

Shabbat Shalom

28 Elul 5776 October 1, 2016

Parashat Nitzavim

This Week at Beth El Synagogue

Saturday, October 1:

Havdalah—7:18 pm
Shabbat Mishnah Study
B'nai Mitzvah Peer Tutoring
Orthodox Kehillah Services
Main Sanctuary Services
Rabbi Fischer Shiur on Sukkot
9:00 am
9:00 am
1:00 pm

Sunday, October 2:

NO Talmud Torah
Weekly Sunday Minyan 9:30 am
Erev Rosh Hashanah Services 6:30 pm
Erev Rosh Hashanah Babysitting 6:30 pm

Monday, October 3:

Rosh Hashanah Day 1 Services 8:30 am
Rosh Hashanah Day 1 Children's Services 10:30 am
Teen Room Open 10:30 am
Rosh Hashanah Day 1 Babysitting 11:30 am
Erev 2nd Day Services 7:00 pm

Tuesday, October 4:

Rosh Hashanah Day 2 Services 8:30 am
Rosh Hashanah Day 2 Children's Services 10:30 am
Teen Room Open 10:30 am
Rosh Hashanah Day 2 Babysitting 11:30 am

Wednesday, October 5:

Weekly Wednesday Minyan 8:00 am Talmud Torah 4:40 pm

Thursday, October 6:

Executive Committee Meeting 8:30 am Synagogue Life Committee Meeting 6:00 pm Rabbi Greyber's Siddur Class 7:30 pm

Friday, October 7:

Candle Lighting-6:08 pm

This weekend's Kiddush lunch is sponsored by:
Lori Bernstein and Doug Merrill, Inessa and Brian Fannin,
Rachelle Bienstock and Scott Snyder, Michaela Davidai, Susan
and Mike Roth, and Eunice Shatzman

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.

Upcoming Events:

Sat. 10/8 Shabbat Mishnah Study

Sat. 10/8 Jesse Summers: "Scrupulosity: When Mistakes Seem Unforgiveable"

Sun. 10/9 Cemetery Visitation

□ Tue. 10/11 Social Action Kol Nidre Food Drive Bag Handout

☆ Wed. 10/12 Study Session

♥ Wed. 10/12 NO Talmud Torah

♥ Wed. 10/12 Havdallah

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

10/1 Nitzavim week.

Diane Markoff

Diane.markoff@earthlink.net 919-969-8953

10/8 Vayelech Shuva

David Kirsch

David.kirsch@dm.duke.edu 919-286-4516

10/15 Ha'azinu

Jon Wahl

jmwahl@email.unc.edu 919-942-382

10/17 Sukkot I

Isaac Price

Isaac@isaacprice.org 919-866-5453

Parashat Nitzavim

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

This week's Torah Portion, Nitzavim, speaks profoundly about *teshuvah*, the literal and figurative struggle to return to God. When we turn back to God "with all [our] heart and soul," the parashah tells us, then God "will bring you together again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you" (Deut 30:3). Being scattered is a state of disorientation and disconnection. *Teshuvah* represents a coming home. There's an organic connection between the return to the Land of Israel—the land at the center of the Jewish soul, from which we have been banished—and the return that involves changing our ways and opening our hearts to God.

The next verse says: "Even if your outcasts are at the ends of the world, from there the Lord your God will gather you, from there He will fetch you" (Deut 30:4). There is no place that is too far away for God to reach us, either literally or figuratively. Even those of us who live on the edges of society will be gathered up. In this *teshuvah* process, God's passionate commitment to the marginalized is front and center.

The Hebrew reads "biktzeh hashamayim", the ends of the heavens. How is it that "the ends of the heavens" is translated as "the ends of the world"? In Psalm 19, the sun moves from one end of heaven to the other, crossing the sky in an arch:

His rising-place is at one end of heaven,

And his circuit reaches the other;

Nothing escapes his heat (v. 7).

As the sun moves across the heavens each day, it also moves from one end of the earth to the other. So the ends of the heavens and the ends of the earth are the same. This is a beautiful image of interconnectedness and reconciliation. At the ends—and in the end—the divine world and the human world come together. The outcasts are gathered in. *Teshuvah* is the space in which *out* and *in* are reconciled. The promise that we will be gathered up by God can offer a profound comfort for those of us who experience ourselves in far-flung places, whether emotionally, spiritually, or physically.

If we return to our original verse, we see something interesting in the language. The New JPS translation I quoted earlier says: "He will bring you together again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you." But the word that is being translated as "bring you" is actually "veshav", which means "He will return." ("Bring you" is the causative form of the same Hebrew root.) The translation skips over the problem, but the rabbis in the Talmud do not.

And when they will be redeemed in the future, the Shekhinah will be with them, as it says, "Then the Lord your God will return [with] your captivity" (Deut. 30:3). It does not say here *veheshiv* [and He shall bring back] but *veshav* [and He shall return]. This teaches us that the Holy One, blessed be He, will return with them from the places of exile. (BT Megillah 29a)

The verses in the parashah seem to convey that we are the outcasts and God is eternally at the center. But this Talmudic midrash complicates the picture. Just as we are outcasts, God is an outcast. Somehow, God, in the form of the Shekhinah, God's in-dwelling presence, is also in need of return. The image of God returning us, bringing us back, conveys one kind of power. But the image of God coming back with us, alongside us, conveys a different kind of power. I cannot pretend to understand this power fully, but I understand the Rabbis to be teaching us that this power is rooted in connectedness, in being with the outcast, dwelling inside the "not yet."

There's something about being joined by the divine in this place on the edge that has the potential to shore us up as we long to return. Perhaps it is the experience of being joined in this way which enables us to open up "with all [our] heart and soul" and return at last.

Refuah Shleymah רפואה שלמה

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

יארצייט Yahrzeits

May their memory be a blessing

	Clarence Berman	Rhea Fishman	Lottie Samuel
	Robert Lubovsky	Polly Gutman	Leveritt A. Wallace
David Alexander Rosefielde Sidney "Chick" Manda Sam Zarkin Abraham Roskin		Irene Silverstein	
	Sidney "Chick" Mandel Sam Zarkin	Rebecca Emenitove	
		Heinz Speier	
		Roberta Morris	
	Abraham Roskin	Sydney Back	

BE Mazel Tov

Mazel Tov to Caryn Rossi on her new position teaching Chinese in the Chapel Hill- Carrboro City schools!

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