



RABBIS
 Marshall T. Meyer (1985-1993)
 J. Rolando Matalon • Marcelo R. Bronstein • Felicia L. Sol
CANTOR & MUSIC DIRECTOR
 Ari Priven
MARSHALL T. MEYER RABBINIC FELLOWS
 Rabbi Katie Mizrahi • Dara Frimmer • Lauren Thomas

December 9 - 16, 2005 **8 - 15 Kislev, 5766**

VAYETZE

TORAH: ANNUAL Genesis 28:10 - 32:3
TRIENNIAL Genesis 30:14 - 31:16
HAFTARAH Hosea 11:7- 12:12

NEXT WEEK: **VAYISHLAH**

TORAH: ANNUAL Genesis 32:4 - 36:43
TRIENNIAL Genesis 34:1 - 35:15
HAFTARAH Obadiah 1:1- 21

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9

Kabbalat Shabbat Service 6:00 PM – 88th St.
Teen Dinner Following 6:00 PM Service – 86th St.
Kabbalat Shabbat Service 6:45 PM – 86th St.
“Share Shabbat” In-Home Dinners Following 6:00 and 6:45 PM Services (SEE P.3)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10

Shabbat Services 9:30 AM – 86th St.
Children’s Services 10:45 AM – 86th St. Parlor and Chapel

Bar Mitzvah Jesse Miller

Aliyat Hatan VeKallah Melvin Berger and Barbara Pleshko

Discussion/Havdalah with Soferet Barclay 4:00 PM – 86th St. (SEE P.3)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11

Morning Minyan 9:30 AM – 88th St.
Calligraphy/Midrash with Soferet Barclay 2:00 PM – 88th St. (SEE P.3)

MONDAY, DECEMBER 12

Morning Minyan 7:30 AM – 88th St.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13

Morning Minyan 7:30 AM – 88th St.
Limud: Gems From Genesis* 8:10 AM – 88th St.
 with Rabbi Hillel Friedman

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14

Morning Minyan 7:30 AM – 88th St.
Kesharim 2:00 PM – 88th St.
Israel Trip Orientation Sessions
 For families: 5:30 PM – 88th St.
 For adults and teens: 6:30 PM – 88th St.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15

Morning Minyan 7:30 AM – 88th St.
Limud: Parashat Hashavu’a* 7:00 PM – BJ Office

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16

Morning Minyan 7:30 AM – 88th St.

PLEASE NOTE: On Friday, Dec. 23 and Friday, Dec. 30, we will have only one Kabbalat Shabbat service at 6:00PM at 88th St. Shabbat morning services on Dec. 24 and Dec. 31 will remain as usual (9:30AM at 86th St.).

* Please see the the BJ website, www.bj.org, for information and how to register.

Storahtelling Opportunity Available to BJ’s B’nai/B’not Mitzvah
 Based on Torah study and creative writing exercises, the dramatized translation of the Torah portion by the Bar Mitzvah and his family and friends this Shabbat reflects a year-long process of personal exploration and profound learning. This innovative approach to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience was guided by Amichai Lau-Lavie, director of Storahtelling. For more information about “Raising the Bar”—Storahtelling’s B’nai Mitzvah Personal Trainer program, call 1-888-STORAH-1 or visit www.storahtelling.org

SOCIAL ACTION/SOCIAL JUSTICE OPPORTUNITY OF THE WEEK

Holiday Gift Packages for the Judith Bernstein Lunch Program

Last winter we distributed over 150 holiday gift packages to our lunch program guests. Each package included a warm hat, scarf or gloves. We want to do even better this year! That’s where we need your help. If you like to knit or crochet, we hope you’ll make hats and scarves for our holiday packages (adult sizes only, please). Finished items should be brought to Naomi Dovdavyan at the BJ Office, 2109 Broadway, Suite 203. We are also happy to accept newly purchased items. For more information, please contact Susan Samuels at ssamuels@aol.com or call 212-787-7600 x338.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HAMAKOM YENAH'EM

The community of B'nai Jeshurun extends sincere condolences to Ernesto and Rita Grinberg, Janine, Jonathan, Harris and Ellis Whiteson, Daniel, Laurie, Emma and Matthew Grinberg on the death of Ernesto's mother and the family's grandmother and great-grandmother, Gicela Grinberg. The funeral has already taken place in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

MAZAL TOV

To the following members and their families:

• Jesse Miller, Dodi Meyer, Maya T. and Nicolas Miller, and the entire Meyer-Miller family in honor of Jesse becoming a Bar Mitzvah.

- Melvin Berger and Barbara Pleshko on their upcoming wedding.
- Keren Kazis and Bradley Phillips, Jordan Phillips, Earl and Judy Kazis, and their entire family, on the naming last Shabbat of their daughter, sister, and grand-daughter, Samantha Ann Phillips.
- Sara and Mitchell Spinnell on the birth of their daughter, Jacqueline Alice Spinnell.

B'RUKHIM HABA-IM

- To Mohamed Rakawy and his wife, Hala Nammar, here from Egypt under the auspices of the Eisenhower Fellowship, which brings professionals from around the world to the U.S to meet with experts in their fields.
- To our new BJ members participating in the New Member Orientation Program tonight.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

NEW SHABBAT EVENING SERVICE SCHEDULE—An Experiment

Starting in January, all Friday night Shabbat services will be held in the Sanctuary at BJ's 88th Street synagogue. The new times for these services are 5:30PM and 7:15PM. There will be no changes to the Shabbat morning service time or location.

The Family Kabbalat Shabbat service and Wandering Minyan will still be held at the early services on the first Friday of the month EXCEPT in February when the Family Service and Wandering Minyan will not take place.

We will try this new schedule for 3 months, from January through March, 2006. Please refer to the letter from the Rabbis attached to the KJ. No matter what the outcome, the early service will begin at 6PM in April because of Daylight Savings Time.

• Contemplative Practice at BJ

You are welcome to join Rabbis Marcelo Bronstein and Rachel Cowan for two contemplative experiences on the Shabbat of **December 16 and 17**. We will meet Friday evening at 6:00PM in the 86th St. Social Hall for a Kabbalat Shabbat service with meditation, niggunim, and prayer. The service will not include musical instruments or dancing. Then join us Saturday afternoon at 4:00PM in the 86th St. Social Hall for *Minha*, *Ma'ariv* and *Havdalah*—with study, reflection, niggunim and prayer. This will be the first of four contemplative Shabbat experiences.

• Jewish Soul Celebration

Saturday, December 17 at 8:00PM at Symphony Space (Broadway and 95th St.): Ayecha, the organization representing Jews of all colors and ethnicities, is holding a holiday season program—with soul. Join Joshua Nelson, the K kosher Gospel Singers and other great artists in a musical journey from Jerusalem to Brooklyn, celebrating the spirit of the African-American and Jewish peoples. Music and dance performances by Jews of Color from the Middle East, Africa and the United States. Call 212-864-5400 for tickets; more information at www.symphonyspace.org.

• Erev Niggunim: Ancient Kabbalistic Chants and Havdalah

Saturday, January 7 at 4:00PM at 86th St.: Rabbi Ohad Ezrahi offers us a rare opportunity to learn these little-known melodies and the legendary stories that contextualize them. Join us for a magical hour of heart-opening niggunim with guitar and drum, woven with *Hassidic-Wisdom-Stories*, silence, and the magic of the moment. Rabbi Ezrahi, an Israeli spiritual teacher, is the founder of the Hamakom spiritual

community and author of numerous books and articles on contemporary Kabbalistic thought. The second series of his classes about love in Kabbalah is currently being broadcast on Israeli TV.

• BJ Morning Minyan E-mail List

Anyone interested in attending or learning about activities at the morning minyan may add themselves to the BJ Morning Minyan e-mail list by sending an e-mail to Cantor Ari Priven at apriven@bj.org. You will receive a weekly minyan schedule. All are welcome.

LIMUD

• Limmud NY Almost Sold Out—Register Now!

January 13-16, 2006: Limmud NY is a four-day learning experience that brings together Jews of all ages and backgrounds to create a community of learning, teaching, and exchanging ideas. Over 300 sessions to choose from throughout Martin Luther King Weekend at Kutsher's in the Catskills. Direct bus service from Manhattan. Scholarships are available. See the preliminary schedule online and register today at www.limmudny.org, or call 212-284-6968. Look for our zebra cards in the rack at the back of the sanctuary.

TORAH FACT



Aviel Barclay: This week B'nai Jeshurun is honored to have Aviel Barclay, a pioneering soferet (female scribe), as our guest. She is the only living certified soferet and the first woman to practice sofrut (creation of sacred Hebrew texts) in over 200 years.

To achieve certification as a sofer, a Jewish man can apprentice with a sofer or go to the Vaad Mishmereth STaM in B'nai B'raq, Israel, where he can learn in a class full of other men. For a woman, there are a great many obstacles to overcome to gain certification as a soferet. She must apprentice privately with a sofer, if she can find one who will teach her. Currently there are no male scribes who are certifying women. Now, because of Aviel's breakthrough role, women can apprentice with her to become fully certified.

Read more about this remarkable woman on her website, www.soferet.com

—Lynda Fisher

SOCIAL ACTION/SOCIAL JUSTICE

• **BJ/SPSA Homeless Shelter Needs Sleepover Volunteers**

Sunday through Thursday homeless guests are bussed to us from The Open Door, a drop-in center under the aegis of Urban Pathways, and Grand Central Social Services Corporation. Our volunteers provide a dignified, welcoming atmosphere for our guests. As we enter the winter months, we especially need additional volunteers to sleep over night (9PM–7AM). Responsibilities include putting out a light breakfast for the guests, putting the cots away, and tidying up the room before leaving in the morning. To volunteer, please contact Robert Imershein at rimershein@capstarny.com or 212-339-4250.

• **Ralph Bunche School Partnership — Volunteers Needed**

There are still many children who would love to have a BJ reading partner. They have brought in their permission slips and are now waiting. If you would like to make a difference in the life of a child and can volunteer on Tuesday or Thursday morning from 9–10:30, please call x 301 or e-mail rjoseph@aaahawk.com

YOUTH AND FAMILY EDUCATION

• **Help Lead Junior Congregation January 7!**

Kids in 3rd through 6th grade are invited to volunteer to lead parts of the Junior Congregation service on Saturday, January 7. If your child wants to participate, please contact us to let us know which prayer he or she would like to lead by Friday, December 16. E-mail Hollis at hgauss@bj.org

HAKHNASAT ORHIM

• **“Share Shabbat:” BJ’s Community At-Home Dinners**

Friday, December 9: Join us tonight as we once again open our homes and our hearts to share the blessings of Shabbat and the beauty of community. If spaces are still available, our rabbis will make an announcement at both the early and late Shabbat Services and hosts’ address cards will be distributed. For further information, contact Carol at x255 or cdikman@bj.org

HAVUROT

• **BJ Health Care Professionals Havurah**

BJ health care professionals are invited to a potluck lunch on the third Saturday of the month after services. If you would like to attend, please e-mail bjhealthprofessionalshavurah@yahoo.com. Meeting location will be e-mailed to you with your confirmation.

• **Help the Poor and Hearing-Impaired in Israel**

Do you have an old or used hearing aid lying in a drawer collecting dust? Has a loved one who was hard-of-hearing recently died and you have their hearing aid and don’t know what to do with it? Hearing aids are being refurbished by Hadassah Hospital and distributed to indigent Israelis who are unable to buy devices of their own. BJ will now be collecting used hearing aids and we ask you to help. If you have a hearing aid to donate, please contact BJ member Esther Rivka Wolpert at Jwerw@aol.com or bring it to the BJ office, attention Carol Dikman.



**180TH ANNIVERSARY
COMMUNITY TORAH PROJECT**

Darkhei No'am • Ways of Pleasantness

UPCOMING EVENTS

M **Meet a woman who is changing history.**

We continue to mark BJ’s 180th anniversary as Aviel Barclay, a pioneering female soferet (Torah scribe), joins us for a Scholar-in-Residence weekend. You can learn more about Aviel at www.soferet.com

SOFERET SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE WEEKEND

Shabbat, December 10 at the 86th Street Social Hall • **4-6PM**
Shabbat discussion: “Netivat Sofrut,” a provocative discussion led by Aviel Barclay on her personal challenges of becoming and being recognized as a soferet, followed by a spirited Havdalah.

Sunday, December 11 at the 88th Street Sanctuary • **2-5PM**
Calligraphy and midrash course: “Shalhevet Yah: Holy Flame of the Aleph-Bet.” Ms. Barclay leads a hands-on workshop of preparing and writing the letters that form the text of the Torah, as well as a presentation of her work. For teens and adults.

January 20-22:

SHABBAT WEEKEND OF LEARNING

with Rabbi Shmuel Miller

A once-in-a-lifetime weekend of intimate encounter centered around the art and soul of the scribe.

THE MAKING OF A SCRIBE

Friday, January 20, following the early service, at 88th St. Frankel Hall: Join us for a Shabbat dinner with Rabbi Miller as he shares his incredible journey from a tiny African island to sunny California to become a world-renowned sofer. Cost for 1/20 dinner: \$40/members only. **TO REGISTER:** Make out your check to Congregation B’nai Jeshurun, and in the Memo section please write “Miller 1/20/06.” Send checks to the attention of Shakeara Hatchett, Congregation B’nai Jeshurun, 2109 Broadway, Suite 203, NY, NY 10023.

**A BEIT MIDRASH: FINDING YOUR TORAH—
HOW TO MAKE A MEANINGFUL COMMITMENT**

Shabbat, January 21, 4:00PM at 88th St.: Rabbi Miller joins our rabbis who will assist us in making a meaningful commitment, both spiritually and monetarily, to a book, a chapter, a verse, or even a letter of the Torah. Criteria such as character traits, history, names, honoring family members and memorials will be discussed.

THE CRAFT OF THE SCRIBE:

A HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE WITH RABBI MILLER

Sunday, January 22, 2:00PM at 88th St.: Through art, games and other hands-on activities, this family-oriented activity for children of all ages will have the opportunity to learn the craft of the scribe by “doing.” Adults will enjoy this, too.

Kindly RSVP, indicating the event, by Friday, January 12 to torahproject@bj.org, or call 212-787-7600 x392.

MASA'EINU—OUR JOURNEY



As BJ turns 180, each week the Kol Jeshurun will feature an anecdote about our history. Much of the information is gleaned from A Century of Judaism in New York by Rabbi Israel Goldstein, who served this congregation for many years in the last century.

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... 1852: The beginnings of a rabbinic-led institution began with Rabbi Raphall. An early opportunity for the demonstration of his religious authority arose in connection with a question of Jewish law, which affected the right of the Congregation to exhume bodies from their burial places in order to remove them to a different location. The right of the Board of Trustees was challenged on both civil and religious grounds. The Trustees turned to their rabbi for guidance, and it was his pronouncement which they quoted as their authority and defense.

GENERAL INFORMATION

WELCOME TO B'NAI JESHURUN! If you are unfamiliar with our services, see our "Welcome to BJ" brochure at the back of the sanctuary, or ask an usher.

• **Membership at B'nai Jeshurun:** Are you considering joining BJ? Would you like information about becoming a member? BJ is also pleased that visitors choose to connect with us when they are in town. Why don't you consider joining our community as a BJ Friend? Contact Membership Director Belinda Lasky at x224 or blasky@bj.org

• **A Note from the Ushers:** For those at the Friday night service at 88th St., please bring your books to the back as you leave. Place damaged books or tallitot in the boxes at the back of the sanctuary. We ask that men wear kippot upon entering the sanctuary and during services. We do not allow food in the sanctuary. So that we may prepare for the comfort and security of all, doors open 30 minutes before the services begin.

FOCUS ON ISRAEL

A PSALM FOR BJ'S ISRAEL TRIP
By Andrea Siegel

The "Focus on Israel" column presents information about our Israeli partnerships, texts and commentary on Israel, book reviews, and discussions of education, spirituality, and social justice in Israel.

As BJ's Israel Trip Coordinator, I have been searching for modern Hebrew poems we can read when lighting Hanukah candles as a group of 180 each night on our journey. The poems we read will in some way reference the theme of light—in a word, a phrase, an image, or even the entire poem itself.

This search has given me the lovely opportunity to open some of the books on my home shelves that have remained closed for too long! I have also asked myself: must the poems we read be Israeli? What about poems from the earliest years of modern Zionism, poems which by their very nature of having been written in Hebrew—even if composed, for instance, in Europe—contributed directly to the blossoming of Hebrew culture that led to the creation of Israel?

And so, with these questions and thoughts in mind, here is a poem that has stayed with me throughout my search. I recently emailed it to the Israel Trip participants in one of our weekly Friday emails. The poem is titled "Psalm"—by Avraham Ben Yizhak, first published in 1910 in the Warsaw literary journal "Ha'Ivri Hehadash" ("The New Hebrew"). The translation is by Peter Cole.

The "Focus on Israel" column is edited by Robin Fleischner, Co-Chair of BJ's Israel Steering Committee (robin.fleischner@verizon.net).

PSALM

For a very few moments it happens you lift
your soul inside you like a crystal bead:
a world of sunlight and broken hues,
a colloquy of things seen and trembling;
and your eyes turn to your world
as to that bead of crystal—
though your world shudders, almost spills,
and in its fullness will not hold,
trembling into its limits...
And you're given, it seems, to all worlds—
The edges of airy distance stream from your eyes
and the terrors of darkness deepen within them—
as things both distant and near find you,
and call for your soul.
in the stillness of nights,
At the mountains' summit you stand
surrounded by cold and giant stars,
while the living below you sink to earth
and blackened oblivion falls
over the last flame of their grief—
and you're awakened to terror
above the darkness.
And if a star should fall,
at the trembling flame a roar will ascend
from the straits of loss to heaven—
and the star will fall toward your soul
and die out in its abyss...
When morning comes
you'll be hovering over the face of the void,
stretching your deepest blue across it,
the great sun in your hands—
until evening.

PLEASE SEE THE BACK OF THE SANCTUARY FOR FLYERS AND MORE INFO ON:

• Welcome to BJ • Membership at BJ • Membership Packets • BJ Annual Catalogue • Limud Catalogue • Bikkur Holim • New Havurot Applications