



Welcome to Shabbat Services at Bet Torah

December 4, 2021

30 Kislev 5782



Shabbat

Parsha Miketz Genesis 43: 16 - 44:17 Etz Hayim pp. 265-270

Haftarah Zachariah 2:14 - 4:7 Etz Hayim pp. 1270-1272

**Mazel Tov to
Michael and Erica Wohlstadter
on the Bar Mitzvah of their son, Matthew**

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.

Like many synagogue communities around the world, we have innovated to respond to the challenges presented by the global pandemic. We continue to use the Talmudic emergency exit called *sha'at ha'dechak* or "time of crisis" in order to provide a multi-access experience on Shabbat so that our entire community can connect while some remain physically separated. The virtual space we have created provides opportunities to allow our value of inclusiveness to find its clearest expression.

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

The Wisdom of Joseph: Saving Self and Country

Parashat Mi-ketz opens with Pharaoh plagued by two disturbing dreams pregnant with meaning. One involves sickly cattle consuming healthy cattle; the other showcases parched grain consuming abundant grain. Pharaoh seeks a competent interpreter to make sense of his visions and, thankfully, the redeemed cup-bearer remembers the talented Hebrew prisoner (a.k.a., Joseph) who successfully interpreted his dream two years earlier. Joseph is summoned by Pharaoh, and offers a compelling explanation—understanding that Egypt and its surroundings will first be blessed by seven years of plenty and then seven years of devastating famine. In response, Joseph proposes an economic plan to save the country from what would have been certain destruction. So impressed is Pharaoh by his Hebrew servant that he describes Joseph as “a man in whom is the spirit of God . . . a man who is discerning and wise” ([Gen. 41:38–39](#)), and places him in second in command over Egypt. How does Pharaoh’s generous complement give us a window into the person of Joseph?

Professor Ze’ev Falk writes,

One should compare this description to that of Bezalal [the artist and architect of the Tabernacle] and to the “redeemer” from the House of David. Concerning Bezalel it is written: “I filled him with the spirit of God, with wisdom, and with insight” ([Exodus 31:3](#)). The building of the Tabernacle is similar to the details of the Egyptian economic plan [to save the country from famine] and in both of the them, the spirit of God is expressed through wisdom and insight . . . It is also similar to the Messiah: “a shoot will grow out of the stump of Jesse . . . the spirit of the Lord will alight upon him: a spirit of wisdom and insight . . .” ([Isaiah 11:1–2](#))—for redemption requires these same qualities. (Divrei Torah Ad Tumam, 90)

Having matured from his younger years through injustices committed against him, Joseph now emerges with a sense of clarity and humility. Far from taking his dreams for granted and using them as a source of pridefulness, his visions now become life-giving. The interpretation of Pharaoh’s dream will now be put to constructive ends, saving the land of Egypt and its environs. The power of Joseph is that he brings God into the midst of the looming crisis. To be sure, he attributes his insightful interpretation to God ([Gen. 41:25](#)). Moreover, by comparing the description of Joseph to both Bezalel and the Messiah, Falk sharpens our understanding of Joseph (and indeed of all of these characters). Bezalel’s goal is to nurture and build a place of God’s Presence—and so too the offshoot of Jesse (the Messiah). Joseph creates his own Tabernacle for God in his life and in the life of Egypt, thereby redeeming a land on the brink of devastation. In so doing, he becomes a shining light in a dark world. May we learn from his example, especially as we kindle the lights of Hannukah and celebrate Thanksgiving over the coming week.

By: Matthew Berkowitz, Director of Israel Programs

Weekly Commentary from
The Jewish Theological Seminary



From the Bar Mitzvah Family of *Matthew Wohlstadter*

Good Morning and Shabbat Shalom!

With great pride and joy, we are thrilled to share this very special day with our family, friends, and members of the Bet Torah community, as our son, Matthew, is called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah. We are grateful, after many months of uncertainty, to be together celebrating such an important milestone with those who mean so much to us. Whether you are here in person or joining us virtually, we feel surrounded by your love and support.

Since joining Bet Torah over 7 years ago, this synagogue has become a huge part of our lives and a place of which we are so proud. We feel very lucky to be part of this community. Our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to Rabbi Brusso, Rabbi Sacks, Cantor Ezring, and Nili Ionascu for their guidance, wisdom, and encouragement throughout this process. Thank you to Gina Fass and all of Matthew's Bet Torah teachers who have helped instill in Matthew the importance of Jewish education and have helped deepen his Jewish identity. Finally, many thanks to Seth Young, Ilana Fleischner, and Joanne Wagner for their guidance and assistance with all the details leading up to today.

Matthew, we are so proud of you. You continue to blow us away with your mature and insightful demeanor and with your tremendous and giving heart. We have been continually impressed and delighted as we've watched you prepare for today with so much determination and enthusiasm. We hope you feel all the love and pride in the sanctuary today and that your life continues to be enriched by living our Jewish values and by being part of our wonderful Jewish community.

Thank you for sharing this Simcha with us!

With Love and Gratitude,
Erica & Michael, Matthew, Ryan & Jordan



Honors

Saturday, December 4, 2021

Ark Opening Barbara Wohlstadter and
Marcia Siegel

Torah Carrier Michael Wohlstadter

Shalom to All Marcia Siegel

D'Var Torah Matthew Wohlstadter

Torah Reading

Genesis 43: 16-18

Genesis 43: 19-25

Genesis 43: 26-29

Genesis 43: 30-34

Genesis 44: 1-6

Genesis 44: 7-17

Numbers 28: 9-15

Mafkir Numbers 7: 42-47

Hagbah #1

G'lilah #1

Hagbah #2

G'lilah #2

Hagbah #3

G'lilah #3

Haftarah - Zechariah 2:14-4:7

Ark Opening

Prayer for Country

Prayer for Israel

Prayer for Peace

Ashrei

Torah Carrier

Ein Keloheinu

Aleinu

Adon Olam

Blessings

Congregation

Congregation

Erica Wohlstadter

Joel Rosenberg

Jared Kupperman

Jeffrey Wohlstadter

Irwin Siegel

Matthew Wohlstadter

Neal Goldman

Deborah Goldman

Richard Siegel

Dana Siegel

Greg Shapiro

Erica Wohlstadter

Matthew Wohlstadter

Barbara and Bruce Spiegel

Eliza Goldman

Arielle Goldman

Ryan Wohlstadter

Matthew Wohlstadter

Irwin Siegel

Noah and Spencer Shapiro

Ryan and Jordan
Wohlstadter

Ryan and Jordan
Wohlstadter and
Nate and Jake Siegel

Torah Readers

Matthew Wohlstadter

Sam Markind

Gabe Goldman

Johanna Shapiro

Michael Wohlstadter

Michael Wohlstadter

Matthew Wohlstadter

Matthew Wohlstadter



Next Week's Parsha

Judah Leads

This week's parashah, Vayiggash, showcases the most dramatic moment of the Joseph narrative. Coerced by Joseph to bring their youngest brother, Benjamin, down to Egypt, the brothers find themselves involved in a Kafkaesque plot. Benjamin now stands accused of stealing a goblet from the Pharaonic household. Judah's promises to his father to return the child flash before him as he pleads with Joseph to let himself be enslaved in place of their brother Benjamin. How are we to understand the emerging character of Judah? And why does his plea open the emotional floodgates for Joseph, leading him to finally reveal himself before his brothers?

Joseph B'khor Shor (French Bible commentator, Orleans, 12th century) imagines a dialogue taking place between Judah and Joseph, on the one hand, and between Judah and himself, on the other. He explains,

If you ask "why is it that I am spokesman before brothers that are senior to me, it is because I am the guarantor": [Judah had said to Jacob, their father] "if I do not bring him (Benjamin) back to you and set him before you, I will stand guilty before you forever" (Genesis 43:9). "And if you need a servant, behold I will be your slave in place of the lad, because if you delay him then I will not return, for how could I be witness to this evil; it is better that I stay here alone and he will go up. He cannot remain here . . . and you have also said that you do not want to buy us as slaves since we have not sinned. So how is it that you are prepared to kill our father since surely, he has not sinned . . ."

Seniority is on Judah's mind. That is to say, Reuven, Simeon, or Levi should be the appropriate spokesperson for the group, as each of these siblings is older than Judah. The reason, however, that Judah owns his role as interlocutor is because of a promise made to Jacob. Judah assures his father that he himself will be surety for his beloved son Benjamin. And true to his word, Judah fulfills the vow made to Jacob. He presses his seemingly Egyptian nemesis, urging Joseph to take himself into custody in place of his younger brother.

We are privy to a portrait of Judah, once again standing within earshot of the pit into which Joseph is thrown. The brothers are about to lose another. Rather than respond with hatred, venom, and indifference, Judah is now ready to put his own life on the line. One imagines that Judah's impassioned and compassion-filled words and Joseph's painful memories of a very a different brother lead Joseph to reveal himself in the moment. Joseph is prepared to love again, and admit of the splendid possibility of *teshuvah*. It is, at the end of the day, Judah's words and emotion that open the doorway to his brother's mercy.

By: Matthew Berkowitz, Director of Israel Programs

Weekly Commentary from
The Jewish Theological Seminary



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).

In the interest of providing the safest environment in the building during COVID, we require that everyone is fully masked at all times while inside. Leaders of the service will have the options to unmask. Other modifications of the service have been made to ensure the greatest degree of health safety. Please feel free to take mask breaks and socialize out of doors. Hand sanitizer is available throughout the building and ushers are here to help you in any way they can.

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
Tuesday Mornings (in person and on zoom)	7:15 am
Weekday Mornings (zoom only) (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday)	8:00 am
Weekday Evenings (Monday through Thursday)	7:30 pm
Friday Kabbalat Shabbat	6:30 pm
Saturday Morning Shabbat	9:30 am

Candle Lighting Times

Havdalah Tonight	5:16 pm
Next Friday, December 10th	4:07 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).

