

Congregation Beth El Bulletin



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February 2017

Volume 46, Issue 5

Tevet/Shevat

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Rabbi's Corner - **THE "WHY" OF JUDAISM**

I was recently challenged by a student to describe the "why" of Judaism. They wanted to know what drove Jews and Judaism to endure.

In my response, I referred to a story that I have told a number of times over the years at the congregation, but I don't know if I have ever written it down in these pages. When I am pressed to explain the Jewish mission – or the "why" of Judaism – I look to the first three major encounters in the Torah between God and humanity.

In the first encounter—in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve sinned

and were thereby cast out of the Garden. Judaism does not believe in original sin. In fact, we believe that each generation is responsible for their own sins. Sin does not get passed down from parent to child. Rather, we are born as blank slates. However, we do recognize that Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden, and we learn that their punishment was to be exiled from the Garden, to have pains in childbirth, to work by the sweat of our brows for food, and to become mortal.

In this text, humanity was kicked out of the Garden of Eden by God's external punishment. One



continued on page 4

Inside this issue:

Schedule of Services	2
Contributions	3
Tu B'shevat Seder	3
Calendar	5
Sisterhood News	6
Hadassah	6
Darwin Day	6
Adult Study	7
Life Cycle Events	7

Sisterhood Shabbat & Musical Service

February 10, 2017

featuring guest speaker JaQuita Lee

Make plans to join the Beth El Sisterhood for a special Shabbat honoring the women of our congregation. On February 10th, members of the Sisterhood will lead the Shabbat service as we welcome a special guest speaker, JaQuita Lee, to talk with us about the work of the Tyler Day Nursery.



That night is also our special musical Shabbat, since it falls during the Torah portion reading of the "Song of the Sea." That night, our service music will be performed by a new four-part choir. Please make plans to attend this special night of celebration at Beth El.





Schedule of Services

Friday, February 3

Erev Shabbat Service 7:00 P.M.

PARASHAT BO: Exodus 10:1-13:16

HAFTARAH: Jeremiah 46:13-46:28

ONEG SHABBAT HOSTS: Mr. & Mrs. Bill Orrender

BIMAH FLOWERS: Congregation Beth El Sisterhood Flower Fund

Yahrzeits: January 28-Jody Ragusa, 29-Jesse Goldfeder, Sam Hurwitz, Robert S. Jarett, 30-Alexander (Sandy) Shtofman, 31-Norman M. Werner, February 1-Edna Sonin Davis, Ida Fogel, Isidore Liebreich, Kenneth Watterston, 2-Eva R. Feldscher, 3-Issac Block.

Friday, February 10

Sisterhood Shabbat/Musical Service 7:00 P.M.

PARASHAT BESHALACH: Exodus 13:17-17:16

HAFTARAH: Judges 4:4-5:31

ONEG SHABBAT HOSTS: Sisterhood Board

BIMAH FLOWERS: Congregation Beth El Sisterhood Flower Fund

Yahrzeits: February 4-Agnes Lipshutz Lachs, Joseph Leff, 5-Trudy Lipstate, 6-Darlene Lipstate, 7-Rosede Mazor Applebaum, Shirley Rebecca Hyman, Nathan Goldstucker, Jonas Silberstein, Jennie Kerstine Liebreich, Julia Lang Reinberg, C. G. Rowland.

Friday, February 17

Erev Shabbat Service 7:00 P.M.

PARASHAT YITRO: Exodus 18:1-20:23

HAFTARAH: Isaiah 6:1-7:6; 9:5-9:6

ONEG SHABBAT HOST: Mrs. Margo Adams

BIMAH FLOWERS: Congregation Beth El Sisterhood Flower Fund

Yahrzeits: February 11-Hattie Freedman, Barbara Wessel Hurst, 12-Philip Bassist, Mitzie Muntz Bloom, Rachel Exelbierd, Daniel W. Gans, Henry S. Gans, 13-Stella Ashendorf, 14-David Denenburg, Jacob Lipstate, 15-David Gelfer, 16-Monte Schoenbrun, 17-Grace Grenader.

Friday, February 24

Erev Shabbat Service 7:00 P.M.

PARASHAT MISHPATIM: Exodus 21:1-24:18

HAFTARAH: Jeremiah 34:8-34:22; 33:25-33:26

ONEG SHABBAT HOSTS: Mr. & Mrs. Brett Harrison In Honor of Tabitha Harrison's Bat Mitzvah

BIMAH FLOWERS: Congregation Beth El Sisterhood Flower Fund

Yahrzeits: February 18-Jeanette Ginsberg, 20-Ethyl Hurwitz, 21-Sallie Sandolosky Friedlander, 23-Mark Healy, 24-Laura Weintraub Muntz.

Friday, March 3

Erev Shabbat Service 7:00 P.M.

PARASHAT TERUMAH: Exodus 25:1-27:19

HAFTARAH: I Kings 5:26-6:13

ONEG SHABBAT HOST: Mrs. Susan Sayre

BIMAH FLOWERS: Congregation Beth El Sisterhood Flower Fund

Yahrzeits: February 26-Edna Spero Greenberg, 26-Rabbi Harvey E. Wessel, 27-Allen B. Cohen, 28-Rose Silverman Fisch, Birdie Brown Goldstein, Fannette Klotz Shaw, March 1-Hannah Isaacs Jarett, Hortense Schoenbrun, 3-Frances Friedman.

ישראל - ISRAEL 2018

Rabbi Katz will be co-leading another Israel trip with Rev. Stuart Baskin from March 5-15, 2018.

Registration is up and running! Please visit TylerToIsrael.com for more information on itinerary, prices, and signing up.



CONTRIBUTIONS

We thank our Congregation Beth El contributors for their kindness and generosity. Their gifts strengthen our congregation.

GENERAL FUND

By Tyler Federated Jewish Welfare Fund

IN MEMORY OF BAYLA EIDELBERG,
SISTER OF ADELE REGAN
By Sandra & Mark Greenberg

ENDOWMENT FUND

IN MEMORY OF
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By Dorothy & David Shaw



תודה רבה

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

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IN MEMORY OF BAYLA EIDELBERG,
SISTER OF ADELE REGAN
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ט"ו בשבט

Tu B'shevat Seder

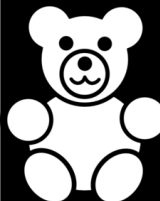
SATURDAY, February 11th
at 11:00 a.m.

Please join Rabbi Katz for a special Adult Education class on Saturday, February 11th at 11:00 a.m. At the class, we will hold our annual educational Tu B'shevat seder. The custom of holding a special seder for this holiday that marks the beginning of spring-time in Israel has become more popular in recent years. Please join us, eat, and learn!



TOT SHABBAT

Friday, February 3rd at 5:30 P.M.



Families with young children are invited to a "Tot Shabbat" - family friendly service.

This service is geared to all children in the congregation.

BETH EL TRAINING WHEELS

Beth El presents Training Wheels. This program focuses on the development of Jewish identity in children ages five and under. The program utilizes music, stories, games, and art projects to instill the building blocks of Jewish identification in our young children. It is run by Jen Katz and meets once a month from 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at Congregation Beth El.

- Feb 19th
- March 5th Purim Carnival
- April 9th Model Seder with RS
- May 21st Last Day of RS

For more information, contact Jen Katz at 903-372-2685 or jenkatz55@yahoo.com.



Rabbi's Corner—continued from page 1

can assume that the goal of this divine punishment was to serve as a corrective to humanity. Perhaps if Adam and Eve were punished in this way, word would get around to future generations not to misbehave. In the same way, a parent punishes a child with the hopes that next time, they will know better. In this way, God hoped to cure humanity's propensity to sin.

But then we meet the generation of Noah. That generation was so wicked that God decided to destroy all of humanity - and begin anew with the one noticeably righteous person among the bunch - Noah. And so God chooses Noah to repopulate the Earth. Again, God's hope is that through this punishment, humanity's urge to be sinful would be eradicated. If we repopulate the Earth from one righteous person, then presumably all of humanity will be righteous thereafter. But, God's hope that humanity would become righteous by becoming descendants of Noah only lasted a few generations

Then we come to the generation of Babel. Although this is a cryptic story in the Torah, we do know that the generation of Babel began building a tower that reached up into the heavens. This upset God who punished humanity by dispersing us to the corners of the earth and causing us to speak different languages. Here again, the hope was that this external punishment would be a behavioral corrective for humanity.

It was at this point, after three unfortunate encounters with humanity, I argue that God decided to change tactics. Instead of punishing humanity every time they sinned - and hoping for better behavior moving forward, God decided instead to use teachers. A parent can punish a child over and over again - in the hopes that they will learn right from wrong through this process. But the best way to teach right from wrong is to model good behavior. Enter Abraham.

While we do not know much about Abraham's childhood from the text directly, we do know that he was chosen by God with one job - to be a role model of ethical monotheism to all of humanity. Abraham and his descendants—us—were charged with the job of being holy exemplars, a light unto the nations.

It is through our concept of covenant and commitment to righteous behavior that other nations of the earth will learn right from wrong. That is a tall order to place on

one specific family, but that is exactly what Abraham agreed to. So did his children - and all generations of Jews through today. And to be clear, we are not always good at it. Individual Jews and the wider Jewish community often fall short of the goal of being holy exemplars. That is the struggle in our job. Call it an occupational hazard. But we are corrected in our bad behavior by the ethical urgings of our prophets, the progressive writings of our sages, and the values of love and learning and family found in our community. And that struggle to be righteous and holy through mitzvot and good deeds is the model of good behavior that each generation needs to observe.

So when I am asked about the "why" of Judaism, or the point of the Jewish mission, I refer to this midrash - that the Jewish people were chosen by God to help all humanity become more holy. Because ultimately, that is God's desire. Instead of punishing us directly—like God did in the Garden, or in Noah's generation, or at Babel, God left it up to our family - and our extended family of monotheistic faiths - to promote holiness through our actions. This is what drives me personally. And through partnership with other lights of humanity, may we continually be a reminder to humanity to choose good over evil, to choose holiness over despair.

L'shalom - to peace,

Rabbi Neal Katz

!! CHANGE OF DATE !!

**Tyler Quiz Night
has been moved!**
The event will
now take place
on **Saturday,
May 6, 2017** at
the Temple.

Tyler
QUIZ NIGHT

**We just began
marketing for
this event—so please let your friends know that
the date and location have changed. We wanted
to keep this in-house for at least another year so
we can continue to grow the fundraiser.**

**Tables, tickets, and general information is
available at TylerQuizNight.com**

February 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3 5:30pm Tot Shabbat 7pm Erev Shabbat Hosts: M/M Bill Orrender	4 SHABBAT BO
5 10:30am Religious School	6	7 7pm Board of Trustees Meeting 	8	9	10 7pm Erev Sisterhood Shabbat / Music Service Hosts: Sister- hood Board	11 SHABBAT BESHALACH 11am Adult Study—Tu B'shevat Seder
12 10:30am Religious School Hebrew High	13	14 	15	16	17 7pm Erev Shabbat Host: Margo Adams	18 SHABBAT YITRO
19 10:00am Sisterhood Meeting 10:30am Religious School Training Wheels	20 10:30am Hadassah Book Club @ Brady's Coffee Shop 	21	22	23	24 7pm Erev Shabbat Hosts: M/M Brett Harrison	25 SHABBAT MISHPATIM 10:30am Tabitha Harrison Bat Mitzva 
26 10:30am Religious School Hebrew High 10:30am Hadas- sah Youth Ali- yah Brunch	27	28	March 1	March 2	March 3 7pm Erev Shabbat Host: Susan Sayre	March 4 SHABBAT TERUMAH

SISTERHOOD



Dear Sisterhood,
At "print-time" for the January bulletin, we were up to our eyeballs preparing for the Art Auction!!!! So, bare with us, we will have a full report for you next month.

Don't forget that the Sisterhood Shabbat is February 10th! We hope to see all of you there!

Until next time...Alison and Pam

ATTENTION!

For anyone cleaning the tablecloths after a Temple function, take them to Wash Smart Laundry at 3101 Shiloh Road (@ Troup Highway). They now accept the Temple as "Tax Free". It is not a charge account, so you will still ask to be reimbursed, but it will save us the tax. Also, Tuesday is a "savings" day. Be sure to ask them to "hang" the tablecloths.

HADASSAH BULLETIN

Upcoming Events:

The Youth Aliyah Brunch will be held on Sunday, February 26, 2017, 10:30 AM, Congregation Beth El. More information on this event will follow.

Hadassah Year Books: May be ready for pick-up at the Youth Aliyah Brunch.

Greeting Cards: These lovely greeting cards are readily available and convenient for every occasion:

- Get Well
- Sympathy
- Birthday
- Congratulations
- Bar Mitzvah/Bat Mitzvah
- Rosh Hashanah

Price: Single card = \$2.50 or 3 cards = \$5.00. For further information, please contact Margie Victor - 903-561-4409.

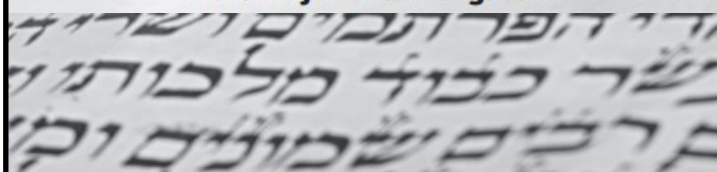
Hadassah Book Club: Scheduled book reading for February: The Vegetarian by Han Kang

Note: Unless otherwise specified, the Book Club meets every third Monday, 10:30 AM, Brady's Coffee Shop, Tyler.

Ruth Goldberg, Bulletin Chairman

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DARWIN DAY

We have a wonderful opportunity in Tyler to celebrate science through a program called Darwin Day. Our congregational leadership - Dr. Josh Banta and Jae Jenkins are part of the committee that creates and promotes Darwin Day.



This year, they have an exciting public lecture Thursday, February 9th at TJC's Planetarium/CESSE at 7:00pm. The speaker will be Dr. Eugenie Scott, physical anthropologist and Founding Director for the National Center for Science Education. Her talk that night is titled, "*Nothing in Biology Makes Sense Except in Light of Evolution - True or False?*"

There are more programs connected to Darwin Day, which you can find at DarwinDayTyler.org.

LIFE CYCLE EVENTS

BIRTHDAYS:

NAMES READ ON FEBRUARY 3: January 28-Leslie Harrison, 30-Ekaterina Banta, Sophie Philibert, February 1-Rick Seawright.

NAMES READ ON FEBRUARY 10: February 5-Steven Idell, 6-Murray Parks, 10-Suzu Beck.

NAMES READ ON FEBRUARY 17: February 14-Dianna Weiss, 17-Connie Greenberg.

NAMES READ ON FEBRUARY 24: February 18-Joshua Sigal, 19-Noah Israel, 20-Darby Owen, Perry Wallach, 21-Shirley Watterston, 23-Peter Weiss, 24-Tabitha Harrison, Gina Jerkins.

NAMES READ ON MARCH 3: February 25-Eldor Brish, Karl Mutchnik, Leah Sigal, 28-Judy Mayer, Margie Victor, Carrie Wolf, March 1-Graham Goodman.

ANNIVERSARIES:

NAMES READ ON FEBRUARY 3: January 28: Wanda & David Rauscher.

NAMES READ ON FEBRUARY 10: February 5-Bunny & Bill Orrender, 8-Janet & Ed Chiniewicz.

NAMES READ ON FEBRUARY 24: February 21-Pam & Tracy Lisner.

NAMES READ ON MARCH 3: February 27-Sandra & Mark Greenberg.

save the date



Tabitha Harrison's
Bat Mitzvah
February 25th 2017
10:30am at Beth El

ADULT STUDY

We will have one Adult Study class this month—on February 11th—the Tu B'shevat seder. This program is for members of the congregation and invited guests. For the most recent schedule of Adult Study dates, please visit the calendar at JewishTyler.com.



In April 2017, Congregation Beth El will celebrate 130 years since our charter in 1887. For the next few months, we will be including clips from our congregational history in the bulletin to celebrate our upcoming anniversary.

RABBI FABER

[In 1900], the Reverend Dr. Maurice Faber was engaged as full-time Rabbi at a salary of \$1,200.00 per annum. He came from Keokuk, Iowa and stayed for 34 years, until his death in 1934. Born in Hungary and European-educated, he had profound learning, and a new spirit of humanism and tolerance blew into Tyler with him. Deeply convinced of the validity of Reform Judaism for his time, he had broken with the Orthodoxy of his childhood - so much so that his father disinherited him for this unfilial act of rebellion.

These early years were filled with ideological struggles between the two different sections of the congregation. An entry for July 7, 1895, in one of the earliest extant minute books, states: An amendment to the By Laws was proposed and carried, as follows: "The services of the congregation shall be conducted during the holidays (Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah) in conformity with the Minhag Yastrow (the Orthodox prayerbook), the balance of the year with the Hebrew Union Prayerbook."

A further striking example of the Orthodox leanings of this Reform Congregation in its early history is another excerpt from this early constitution: "No applicant shall be qualified for membership who is...united in marriage contrary to the ordinances of the Jewish religion and any member marrying out of the pale of Judaism shall thereby forfeit his membership."

Only a few years later, in 1902, after two years of the stewardship of the redoubtable Dr. Faber the by-laws read "that any Israelite who is honorable shall have the right to join this congregation - and that all services, weekly and High Holidays shall be conducted in accordance with the rites of the Hebrew Union Prayer Book."

Read more at JewishTyler.com/history





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