



The Bet Ha'am Weekly Email

Words of Torah

We encounter the story of the Tower of Babel in this week's Torah portion, *Parashat Noach*. Towards the end of the portion, the Torah tells us that all of the earth's population settled together and spoke the same language. They plotted to construct a tower that would reach heaven in order to make a name for themselves, perhaps to usurp God's power. Then, the text tells us that God descends to address the problem directly. The midrash (Midrash HaGadol 11:3) tells us, "As the tower grew in height it took one year to get bricks from the base to the upper stories. Thus, bricks became more precious than people. When a brick slipped and fell the people wept, but when a worker fell and died no one paid attention." The story of the Tower of Babel is, at times, troubling, because we see humanity working together, sharing language, and God comes down to throw a stick in their spokes. But it isn't their collaboration that is the issue; it is their goal. The tower is meant as self-aggrandizement, not as a testament to their interconnectedness. This narrative calls us to remember at all times that others are part of the same human family and we are asked to treat them accordingly.



Join Us In Person!

- Everyone must wear a mask at all times while attending services as we will be singing.
- **Effective September 1st, anyone who wishes to attend services in-person must be fully vaccinated and be willing to attest to vaccination status.**
- All services will continue to be live-streamed on Zoom. See below details.

Questions can be addressed to Sylvia Most at president@bethaam.org

Want to Join Us Via Zoom?

All services will continue to be live-streamed via Zoom. In addition, Torah Study will continue meeting via Zoom until further notice.

Family Shabbat Worship Services are held on the second Friday of each month and are currently being offered via Zoom only.

Want to join us via Zoom? Just click on the links provided below. It's that easy!

Join the **Family Shabbat Worship Service** [here](#).

Join the **Friday Evening Shabbat Service** [here](#).

Join the **Torah Study** session [here](#).

Join the **Shabbat Morning Worship Service** [here](#).

Join the **Wednesday Morning Minyan** [here](#).

Worship Schedule

Friday, October 8

Family Shabbat Worship Service, 6:00 PM - Zoom Only

Our Family Shabbat Services are currently being held via Zoom only. No in-person attendance is available.

Please use the service link [here](#).

Read more about our service and our siddur (prayer book) [here](#).

Saturday, October 9

Weekly Torah Study, 9:00 AM - Zoom Only

Please join Rabbi Saks for weekly Torah Study. Study materials will be shared in the Zoom chat.

Saturday, October 9

Shabbat Morning Worship, 10:30 AM - Zoom and In-Person

Read more about our service and our siddur (prayer book) [here](#).

Contemplative Worship Service - Always Available on the Bet Ha'am Website!

This contemplative worship service offers an opportunity for you to delve deeper into your own spiritual practice and open the pathways to God that are available to you. By making this available, we hope that you will access it anytime you need to re-center yourself or reopen those pathways to God.

You can watch the service [here](#).

Follow along with the prayer book [here](#).



Religious School on Zoom

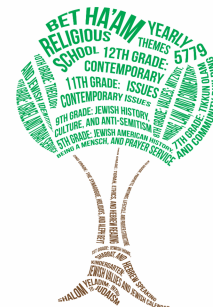
School registration 2021-22 is open.

Click [here](#) to register!

Exciting update! The board approved in-person classes for religious school. Watch for updates here and from Sam over coming weeks as we transition.

October 10:

No Religious School



Call for Volunteers!



Would you like to help fellow congregants in need of rides, help with errands, or friendly phone calls to check-in?

Rabbi Saks is seeking fully vaccinated volunteers who are interested in helping our members in need. Please email Lynn@bethaam.org for more information.

Bet Ha'am is always looking for volunteers to assist with programs and services! From gardening to helping plan community events, we're sure to have the right opportunity for you. Contact Lynn at Lynn@bethaam.org to learn more about how your time and talents can help grow the Bet Ha'am community!

We're Hiring!

Administrative Assistant

Bet Ha'am is hiring an Administrative Assistant to support the Rabbi and serve the general administrative needs of our congregation. This is a 30 hour per week position with flexible hours between Tuesday and Friday. If this sounds like the perfect opportunity for you or someone you know, please contact our Executive Director, Lynn Mansfield, at Lynn@bethaam.org.

**ARE YOU
AWESOME?**

...perfect!
We're hiring!

Donor Gallery, New Members & Milestones

Many thanks to the following donors for their generosity:

Annual Fund:

- Julie Krasne
- Rina Porell
- In memory of Mickey & Larry Bluerock by Katrina Tsvayberg
- In memory of Abraham & Beatrice Peck by Dr. Fred Peck
- In honor of Toby Rosenberg on her birthday by Lynn Urbach
- In honor of Toby Rosenberg on her birthday by Donna Landau
- In appreciation of the High Holy Day services by Dave & Kim Goren
- Maxine Sclar

Bernstein Scholar-in-Residence Fund:

- In memory of Joan Lamkin by Lynne & David Unger

Discretionary Fund:

- In appreciation by Ruth Rosenthal

Close the Budget Gap:

- In memory of Sharon Cunningham by Sharon Ash Tancredi
- Anna Brubaker

General Fund:

- In memory of Kirt & Sonja Messerschmidt by Eva & Duane Polisner
- In memory of Camilla & Saul Polisner by Duane & Evie Polisner
- In appreciation of High Holy Day services by Wendy Wicks
- In memory of Carl & Shirley Lerman by Jodi Lerman & Howard Feller
- In honor of Eliana Goldman on becoming Bat Mitzvah by Jill Webber

- In memory of Joyce Karp Rosenthal and Macey Rosenthal by Jill Rosenthal

Tutor Fund:

- In memory of Frances Weinstein by Jane Weinstein

The congregation and Board of Trustees offer their deepest condolences to:

- The Quenk family on the loss of Naomi Quenk
- Devra and Karla Krassner on the loss of their father, George Krassner

Please join us in welcoming our new members! We're pleased to have you in our community!

- Lindsey Hewett
- Julia Redding along with David, Mayer & Rya

Congregant Corner

This week's Congregant Corner submission was written by Garth Ebner.

How Yizkor Can Revive the Dead

by Garth Ebner

During the Amidah prayer, traditionally recited three times daily, we read the Gevurot prayer. In our Reform prayerbook, the Mishkan T'filah, the Gevurot prayer is most identifiable by its closing benediction: "Baruch atah Adonai, m'chayeh hakol (hameitim)". "Hameitim" occurs, again with parentheses surrounding it, three other times in the prayer as written in our siddur. Why is this?

"Hameitim" refers to an ancient belief in Judaism that after the coming of the Messiah the dead will be revived for a second (some sources say eternal) life. This belief goes back at least 2000 years to the time of the Second Temple, and can also be seen in Christianity and Islam. Translated, the closing benediction of Gevurot according to this traditional belief is "Blessed are you, God, who resurrects the dead".

In the early 19th century, during the birth of the modern Reform movement, Gevurot was one of many prayers edited by the rabbis to reflect modern sensibilities. The idea that the dead could ever be resurrected contradicted biology and natural logic, and was also connected to the Messianic belief that the early Reform movement rejected. It was at this point that "hameitim" was replaced with "hakol" - giving the prayer a new meaning of "Blessed are you, God, who gives life to all". Only with the Reform movement's newest siddur, the Mishkan T'filah, with its re-embrace of certain traditions, did the old "hameitim" reappear as an option for readers.

When I attended my first Shabbat service years ago, I said "hakol" mainly because it came first in the prayer. I got used to it as I continued in my Jewish studies because the idea of a physical resurrection always seemed ridiculous to me and I preferred to thank God for my life now rather than some other life that might happen later. During Yizkor this year during Yom Kippur, I had a change of heart. I would like to briefly talk about it.

If Yom Kippur is a liminal day between the new and old year, sin and redemption, life and death, Yizkor must be the hour at which the veil thins to be nearly invisible. It is a time in which we are reminded of everyone in our lives we have lost. For me, I am inevitably reminded of my grandmother. When I was school-aged, my parents would drop me off at her house down the street in the morning before work to catch the bus. In the summer, I would spend the whole day there. She would take me grocery shopping and let me wander the aisles while she chatted, gossiped, and argued with the other French-Canadian ladies in town. We would go home and she would pile a plate high with crepes that we ate for breakfast before she went outside for a smoke. We stayed close as I grew, and when she died when I was 23 I worried I would never feel better.

During Yizkor this year my mind immediately turned to her. Truthfully, by the afternoon of Yom Kippur I wanted nothing more than to eat a pile of her crepes again. It seemed almost like I could taste them, and smell the Winston Gold cigarettes she used to smoke (not quite as pleasant a smell as maple syrup). Part of me felt that if I opened my eyes I might see her in front of me. During Nei'lah it immediately became clear: I don't know if one day the dead may physically wander the earth, but are they not resurrected in our memories daily? In this way, perhaps, God resurrects the dead, and the Eternal deserves a blessing for that.

Ongoing Events at Bet Ha'am

Shabbat Candle Lighting

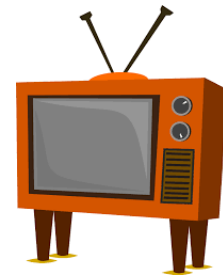
Please consider signing up to be a candle lighter at an upcoming Zoom Friday night service. You may choose to do this in memory of a loved one for whom you're observing yahrzeit, in honor of a celebration in your life, or just because you want to engage in this ritual. You can read more from Rabbi Saks [here](#); learn the candle lighting blessing [here](#) (on track 420); and find the words [here](#).



[Candle Lighting Sign-Up](#)

TV and Movie Discussion Group

Please join congregants Melissa Montefel and Wendy Hayes, co-facilitators, for a discussion group about Jewish-themed movies and shows. The group meets at 7:00 PM for fun, talk, and insights. Please email [Wendy](#) for questions or suggestions for future movies.



October 13th

The Band's Visit - movie

Eight Egyptian musicians arrive by mistake in a small town in Israel's Negev Desert. Their booking set for a different city, and with no transportation out of the town or any hotels to stay at, the band settles at a restaurant owned by Dinaz, who offers them lodging. Overcoming ethnic barriers, the Egyptians find diversion and companionship with the Israelis. Available on Amazon or Tubi.

October 27th

Hit and Run - 9 episodes

A man searching for the truth behind his wife's death becomes caught up in a dangerous web of secrets and intrigue stretching from New York to Tel Aviv, Israel. Available on Netflix.

November 10th

Worth - movie

In the wake of the Sept. 11th attacks, a lawyer faces an emotional reckoning as he attempts to put a dollar value on the lives lost. Based on real events. *Available on Netflix.*

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84000133732?
pwd=RvVNS1UvNHpORnFZOTFpMmhoWVpyQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84000133732?pwd=RvVNS1UvNHpORnFZOTFpMmhoWVpyQT09)

Meeting ID: 840 0013 3732

Passcode: 853665

One tap mobile

+19294362866,,84000133732#,,,,*853665# US (New York)

Jewish Community Happenings

We are fortunate to be in a community where there is so much going on Jewishly that we cannot possibly list all of the happenings here. Please check out the websites listed below for all kinds of activities – movement, art, spirituality, books, movies, Jewish education, and more. Bet Ha'am often co-sponsors programs with these community leaders.



Introduction to Judaism Online

Introduction to Judaism online is a live 21-session class for adults who wish to gain a deeper understanding of Jewish life through a Reform lens. Classes meet on Zoom video-conferencing and live closed captioning is available by advance request.

Introduction to Judaism online is designed for interfaith couples, adults raising Jewish children, spiritual seekers, individuals considering conversion, and Jews who want a meaningful adult learning experience.

Wherever you are on your journey with Judaism, this class is designed to be a safe and welcoming place for you to explore. Our programs welcome people from all backgrounds and are LGBTQ-friendly.

To learn more and register for this URJ course, please visit <https://reformjudaism.org/learning/judaism-classes/introduction-judaism/introduction-judaism-online-classes>.

Learn to Read Hebrew

Familiarity with Hebrew can be a key to feeling at home in the Jewish community. Learn the shapes and sounds of the Hebrew alphabet, with a warm and supportive educator to guide you and a group of classmates for practicing together. Recognize and understand common Hebrew words and phrases that are often heard in Reform congregations and in Jewish prayer. Perfect for Introduction to Judaism alumni and other adults, this course assumes no prior Hebrew experience.



This course has been developed specifically for online learning, and is taught by experienced educators. Live sessions meet weekly over video conferencing. Participants are given access to online course materials and a link to purchase workbook.

To learn more about registering for this URJ course, please visit <https://reformjudaism.org/learning/judaism-classes/Learn-to-read-hebrew>.



**Join us for
The Fall
Shabbaton
with Elana Arian**

Friday, October 29 and Saturday, October 30, 2021

Join us via live stream for Friday-night services, and in person for a Shabbat afternoon concert at Beth El, Augusta. Save the date!
More details to come at jewishlife.colby.edu

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Community
Alliance of
Southern Maine](#)

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Life](#)

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Jewish
Cemetery
Association](#)

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[Levey Day
School](#)

[Maine Jewish
Film Festival](#)

Donate to Bet Ha'am

Please consider donating in any amount to Congregation Bet Ha'am--with your help, we can close the budget gap! We are grateful for your support.

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Congregation Bet Ha'am | 81 Westbrook Street, South Portland, ME 04106

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