Hoshana Raba 2018

#### SHMINI ATZERET

Monday, October 21 Services 9:00 am Yizkor 10:30 am

#### EREV SIMCHAT TORAH

Monday, October 21 Services 6:30 pm

#### SIMCHAT TORAH

Tuesday, October 22 Services 9:00 am





Left: Pizza-in-the-Hut 2018

### Ask the Rabbi

#### Are Funerals Permitted in the Beth El Sanctuary?

Most funerals at Beth El consist of a graveside service. Sometimes, an additional funeral service is held prior to burial. For many years, these funeral services were held at the chapel at Howerton-Bryan Funeral Home on Main Street. Howerton-Bryan closed a few years ago. Our Chevra Kaddisha now works with Hudson Funeral Home for Beth El funerals, but, because their chapel is quite far away, we began holding funeral services in the Beth El sanctuary a few years ago.

The Talmud (Megilah 28b) discusses the issue in Tractate Megilah (28b) where a "private funeral" (קלות ראש / *hesped shel yahid*) in a synagogue is prohibited because (according to Rashi) an attitude of *kalut rosh*/ disrespect is out of keeping with the dignity of a synagogue, while a public funeral (הספד של רבים) / *hesped shel rabim*) for a Torah scholar is permitted in order to accommodate the larger crowd. Later generations permitted synagogue funerals for Torah scholars or communal leaders and their relatives. Since it is clear that no hard and fast prohibition exists in Jewish law against holding funeral services in a synagogue sanctuary, we have decided to hold funerals in our synagogue sanctuary for a combination of the following reasons:

- 1) Lack of a suitable chapel with the funeral home with whom we now work for our communal burials
- 2) To allow "important" persons a funeral ceremony in our sanctuary while denying that option to "less important" people grates against the egalitarian commitments of our community
- 3) We can hardly imagine a funeral in our sanctuary leading to קלות ראש / kalut rosh/ disrespect. Funerals in our community are occasions for the deepest of respect and their occurrence in our synagogue only deepens their solemnity.<sup>1</sup>

A final thought: one of the most meaningful rituals I discovered in my first few years as Beth El's rabbi was the tradition that, after a funeral service, the procession of cars would drive from Howerton-Bryan and, instead of going straight to the Durham Hebrew Cemetery, it would proceed down Watts Street and the hearse would stop at Beth El. David Klapper, the head of our Chevra Kaddisha, would get out of the front seat of the hearse and open the back door; then Laura Quigley, Krisha Miller, Sheri Hoffman or someone from the synagogue office would open the front door of our synagogue to create one last moment of connection between the deceased and our sanctuary, where that person had prayed for many years. The first time I had the honor to witness and participate in this ritual, it took my breath away. Permitting funerals in our sanctuary honors this tradition and extends it forward into the future.

<sup>1</sup>Sources for this analysis were drawn from CCAR responsum 5769.5



Left: Durham Hebrew Cemetery





*Our Story, Our Time* Capital Campaign Update September 2019

Our Time to Thank You and Celebrate!

After 3+ years of planning and implementation, our time as co-chairs of the *Our Story, Our Time* campaign is drawing to a close. We cannot thank this Beth El community enough for the tremendous generosity demonstrated during this initiative to renovate our beloved shul. Many of you not only shared your treasures, but also your time reaching out to others to encourage their support. As a result, more than \$6.1 million was committed to this effort that has transformed our synagogue into the center for spiritual, educational, and social activity our community had long envisioned.

Thank you again for the privilege of leading this community in writing the next chapter in the Beth El story! We hope you will join us in celebrating the success of this campaign and dedicating our renovated shul on September 22nd.

n. Bun

Nathan Bearman Campaign Co-Chair <u>nathan@furniturelab.com</u> 919.618.9011

Gary Zarkin Campaign Co-Chair gzarkin@gmail.com 919.699.7282

### Thank you to our Capital Campaign donors!

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\*This list contains donations made to Beth El from March 30-July 31 If your name is missing, please email info@betheldurham.org.

for his twin sister, Emmaline Rose Aronin Mills, and for their older sister, Josephine Tilly Aronin Mills

### Yahrzeit Reminders

September		Elul
15	Abraham Fischer	15
15	Martin Fischer	15
15	Selma Fischer	15
15	Emma Hirsch	15
15	Karl Hirsch	15
15	Nettie Shapiro	15
16	Shirley Convissor	16
17	Marilyn Hausman	17
18	Adele Kaplan	18
18	William King Keyserling	18
18	Carol Hart	18
18	Lewis Klein	18
18	Yaakov ben Leib	18
18	Ruth Cobert	18
20	Esther Kaplan	20
20	Lee Ray Bergman	20
20	Abbott Pozefsky	20
21	Sondra Gevarter	21
21	Malvina Markman	21
21	Jeanne Dreifus	21
22	Anne Levinsohn	22
22	Julius Weinstein	22
24	Carrie Gladstein	24
24	Norma Lovins	24
25	Jill Goldstein Lafrance	25
26	Jacob A. Ornstein	26
26	Anna Grossman	26
26	Mollie Liptzin	26
26	Carol Bowen	26
26	Lewis Cohen	26

Septen	ıber ]	Elul
27	Susan Cox	27
28	Clarence Berman	28
28	Jerry Robins	28
28	Miriam Pell Schmerler	28
29	Robert Lubovsky	29
29	David Alexander Rosefield	29
29	Sidney "Chick" Mandel	29
29	Sam Zarkin	29
Septen	nber 7	lishrei
30	Abraham Roskin	1
30	Rebecca C. Stadien	n 1
30	Paul Grossman	1
Octobe	er 7	lishrei
1	Rhea Fishman	2
2	Polly Salomon Gutman	3
2	Irene Silverstein	3
3	Rebecca Emenitov	e 4
3	Heinz Speier	4
3	Roberta Morris	4
4	Sydney Back	5
4	Lottie Samuel	5
4	Leveritt A. Wallace	5
5	Rifkie Kresses Birnbrey	6
6	Israel Gutman	7
6	Pearl Cohen	7
6	Lester Zauder	7
6	Michel Baranger	7

Octobe	er T	'ishrei
8	Jeffrey Grossman	9
10	Morris Becker	11
10	Harry Rosenberg	11
10	Israel Hurwitz	11
11	Bernice Kahn	12
11	Janet Harrison Broadwell	12
12	Herbert Herzfeld	13
12	William Jacob Jackson Jr.	13
12	Anna Lipschitz	13
14	Edna Geneva Stapleton Miller	15
17	Morris Kaplan	18
17	Harry Harrison, Jr.	18
17	Louise D. Kushner	18
18	Julius Grossman	19
18	Marya Kirshner	19
19	John Ullman	20
19	Morris D. Ashendorf	20
21	Hanna Rachel Koren	22
21	Lawrence Singer	22
21	Hylton Jaggard	22
21	Rose Post	22
22	Israel Meyer Frohman	23
22	Robert Strauss	23
22	Marcus Weston	23
23	Susana Levy	24
24	Halina Gutman	25
24	Rose Gutman	25

## Yahrzeit Reminders, continued.

Octob	er 7	ſishrei	Noven	nber	Heshvan	Noven	nber	Heshvan
24	Cecille R. Lipton	25	4	Joseph George	6	15	Rose Philipson	17
24	Paul Silver	25	4	Shimm Kassel Siegel	6	16	Arthur Concors	18
25	Kurt Schreiber	26	4	Sara bas Yaakov	6	16	Shirley Friedland	18
26	Harry Lyons	27	5	Herman Bachenh		17	Jacob I. Stadiem	19
26	Alex S. Tulsky	27	5	Helen Reiner Por		17	Mildred Sass Slath	xoff 19
26	David Liptzin	27	5	Polly Keyserling	7	17	Reuven ben Eliez	er 19
26	Robert Bakst	27	5	Sinnreich	,	18	Joseph Poss	20
27	Albert Behar	28	5	Edward R. Svetke	ey 7	18	Sylvia Shane	20
27	Erven Gladstein	28	6	Lawrence Dubow	. 8	18	Yetta Rockman	20
27	Alberto Levy	28	7	Frances Rothsteir	n 9	18	Shirley Schulman	20
27	Jennie Nachamson	1 28	8	Alfred Carson	10	19	Eric Ivan Pas	21
27	Sidney Brettler	28	8	Alice Rosenberg I	Kline 10	19	Hattie Singer	21
27	Leonard Sperling	28	8	Abe Rosenzweig	10	19	Howard Greyber	21
27	Paul Luebke	28	8	Renee Rosenthal	10	19	Lenore Siegel	21
28	Ruth Shecter	29	9	Sid Rancer	11	20	Sarah Behar	22
29	Eliot Kraft	30	9	Jack Poncher	11	20	Marvin C. Goldst	ein 22
Octob	er I	Heshvan	10	Marylu Goldberg	12	20	Arnold Klapper	22
30	N. Herbert	1	10	Joseph Morrison	12	21	Celia Shatzman	23
	Halberstadt		10	Sandra Richmond	l 12	21	Fannie Romick	23
30	Paul Perilstein	1	10	Manuel Singer	12	22	Larry Katz	24
30	Marvin Chester Wahl	1	11	Sadie Greenberg	13	23	Agnes Culp	25
31	Dan Portnoy	2	12	Chaim Mordecai	Finkel 14	24	Nora Barth	26
31	Dolores Ginsburg	2	12	Stanley Barclay	14	24	Sara Lieber	26
31	Estelle Dubow	2	12	Florence Mintzer	14	24	Ida Stollwerk	26
Noven		- Heshvan	13	Harry Segal	15	24	Herbert Bailin	26
2	Herman Krebs	4	13	David Helms	15	25	Harold Barth	27
2	Norman Gross	4	14	Treasure Mcclain	16	25	Mary Siegel	27
3	Esperanza Remoli		14	Nathan Rafterma	n 16	25	Leah Silver	27
5	De Rocha		14	Moshe Friedman	16	25	Lillian Sperling	27
4	Katherine Asbury	6	15	Anna Marck	17			

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**Donald and Sheila Goldstein**, in honor of Richard Cramer and Jane Gabin's 40th wedding anniversary; and the B'nai Mitzvah of Elliott Albin and Jack Beeson

**Donald and Sheila Goldstein**, with thanks to Rabbi Greyber for all the help and kind words at Avery Prince's Bar Mitzvah

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\*This list contains donations made to Beth El from April 1-July 31. If your name is missing, please email info@betheldurham.org.



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