



Welcome to Shabbat Services at Bet Torah

January 16, 2021

3 Sh'vat 5781



Shabbat

Parsha Vaera Exodus 7:8-8:15 Etz Hayim pp.357-363

Haftarah Ezekiel 28:25-29:21 Etz Hayim pp.370-373

Mazel Tov to

**Peter and Robbie Cohen-Millstein
on the B'nai Mitzvah of their sons,
Noam and Saul**

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

From Slaves of Pharaoh to Servants of God

The opening of Parashat Va'era shows God reiterating the ancestral promise of redemption to a still reluctant Moses. Aaron will accompany Moses as a spokesperson, and the two will appear before Pharaoh demanding the freedom of the enslaved Israelites. God places this drama against the background of prophets and patriarchs before Moses, recalling covenantal promises and acknowledging the suffering of the Israelites. The Israelite God will now enter history through what has become known as the “four languages of redemption”: “I will free you from slavery,” “I will redeem you with an outstretched arm,” “I will take you to be My People,” and “I will bring you into the Land.” (Some are quick to identify a fifth expression, “I will give you the Land as a possession.”) How are we to understand the notion of Israelite redemption? Do the Israelites truly free themselves of servitude?

Joseph B'khor Shor shares an essential interpretation of Israelite redemption: far from becoming “free agents,” the Israelites transition from the authority of one master to that of another. According to our exegete, when God declares “and I will take you as My People,” God's message is to say that God will be a more benevolent master than Pharaoh. God is on one hand “lowering” the Divine Self to become the master of these former slaves; and, on the other hand, the Israelites choose to raise themselves by serving a higher authority.

On some profound level, B'khor Shor inverts our common understanding of *yetziat Mitzrayim* (the Exodus from Egypt) and redemption. Though associations with liberation from bondage conjure images of shackles breaking, the Israelites are far from unfettered. They now become the servants of God. And it is through the structure of covenant, law, and relationship that they become free to live meaningful, purposeful, and holy lives. Eschewing freedom that leads to chaos and idolatry, God and the Israelites choose a different path—one that will lead to a prophetic and divine vision of a world repaired.

By: Matthew Berkowitz, Director of Israel Programs

Weekly Commentary from
The Jewish Theological Seminary



From the Bar Mitzvah Family

Noam and Saul

Shabbat Shalom

A little over thirteen years ago, as we gathered with friends and family at the Jewish Theological Seminary to celebrate the britot of our sons, we were already looking to the future...to the joyous day when we would gather in front of our computer screens, thousands of miles from home, confident that a yet-to-be invented technology would livestream around the world the momentous occasion of our boys becoming B'nai Mitzvah! Okay -- So maybe we weren't so prescient. Nevertheless, as fathers of newborn twins, we almost immediately began to learn the lesson that we continue to fall back on today as we wade through the sometimes horrific realities of our current world – for, within a few hours of Noam and Saul's birth, we came to recognize the inherent lack of control we would have as parents. It was -- and is -- a lesson in humility.

Today marks yet another example of that lack of control – we find ourselves in Costa Rica at the mercy of semi-stable power grid and a wobbly internet connection to connect to all of you – our loved ones. And yet, as has always been the case during a Bar Mitzvah, as Jews, today we celebrate!

We are incredibly proud of the people that Noam and Saul have become and are becoming. Saul and Noam have brilliantly dedicated themselves to this experience, each in his own very different and distinctive way. The Bet Torah community has supported our family in this experience -- from Rabbi Brusso, to Rabbi Sacks, to Cantor Ezring, to Nili, to all of our teachers over the years, and each of you. We are incredibly thankful for this community.

We are grateful that you are joining us as we welcome Noam and Saul to this next stage of their Jewish lives – and we're looking forward to their contributions to the ancient and ongoing conversations, debates, and spirit of the Jewish people.

We love you very much,
The Cohen-Millstein family



Honors

Friday, January 15, 2021

A Prayer for Lighting Shabbat Candles

As I Light

Candlelighting

Shalom Aleichem

Kiddush

Blessing Children

Motzi

Chatzi Kaddish

Aleinu

Saturday, January 16, 2021

Shalom to All

Prayer for the Journey

D'Var Torah

Torah Reading

Exodus 7: 8-13

Exodus 7: 14-18

Exodus 7: 19-25

Exodus 7: 26-29

Exodus 8: 1-6

Exodus 8: 7-11

Exodus 8: 12-15

Maftir Exodus 8: 12-15

D'var Torah

Haftarah—Ezekiel 28:25-29:21

Prayer for Congregation

Prayer for Country

Prayer for Israel

Prayer for Peace

Ashrei

Ein Keloheinu

Aleinu

Adon Olam

Maxine Millstein

Susan Cohen

Cohen-Millstein Family

Cohen Millstein Family

Robbie Cohen-Millstein

Peter and Robbie Cohen-Millstein

Lilah Cohen-Millstein

Saul Cohen-Millstein

Noam Cohen-Millstein

Jerry Millstein

Jay Cohen

Saul Cohen-Millstein

Torah Readers

Robbie Cohen-Millstein

Peter Cohen-Millstein

Adi Nulman

Lara Weiner

Saul Cohen-Millstein

Saul Cohen-Millstein

Noam Cohen-Millstein

Noam Cohen-Millstein

Noam Cohen-Millstein

Saul and Noam Cohen-Millstein

Louise Millstein

Lotte Reinhold and Evi Iglauer

Susan Cohen

Ashton Millstein

Saul Cohen-Millstein

Cohen-Millstein Family

Noam Cohen-Millstein

Cohen-Millstein Family



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

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|---|---------|
| 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

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|---------------------------|---------|
| Havdalah Tonight | 5:35 pm |
| Next Friday, January 22nd | 4:39 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).

