



Welcome to Shabbat Services at Bet Torah

November 28, 2020

12 Kislev 5781



Shabbat

Parsha Vayetzei

Genesis 30:14-31:16 Etz Hayim pp. 176-181

Haftarah

Hosea 12:13-14:10 Etz Hayim pp. 189-193

Mazel Tov to

**Neal and Deborah Goldman
on the Bar Mitzvah of their son, Gabe**

Welcome to Bet Torah!

Message from the Clergy

Shabbat Shalom and Welcome to Bet Torah!

Whether you are with us every Shabbat, every so often, or experiencing our community for the first time, we are so glad you are here. Being present with people to share in meaning has always been Judaism's antidote to the loneliness and alienation we can sometimes feel as human beings. With busy lives we are in ever greater need of places in which we can feel whole, fully seen, and able to be present. That place has always been the synagogue, and we at Bet Torah strive to provide an oasis of calm and connection amidst the currents of life.

As a synagogue community, the global pandemic has prevented us from gathering in person. In response, we used the Talmudic emergency exit called *sha'at ha'dechak* or "time of crisis" in order to go online on Shabbat so that our community can connect while physically separated. The virtual space we have created provides opportunities to allow our value of inclusiveness to find its clearest expression.

A special aspect of our virtual service, the Home Torah Program, allows for aliyot in the home where the Torah is, along with aliyot from a distance. The blessings are different for each location, but the Torah readings are the same. This is an elegant solution for an unprecedented time.

We feel truly blessed to be here with all of you!

Rabbi Aaron Brusso, Rabbi Lisa Sacks, and Cantor Gil Ezring



This Week's Parsha

Being in the Land

Parshah Vayetzei opens with Jacob's flight from the Land of Israel. As a result of his deception and betrayal, Jacob is forced to flee from the murderous intent of his brother Esau. His parents, Isaac and Rebekah, urge him to return to the "old country," where he will hopefully find both a worthy mate and a better future. The fear and uncertainty surrounding Jacob's journey lead to the mysterious episode with which the parsha opens. Genesis 28 narrates, "Jacob came upon a certain place and stopped there for the night . . . Taking one of the stones of that place, he put it under his head . . . He had a dream; a stairway was set . . . and angels of God were ascending and descending." Strikingly, God reiterates the promise of the inheritance of the land to Jacob and his descendants, a vow made to his grandfather before: "I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac: the ground on which you are lying I will assign to you and your offspring." Yet, on closer examination of the divine promise, we discover a subtle but dramatic difference between God's promise to Abraham and the promise to Jacob. God tells Abraham, "Lift up your eyes and see the place where you are . . . for all of this land I will give to you and to your seed for eternity" (Gen. 13:14–15). What is the qualitative nature of these two promises? And how may we derive meaning from them today, especially with regard to our own relationship with Israel?

Meir Shalev, prolific and poetic modern Israeli author, comments on the difference between these promises in his remarkable work *Reishit (In the Beginning)*, a book about the first occurrences of various events and phenomena in the Torah. Shalev writes that the essence of Abraham's promise is connected to the eye (sight and seeing); Jacob's promise is connected to his body

(the physical connection of his body resting on the land). To be sure, Shalev writes, *The eye beholds a vast area that is far greater than the body which rests on a small parcel of land. But seeing does not involve the same intimacy as physically resting upon something. From here we see that Abraham had a fleeting, distant and relatively cold relationship to the Land of Israel—distant and abstract—as only the sense of sight could impart. In sharp contrast we have the figure of Jacob—who had complete and direct contact with the land—contact between the land and his body, between man and the soil of the earth. (Reishit, 35 [translated from the Hebrew])*

In many ways, we are witness to the paradox of the promise of the Land. Despite the promise given to Abraham, Jacob is forced to flee as a result of tragic familial circumstances. Still, Meir Shalev's keen sensitivity and literary eye leads us to a deeper understanding of the differing relationships of our ancestors to the Land of Israel. While Abraham's was one of *sight* and relative distance, Jacob's was one of contact and *physical connection*. This remarkable reading teaches us a great deal about our own relationships with the Land of Israel.

While it is important to keep our eyes upon the Jewish homeland, seeing from a distance is insufficient. We need to become part of the story. And the way we become part of this modern day miracle is by making ourselves physically present in the land. Living in Israel is indeed a sacred endeavor and treasured mitzvah. And frequent visits to Israel are no less important and vital to energize the Israel-Diaspora relationship. May we live with the keen sight of Abraham and the physical connection of Jacob—continually strengthening our ties and bonds to the promised homeland of Israel.

By Rabbi Matthew Berkowitz
Director of Israel Programs

Weekly Commentary from
The Jewish Theological Seminary



From the Bar Mitzvah Family

Gabriel Payton

Shabbat Shalom & Happy Thanksgiving weekend—

We are so grateful to have our family and friends share this special morning with us. Like all of you, we certainly could not have ever imagined Gabe's Bar Mitzvah service looking like this, but following Gabe the Babe's easygoing, go-with-the-flow, 4th kid spirit, we have embraced it all and feel very fortunate to share this service safely from our home to yours today.

Bet Torah has been a very special part of our lives since we moved to Northern Westchester. Thank you to Morah Mindy, Gina and the entire Nursery School and Religious School staff, who will always hold a special place in our hearts for their help in building our children's Jewish foundation. Robin Wald, thank you for continuing to inspire life-long learning and Jewish exploration for all of us. Nili, Cantor Ezring, and Rabbi Sacks—thank you for your tender loving care and encouragement even over face-time, while helping Gabe prepare for today. Thank you Seth Young, Ilana Fleischner and Joanne Wagner for keeping us all on track. And thank you to Rabbi Brusso, not only for his exceptional leadership, but also for your special friendship and shared Chicago roots. We are very grateful that you have seen Gabe grow from that tiny kid with a really loose tooth on our Israel trip, to the teenager who makes creative Zoom backgrounds to keep you and his Kulanu classmates happily entertained.

The uniqueness of Gabe's Bar Mitzvah story on Thanksgiving weekend in the midst of a global pandemic, will probably be one he shares often. We are taking this opportunity to feel EXTRA gratitude and blessings — just like who he is to us — our EXTRA blessing — the cherry topping on our family sundae, as we always say. We hope that Gabe's big heart and joyous, sweet spirit will also be a bright light to everyone joining us today.

Gabe, please look around our house and out into the Zoom screen today to see your community of support. Take it all in, as we celebrate your accomplishments and ongoing journey in this special Bet Torah community and beyond. We love you and could not be prouder!

Thank you, again, for taking the time to share this morning with us. We certainly look forward to dancing the hora together one day soon! And lastly, a BIG Mazal Tov to the Warshaw family, who is also celebrating Phoebe on this memorable weekend.

With love and so much gratitude,
Deborah & Neal, Sam, Eliza, Arielle & Gabe



Honors

Friday, November 27, 2020

As I Light

Candlelighting

Kiddush

Blessing Children

Motzi

Aleinu

Phoebe Warshaw

Phoebe Warshaw

Gabe Goldman

Goldman Family (Hebrew) &
Warshaw Family (English)

Gabe Goldman

Goldman & Warshaw Children

Saturday, November 28, 2020

D'Var Torah

A Prayer for the Journey

Torah Reading

Genesis 30:14-16

Genesis 30:17-21

Genesis 30:22-27

Genesis 30:28-36

Genesis 30:37-43

Genesis 31:1-9

Genesis 31:10-16

Maftir Genesis 31:14-16

Haftarah Reading—Hosea
12:13-14:10

Prayer for Country

Prayer for Israel

Prayer for Peace

Ashrei

Musaf

Ein Keloheinu

Aleinu

Adon Olam

Blessings

Jeff Wohlstadter

David Silver

Erica Wohlstadter

Congregation

Congregation

Greg Shapiro

Neal Goldman

Gabriel P(f)ele
ben Noach
uD'vorah

Gabe Goldman

Grammie Barbara

Torah Readers

Sam Goldman

Arielle Goldman

Eliza Goldman

Michael Wohlstadter

Deborah Goldman

Johanna Shapiro

Gabe Goldman

Gabe Goldman

Gabe Goldman

Karen Budin

Morgan Adriaola

Jennifer and Scotty Gould

Eliza and Arielle Goldman

Gabe Goldman

Shapiro Cousins

Bet Torah Friends

Wohlstadter Cousins



The Shabbat Service

Shabbat Shalom! Welcome to Bet Torah! We are delighted that you are joining our community to celebrate the joy of *Shabbat*.

Bet Torah is an egalitarian congregation affiliated with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. It is customary that all men and boys wear a *kippah* (skullcap) during services. Head coverings are also appropriate for Jewish women. Men and women who are called to the Torah to read or recite a blessing before and after a Torah reading are also asked to wear a *tallit* (prayer shawl).

To maintain the sanctity of *Shabbat*, we remind you to please mute your microphone except when you have an assigned role during the service or are invited to unmute. Also, please keep distractions to a minimum when your camera is enabled. Photography is prohibited on *Shabbat*.

Two texts are needed to participate in the *Shabbat Service* - a *siddur* (prayer book) and a *Chumash* (Bible). (PDF links may be found on the Bet Torah website alongside the Zoom link to this service.) The *siddur* contains all of the prayers including a full English translation of the Hebrew text. We use *Siddur Lev Shalem* and also call pages for *Siddur Sim Shalom for Shabbat and Festivals*. The *Chumash* contains the complete text and translations of the Torah and Haftarah readings.

The *Shabbat* morning service has a definitive order and is divided into three basic sections – *Shacharit* (the morning service), the Torah Service, and *Musaf* (the additional service).

Shacharit - This service includes preliminary prayers and hymns followed by the *Shema* and *Amidah*. The *Shema* expresses our belief in one God and instructs us to love God with all our heart. The *Amidah*, which is Hebrew for “Standing,” is an individual meditation that compels us to remember God and the meaning of *Shabbat*.

Torah Service - The Torah (the Five Books of Moses) is read from a handwritten scroll of parchment, without vowels, punctuation, or musical notation. Its words are chanted to a precise musical cantillation.

One portion of the Torah is read aloud each week to fulfill the commandment to study. At Bet Torah, we follow a modified version of the ancient triennial cycle. Each week we read one-third of the weekly portion so that the scroll is read in its entirety in three years.

The *Haftarah*, a passage from the prophets, follows the Torah readings. This tradition dates back to the time of the Babylonian exile, when Torah study was prohibited. Each *Haftarah* portion was selected for its similarity to a corresponding portion of the Torah, so the Jews were able to study God’s word without breaching civil law.

Musaf - *Musaf*, the third and final portion of the *Shabbat* morning service, is similar in structure to the *Shacharit* service, although shorter. This service parallels the additional sacrifices that were performed to honor *Shabbat* and Holidays at the Temple in Jerusalem until 70 C.E. At Bet Torah, we read the beginning of the *Musaf Amidah* together with the reader and conclude our prayers in silence.



Bet Torah Service Times

Sundays	9:00 am
Weekday Mornings (Monday through Friday)	8:00 am
Weekday Evenings (Monday through Thursday)	7:30pm
Friday Kabbalat Shabbat	6:30 pm
Saturday Morning Shabbat	9:30 am
Saturday Contemplative Afternoon Service	4:00 pm

A contemplative approach to *Mincha* including meditation, chanting, and words of Torah. Check the website for the Zoom link.

Candle Lighting Times

Havdalah Tonight	5:12 pm
Next Friday, December 4th	4:08 pm

Bet Torah's Mission Statement

Bet Torah is a progressive, egalitarian, participatory congregation committed to the principles of Conservative Judaism. Our purpose is to help strengthen the bonds among members of our congregation and God, the Jewish community, Israel, Jewish tradition, and the world in which we live. Wherever each member may be on his or her Jewish journey, he or she will find in Bet Torah a community where everyone can gather for prayer and celebration, learning and teaching, performance of mitzvot, and deeds of caring and *tikkun olam* (repairing the world).

