

## B'nai Torah (also known as Adult B'nai Mitzvah) The Temple, Congregation B'nai Jehudah

בן בג בג אומר, הַפֶּדַף בָּהּ וְהַפֶּדַף בָּהּ, דְּכִלְאָה בָּהּ, וּבָהּ תִּחְזֹי, וְסִיב וּבִלְהָ בָּהּ, וּמִנָּה לֹא תִזוּעַ, שְׂאִין לָךְ  
מִדָּה טוֹבָה הִימְנָה.

Ben Bag Bag would say: Turn it and turn it for everything is in it. See with it, grow old and worn in it, and do not budge from it, for there is no measure better than it. ~Pirkei Avot 5:22~

Every Jewish adult is technically a *bar mitzvah* or *bat mitzvah*, a person who is fully counted within the Jewish community. But not everybody had the opportunity to celebrate becoming a *bat* or *bar mitzvah*. And even many of those who did celebrate this lifecycle event when they were children recognize that the learning and commitments of a 13-year-old are very different from those of a mature adult.



We here at B'nai Jehudah seek to empower Jewish adults to become more competent in Jewish life and knowledgeable in Jewish history, thought, and tradition. These adults will be called B'nai Torah (sing. *bar Torah* or *bat Torah*), and they will celebrate this milestone during a unique B'nai Torah Shabbat service on November 17, 2018.

Please see below for details and contact Rabbi Kirzane ([rabbi2@bnaijehudah.org](mailto:rabbi2@bnaijehudah.org)) with any questions or to sign up. This opportunity is available for all members of B'nai Jehudah, including those who celebrated becoming b'nai mitzvah at age 13 and who want to try again as adults for a more mature experience.

### Expectations

- Attendance at  $\frac{3}{4}$  of all classes.
- Shabbat service attendance twice per month.
- Working to improve Hebrew skills.
- Participation in service on Nov. 17, 2018, including Torah reading.
- Group *mitzvah* project (to be determined together).
- Commitment to embark on an IJP (Individualized Jewish Path).
- Enrollment in (Re)Introduction to Judaism Fall 2017 or Fall 2018 (unless previously completed comparable course).
- Written reflection and/or d'var Torah (teaching about the Torah portion).

**Costs:** (Re)Introduction to Hebrew — \$75

Hebrew class — \$100 per course (two total) plus \$20 for materials

Hebrew tutoring — Individual arrangements

## Calendar at a Glance

Oct. 15 – Nov. 19 = Hebrew 101 (6 sessions)

Dec. 2 – Aug. 11, 2018 = Talmud Tefillah – Studying Jewish Prayer (19 classes)

Sept. 16 – Oct. 28 = Hebrew 102 (6 sessions)

Nov. 4-11 = Rehearsals

Nov. 10 – Dec. 2 = Final class, service, reflection

December = Begin IJP

June 2019 = Congregational Israel trip (optional and encouraged)

## Calendar

### **Hebrew Crash Course**

Sundays 1:30-3:00 pm

October 15, 22, 29

November 5, 12, 19

Our seasoned Hebrew instructor, Suzy Rieber, will help all students be able to sound out Hebrew words in these six sessions. This course is optional for students who can already read Hebrew.

Cost: \$100 plus \$20 book fee

### **Talmud Tefillah – Studying Jewish Prayer (biweekly)**

Saturdays 8:15-10:15 am, followed by *tefillah* 10:30 am – 12:00 pm

1. Dec. 2
2. Dec. 16
3. Dec. 30
4. Jan. 13, 2018
5. Jan. 27
6. Feb. 10
7. Feb. 24
8. Mar. 10
9. Mar. 24
10. Apr. 7
11. Apr. 21
12. May 5
13. May 19

14. June 2  
15. June 16  
16. June 30  
17. July 14  
18. July 28  
19. August 11

### **Hebrew 102 (weekly) – tentative schedule**

Sundays 1:30-3:00 pm

September 16, 23 (2018)  
October 7, 14, 21, 28 (2018)

This class will focus on prayer fluency and may include review of Torah reading. Required for all students unless alternative arrangements are made. Cost TBD but probably \$100.

### **Service Rehearsals – tentative schedule**

Sundays 1:30-3:30 pm

November 4, 11

### **Concluding Sessions**

Saturday, November 10 (8:45-10:15) = Final class  
Saturday, November 17 (10:30-12:00) = B'nai Torah service  
Sunday, December 2 (1:30-3:00) = Review of process; evaluations; final reflections  
December = Begin Individualized Jewish Path (IJP)

## Curriculum

Our curriculum is based on the *siddur* (prayerbook). Each class will explore the text and meaning of one or more prayers, using this text as a starting-point for a lesson about a topic in Jewish life or thought.

Introduction:

1. **Mah Tov** – Introductions, getting to know one another, how will this work
2. **Psalm 150** – What does prayer mean for us? What are different ways to pray?
3. **Eilu Devarim** – Who were the rabbis? How did they create the siddur?

Creation/Revelation/Redemption:

4. **Yotzer Or / Ma'ariv Aravim** – Creation
5. **Ahavah Rabbah / Ahavat Olam** – Revelation
6. **Emet / Mi Chamocha** – Redemption

God:

7. **Elohai Neshamah** – The human spirit
8. **Shema** – God is One
9. **Aleinu** – God acts in the world; we act in the world (Tikkun Olam)

Preparing for our service:

10. **Eitz Chayim** – What is Torah?
11. **Torah blessings / Haftarah blessings** – Why do we care about Torah?
12. **Kiddush** – Becoming a holy community

Amidah:

13. **Avot** – Connection to the past
14. **Gevurot** – God's power in the world; afterlife
15. **Kedushah** – Holiness: Divine and human
16. **Yism'chu / V'shamru** – Shabbat
17. **R'tzei** – Israel
18. **Modim / Sim Shalom / Oseh Shalom / Mi Shebeirach** – Petitions for the greatest gifts

Conclusion:

19. **Kaddish** – At the crossroads of past and future

## ***Emet / Mi Chamocha*** **Redemption**

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו לעסוק בדברי תורה.  
Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu la'asok b'divrei Torah.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the Universe, who sanctifies us with Your mitzvot, commanding us to engage in the words of Torah.

Emet and Mi Chamocha (evening) can be found in *Mishkan T'filah* on p. 38-40 [156-158].

Emet and Mi Chamocha (morning) can be found in *Mishkan T'filah* on p. 120-122 [238-240].

### ***Iyyun Tefilah* – Studying the Prayers**

#### **Redemption from Egypt**

**Exodus 14:30-15:1**

ויושע יי ביום ההוא את-ישראל מיד מצרים וירא ישראל את-מצרים מת על-שפת הים : וירא  
ישראל את-היך הגדלה אשר עשה יי במצרים ויראו העם את-יי ויאמינו ביי ובמשה עבדו : אז  
ישיר-משה ובני ישראל את-השירה הזאת ליי ויאמרו לאמר...

Thus the Eternal delivered Israel that day from the Egyptians. Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the shore of the sea. And when Israel saw the wondrous power which the Eternal had wielded against the Egyptians, the people feared the Eternal; they had faith in the Eternal and God's servant Moses. Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Eternal, saying...

#### **It'll Be Even Better Next Time**

**Jeremiah 31 (selections)**

<p><sup>8</sup>I will bring them in from the northland, Gather them from the ends of the earth— The blind and the lame among them, Those with child and those in labor— In a vast throng they shall return here. <sup>9</sup>They shall come with weeping, And with compassion will I guide them. I will lead them to streams of water, By a level road where they will not stumble.</p>	<p>הַנְּנִי מִבֵּיא אוֹתָם מֵאַרְץ צָפוֹן וְקִבְצֵתִים מִיַּרְכְּתֵי-אֶרֶץ בָּם עוֹר וּפְסֶחַח הָרָה וְיִלְדוֹת יַחְדָּו קָהֵל גְּדוֹל יָשׁוּבוּ הֵנָּה : בְּבִכּוֹ יָבֹאוּ וּבִתְחִנוּנִים אוֹבִילִם אוֹלֵיכֶם אֶל-נַחְלֵי מַיִם בְּדֶרֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִפְשְׁלוּ בָּהּ</p>
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<p>For I am ever a Father to Israel, Ephraim is My first-born. <sup>10</sup>Hear the word of the Eternal, O nations, And tell it in the isles afar. Say: The One who scattered Israel will gather them, And will guard them as a shepherd his flock. <b><sup>11</sup>For the Eternal will ransom Jacob, Redeem him from one too strong for him.</b></p>	<p>כי-הייתי לישראל לאב ואפרים בכרי הוא : ט שמעו דבר-יי גוים והגידו באיים ממרחק ואמרו מזרה ישראל יקבצנו ושמרו כרעה עדרו : י כי-פדה יי את-יעקב וגאלו מיד חזק ממנו:</p>
<p><sup>15</sup>Thus said the Eternal: A cry is heard in Ramah— Wailing, bitter weeping— Rachel weeping for her children. She refuses to be comforted For her children, who are gone. <sup>16</sup>Thus said the Eternal: Restrain your voice from weeping, Your eyes from shedding tears; For there is a reward for your labor —declares the Eternal: They shall return from the enemy's land. <sup>17</sup>And there is hope for your future —declares the Eternal: Your children shall return to their country.</p>	<p>יד כה אמר יי קול ברמה נשמע נהי בכי תמרורים רחל מבכה על-בניה מאנה להנחם על-בניה כי איננו : טו כה אמר יי מנעי קולך מבכי ועיניך מדמעה כי יש שכר לפעלתך נאם-יי ושבו מארץ אויב : טז ולש-תקוה לאחריתך נאם-יי ושבו בנים לגבולם :</p>
<p><sup>31</sup>See, a time is coming—declares the Eternal—when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah. <sup>32</sup><b>It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers, when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, a covenant which they broke, though I espoused them—declares the Eternal.</b> <sup>33</sup>But such is the covenant I will make with the House of Israel after these days—declares the Eternal: I will put My Teaching [<i>Torah</i>] into their inmost being and inscribe it upon their hearts. Then I will be their God, and they shall be My people. <sup>34</sup>No longer will they need to teach one another and say to one another, “Heed the Eternal”; for all of them, from the least of them to the greatest, shall heed Me—declares the Eternal. For I will forgive their iniquities, And remember their sins no more.</p>	<p>ל הנה ימים באים נאם-יי וכרתי את-בית ישראל ואת-בית יהודה ברית חדשה : לא כברית אשר כרתי את-אבותם ביום החזיקי בידם להוציאם מארץ מצרים אשר-המה הפרו את-בריתי ואנכי בעלתי בם נאם-יי : לב כי זאת הברית אשר אכרת את-בית ישראל אחרי הימים ההם נאם-יי נתתי את-תורתתי בקרבם ועל-לבם אכתבנה והייתי להם לאלהים והמה יהיו-לי לעם : לג ולא ילמדו עוד איש את-רעהו ואיש את- אחיו לאמר דעו את-יי כי-כולם ידעו אותי למקטנם ועד-גדולם נאם-יי כי אסלח לעונם ולחטאתם לא אזכר-עוד</p>

## **Commentary by Elliot Dorff**

*My People's Prayer Book: Volume 1, The Sh'ma and Its Blessings* (p. 127-128)

Why does the Siddur specify just the Exodus from Egypt, not other instances of God's deliverance?

I suggest the Exodus matters most because it is the birth event of our people. Individuals and nations take birth events seriously and mark them publicly, not because nothing significant has happened since then, but because who we are at birth often sets the stage for who we are in later life....

Birth stories also act as paradigms for what is important. God redeemed us from Egypt not because of our size, power, or worth (Deut. 7) but because God chose to love us and to do special things for us, so that—indeed, on condition that—we carry out the God-given mission articulated at Sinai. More than freedom from slavery, the Jewish birth-story of redemption is freedom to become responsible partners with God in the ongoing divine acts of creation, revelation, and redemption.

## ***Hirhur Tefilah - Reflecting on the Prayer***

### **Our Role In Bringing Redemption**

#### **1. Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 98a**

R. Joshua b. Levi met Elijah standing by the entrance of R. Simeon b. Yohai's tomb. He asked him: "Have I a portion in the world to come?" One replied, "If this Master desires it." R. Joshua b. Levi said, "I see [only the] two [of us], but hear the voice of a third."

He then asked [Elijah], "When will the Messiah come?" — "Go and ask him himself," was his reply. "Where is he sitting?" — "At the entrance [of Rome]." And by what sign may I recognize him?" — "He is sitting among the poor lepers: all of them untie [them] all at once, and rebandage them together, whereas he unties and rebandages each separately, [before treating the next], thinking, should I be wanted, [it being time for my appearance as the Messiah] I must not be delayed [through having to bandage a number of sores]."

So he went to him and greeted him, saying, "Peace upon you, Master and Teacher." "Peace upon you, O son of Levi," he replied. "When will you come, Master?" asked he. "Today," was his answer.

On his returning to Elijah, the latter enquired, "What did he say to you?" — "Peace upon you, O son of Levi," he answered. Thereupon he [Elijah] observed, "He thereby assured you and your father of [a portion in] the world to come." "He spoke falsely to me," he rejoined, "stating that he would come today, but has not." [Elijah] answered him, "This is what he said to you: Today, if you will hear his voice."

## **2. A Statement of Principles for Reform Judaism (Pittsburgh) of 1999**

We bring Torah into the world when we strive to fulfill the highest ethical mandates in our relationships with others and with all of God's creation. Partners with God in תיקון עולם (*tikkun olam*), repairing the world, we are called to help bring nearer the messianic age. We seek dialogue and joint action with people of other faiths in the hope that together we can bring peace, freedom and justice to our world.

## **3. Kerry Olitzky, *Jewish Paths Toward Healing and Wholeness: A Personal Guide to Dealing with Suffering* (2000), p. 93-94.**

It is not enough to follow the words of the prophet Micah who taught, "Do justice. Love mercy and walk humbly with God" (Micah 6:8). Our lives need structure and meaning—this comes through the discipline of living a Jewish life. ... I believe that Jewish living leads to personal redemption. And individual personal redemption ultimately leads to the redemption of the world. We bring it on, one person at a time. We have to start this process with ourselves; redemption doesn't just come on its own. We have to work toward it. When you engage a ritual, you are bringing yourself closer to God, but you must initiate it. ... There are obstacles to overcome, but we soon recognize the spiritual path and get on it. Judaism makes it easier by giving us direction and by setting aside certain times that emphasize our spiritual work.



## Shema: God

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְעֲסוֹק בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה.  
Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu la'asok b'divrei Torah.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the Universe, who sanctifies us with Your mitzvot, commanding us to engage in the words of Torah.

Shema can be found in *Mishkan T'filah* on p. 34-35 [152-153].

### *Iyyun Tefilah* – Studying the Prayer

#### Shema Yisrael – Three Translations

##### 1. Hear, O Israel

א"ר לוי נראה להם הקב"ה כאיקונין הזו שיש לה פנים מכל מקום. אלף בני אדם מביטין בה והיא מבטת בכולם. כך הקב"ה כשהיה מדבר כל אחד ואחד מ'ישר' היה אומ' עמי הדבר מדבר. אנכי יי אלהיכם אין כתי' כאן, אלא אנכי יי אלהיך (שמות כ: ב).

Rabbi Levi said: The Holy One appeared to them as though God were a statue with faces on every side. A thousand people might be looking at the statue, but it would appear to be looking at each one of them. So, too, when the Holy One spoke, each and every person in Israel could say, "The Divine word is addressing *me*." Note that Scripture does not say, "I am the Eternal *your* God," [in the plural] but "I am the Eternal *thy* God" (Exod. 20:2), [in the singular].

~Pesikta D'Rav Kahana 12

##### 2. Know, O Israel

וַיִּבֹא מֹשֶׁה וַיְסַפֵּר לָעָם אֶת כָּל-דִּבְרֵי יְיָ וְאֵת כָּל-הַמְּשֻׁפָּטִים וַיַּעַן כָּל-הָעָם קוֹל אֶחָד וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָּל-הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר-דִּבֶּר יְיָ נַעֲשֶׂה. ... וַיִּקַּח סֵפֶר הַבְּרִית וַיִּקְרָא בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָּל אֲשֶׁר-דִּבֶּר יְיָ נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע.

Moses went and repeated to the people all the words of the Eternal and all the rules; and all the people answered with one voice, saying, "All the things that the Eternal has spoken we will do!" ... Then he took the book of the covenant and read it aloud to the people. And they said, "All that the Eternal we will do and we will understand (נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע)."

~Exodus 24:3, 7

### 3. Accept, O Israel

The commentary of Saadia Gaon (882-942 CE): שָׂמַע may mean “know” [דַע] or “accept” (קַבַּל).

Saadia’s second sense of this word is *kabbel*, “accept,” implying faith, commitment, and obedience, as in the Talmudic expression for the Shema, *kabbalat ‘ol malkhut shamayim*, “the acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven.” The recitation is not to be a disembodied intellectual declaration, a mere academic exercise, but must represent a profound spiritual, existential commitment to the content and implications of this first verse of the Shema. That is, we are summoned not only to listen but to listen *to*.

~Norman Lamm in *The Shema: Spirituality and Law in Judaism* (2000), p. 16

### Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad – Five Translations

#### 1. Adonai is our God alone

יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְיָ אֶחָד (דברים ו ד). יְיָ שֶׁהוּא "אֱלֹהֵינוּ" עֲתָה וְלֹא אֱלֹהֵי הָאֲמוֹת. הוּא עֲתִיד לְהִיּוֹת "יְיָ אֶחָד", שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר "כִּי אֶזְ אֶהְפֹּךְ אֶל עַמִּים שָׁפָה בְרוּרָה לְקִרְאָ כָלֶם בְּשֵׁם יְיָ" (צפניה ג ט), וְנֶאֱמַר "בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יְהִיָּה יְיָ אֶחָד וְשֵׁמוֹ אֶחָד" (זכריה יד ט).

**“Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad” (Deut. 6:4).** Adonai is “our God” now but not the God of the other nations. God is destined to be “One Adonai,” as it is said, “For then I shall change the nations to speak a clear language so that they may all call out in the name of Adonai” (Zephaniah 3:9), and as it is said, “On that day Adonai will be One and God’s name will be One” (Zechariah 14:9).

~Rashi’s commentary to Deut. 6:4

#### 2. Adonai, our God, is one

The belief in one God is not merely an abstract statement about some kind of reality that exists outside of ourselves. It also implies the supremacy of this single essential entity within all reality: all particularities with their differences and divisions, are unified and subject to a single authority. In this regard, every monistic perception is a kind of comprehensive statement—even if not in religious language—of the very same thing, that is to say, the presupposition of the existence of a unified essence from which the different particularities are constructed and are given significance.

~Adin Steinsaltz in “How Does Our Jewishness Influence Our Thinking Process? Marx, Freud, Einstein, and the Jewish Search for Unifying Principles”

### 3. Adonai, our God, is the only [god]

The task of Israel is to proclaim that only J. is God.\* J. is thus identified by a proper name not by the noun God. “Only J. is God” asserts that the one specific person described in the Bible is God. And the specificity of J. can only be expressed through the stories recorded in the Bible. He is the God who created heaven and earth, chose Abraham, brought the children of Israel out of Egypt. This is the reason that the history of the Jewish people plays such an essential role in the definition of J. While, in one sense, “creator of heaven and earth” alone defines him uniquely, in the broader sense only a relatively adequate recounting of his deeds determines that we are speaking about the particular J. who is the only God. Without such a recounting, we are likely to be referring to God as an abstract noun rather than to the God who does not hesitate to assume a proper name. When the proper name of God recedes into the background, we move into the realm of first causes and unmoved movers, the God of pure reason rather than the covenant partner of Israel.

~Michael Wyschograd, *Abraham's Promise: Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations* (2004), p. 40

\* - In this text, Wyschograd uses “J.” as a substitute for the letters of God’s proper name, *Yud-Hei-Vav-Hei*.

### 4. Adonai, our God, is unique

רבנן אמרי אמר הקב"ה לישראל בני כל מה שבראתי בראתי זוגות, שמים וארץ זוגות, חמה ולבנה זוגות, אדם וחיה זוגות, העולם הזה והעולם הבא זוגות. אבל כבודי אחד ומיוחד בעולם. מנין? ממה שקרינו בענין שְׁמֵעַ יִשְׂרָאֵל יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְיָ אֶחָד (דברים ו ד).

The Rabbis say: The Holy One said to Israel, “My children, all that I have created, I have created in pairs: heaven and earth—a pair. Sun and moon—a pair. Adam and Eve—a pair. This world and the world to come—a pair. But My glory is one and unique (אֶחָד וּמְיֻחָד) in the world.” How do we know this? From what we have read regarding “Hear, O Israel, Adonai is our God, Adonai is *echad*.”

~Deuteronomy Rabbah 2:31

### 5. Adonai, our God, is all there is

The theology of Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the Alter Rebbe of Lubavitch Chasidism (1745-1813, known also as *Ba'al Hatanya*—“author of *The Tanya*,” the masterwork of Chabad Chasidism) maintains that nothing exists but God. This “acosmism” denies the reality of the cosmos. God is not only the basis of reality, God is the *only* reality; God is all there is. ... In such a radical monism, the *Sh'ma*, the declaration of God’s unity, means effectively that nothing exists besides God.

~Commentary by Lawrence Kushner and Nehemia Polen, *My People's Prayer Book: Volume 1, The Sh'ma and Its Blessings* (1997), p. 87, 93-94

## ***Hirhur Tefilah - Reflecting on the Prayer***

### **Describing God in Story**

“What do you mean by belief in God?” asked Paul.

“The Sense of an existent Ideality,” replied Daniel, quietly, “an ideality—a perfectability—whether the potentiality, the growth of man tends – and which still, as we advance, retreats like the horizon, beckoning us ever onward. A gray abstraction to some, perhaps, but which alone makes for and marks our religion.”

~Emma Wolf, “Heirs of Yesterday” (1900)