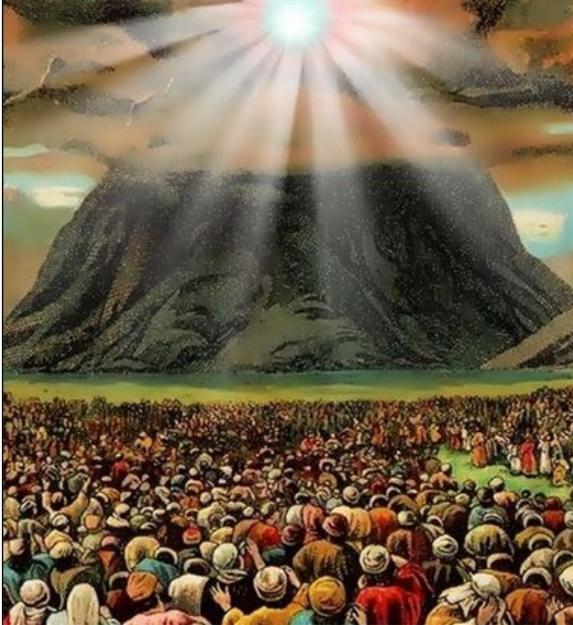




# *Welcome to Shabbat Services at Bet Torah*

May 15, 2021

4 Sivan 5781



## **Shabbat**

Parsha Bamidbar Numbers 2:1 - 3:13

Etz Hayim pp. 774-779

Haftarah Hosea 2:1 - 2:22

Etz Hayim pp. 787-790

## **Mazel Tov to**

**Jason and Jocelyn Herman  
on the Bar Mitzvah of their son, Jonah**

**Fredric and Alice Perlman  
on the Bar Mitzvah of their son, William**

# 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

## *Finding Direction to Move Forward with God*

This Shabbat opens the fourth book of Torah known as *Sefer Bemidbar*, the book of Numbers. Though in Hebrew, the title translates as “the Book of the Desert,” alluding to the desert wanderings of the people, the standard English translation is “Numbers,” referring to the census that is commanded to the Israelites at the beginning of the narrative: “On the first day of the second month, in the second year following the exodus from the land of Egypt, the Lord spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the Tent of Meeting, saying: Take a census of the whole Israelite community by the clans of its ancestral houses” ([Num. 1:1–2](#)). Rashi, the prolific medieval biblical commentator, notes, “it is out of Divine affection for Israel that God seeks to count them at every hour.” This notion of affection or love plays out beautifully in our parashah and in these days leading up to Shavu’ot, the holiday in which we mark the giving of Torah.

Joseph Bekhor Shor focuses his opening comments on the map of the Israelite encampment. The first verse of our parashah

refers to a month after the raising of the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was finished and the days of its dedication had passed along with the ordering of sacrifices. God then warned them concerning impurities—that they should not desecrate the Tabernacle. God also commanded them here to count the troops that would be stationed around the King; this refers to those who were fit to wage battle. They were divided under four banners so that they would be encamped from four directions. This is the way to show honor to a king: his ministers and servants surround him and the king is in the middle.

And so the placement of the tribes is anything but random. As the Bekhor Shor points out, such a layout reflects the honor due to a king. More than that, this encircling of the Tabernacle reminds one of the bride making her way seven times around the groom (and today it is often true of the groom encircling the bride). Such a gesture is one of both knowledge and love. To go around something is to know its essence.

Our exegete’s comments dovetail well with Midrash Tanhuma. This collection of rabbinic legends portrays the giving of Torah as the *engagement* of God and the Israelites. The day on which the Tabernacle is raised represents the *wedding* between the two. And now, the setting up of the encampment plays on this same imagery: the Israelites placing themselves around their beloved. Sadly, we often lose sight of God in our daily lives. We forget to be more conscious of the direction in which we orient ourselves; and we turn our backs on the Divine Presence. Parashat Bemidbar and the Bekhor Shor remind us that we must be attentive to the way we design our daily encampments—at once being cognizant of the four directions outward and deriving inspiration from our beloved inward. Only then can we (humanity) and God move forward together.

By Rabbi Matthew Berkowitz, Director of Israel Programs

*Weekly Commentary from  
The Jewish Theological Seminary*



# From the Bar Mitzvah Family

## Jonah

Bruchi'm Ha'Baim! Thank you all for joining us virtually.

This week's torah portion is Ba'Midbar, which Jonah – along with his family members as supporting cast – read so beautifully. This chapter focuses on the rather mundane elements of the first census of the Israelites and the building of the Tabernacle (Mish'kan). But one of the more interesting details is the instruction for Aaron and his sons to cover certain objects in the Mish'kan with “Tachash” skins. In reading this ancient text, we don't know for certain what a “tachash” is. This is often translated as a dolphin, which seems nonsensical as how could the Israelites possibly have dolphin skins in the desert! Some rabbis have taken a fantastical approach. Rashi says that the tachash was a kind of multi-colored animal that “only existed during that time”. And the Babylonian Talmud states that it was a unique creature which “had a single horn in its forehead and presented itself to Moses when it was needed.” So, not a dolphin, but a unicorn! The rabbinic understanding is not only a bit more fun, but also gives us an insight into how one can engage with the text of the Torah. Rather than reading this as literal truth, one can understand these stories as emanating from the world of myth and retaining a sense of magic, similar to the miracles describes elsewhere in the book of Exodus. Given the dark tones of this past year, living through the COVID-19 pandemic, how nice to have a bit of brightness and fantasy in our lives.

Jonah, we are so proud of you. We admire your hard work and dedication as you have prepared for your bar mitzvah. You have a natural charisma, which puts others at ease. And you have a great sense of humor – even if your sisters often find it annoying. As you begin your journey into adulthood, we look forward to celebrating many more life events with you.

We would like to thank all those who have helped Jonah prepare for this important milestone. Rabbis Brusso and Sacks, we are grateful for you taking the time to work with Jonah on his d'var torah and for mentoring him throughout his hebrew education. Cantor Ezring and Nili Ionascu – todah rabah v'kol hakavod – for your tireless efforts in teaching Jonah and helping him to learn his parsha and haftorah. Thank you also to Ilana Fleischner for your assistance in making this zoom celebration a success.

We are honored to share this special day with the Perlman family. Mazel Tov to William and your entire family!

Shabbat Shalom and we look forward to seeing you in person in the days to come!

Jocelyn and Jason Herman



# From the Bar Mitzvah Family

## *William*

Will, we are so proud of you! We feel privileged and honored to have accompanied you on your journey toward this wonderful day, and it is with the deepest joy and love that we celebrate your Bar Mitzvah. You are blessed with a wonderful sense of fun, humor and adventure, a keen intellect, and a deepening sense of morality. With every passing year, we see you become more and more of a mensch. We could not be more grateful and delighted that you are our son.

We would also like to extend our best wishes and congratulations to the Herman Family, and especially to Jonah. Mazel Tov!

We feel very happy and fortunate to be part of the Bet Torah community. We have found a real home here, and are thankful for all the wonderful people we have met. We wish to express special thanks to Rabbi Brusso, Cantor Ezring and Nili Ionascu for their kindness, encouragement and guidance as Will prepared for his Bar Mitzvah during these unprecedented and challenging times. And many thanks to Seth Young for his timely support – both technological and psychological!

To our friends and family, welcome! We are fortunate to have you in our lives, and we offer you our heartfelt thanks for your virtual presence on this joyous day.

Mazel Tov, dearest Will!

With love and gratitude,  
Rick, Alice and Ellie



# Honors

## Friday, May 14, 2021

A Prayer for Lighting Shabbat Candles

As I Light

Candlelighting

Kiddush

Blessing Children

Motzi

## Saturday, May 15, 2021

Shalom to All

A Prayer for the Journey

D'Var Torah

### Torah Reading

Leviticus 22: 17-20

Leviticus 22: 21-25

Leviticus 22: 26-28

Leviticus 22: 29-33

Leviticus 23: 1-3

Leviticus 23: 4-8

Leviticus 23: 9-14

Hosafa Leviticus 23: 15-18

Acharon Leviticus 23: 19-22

Maftir Leviticus 23: 19-22

D'Var Torah

Haftarah Reading—Ezekiel  
44: 15-31

Prayer for Congregation

Prayer for Country

Prayer for Israel

Prayer for Peace

Ashrei

Ein Keloheinu

Aleinu

Adon Olam

Alice Perlman

Jocelyn Herman

Jonah Herman

William Perlman

Hebrew Reading-Jason Herman,  
English Reading-Rick Perlman  
Fred Santo

Ilene Klein

Jane Santo

Jonah Herman

### Torah Readers

Alice Perlman

Jonah Herman

Jason Herman

Zoe Herman

Jonah Herman

Jonah Herman

Ellie Perlman

William Perlman

William Perlman

William Perlman

William Perlman

Jonah Herman and William  
Perlman

Ed Herman

Karen & Margo Krane, and  
Neil Goldberg

Marc Herman

Gabriel Bender

William and Ellie Perlman

Shai-El Katz and Family

William Perlman

Jonah Herman, Zoe & Sydney  
Herman and 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	8:54 pm
Next Friday, May 21st	7:47 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).

