



Beth Shalom Weekly Update

Thursday, July 29, 2021 to Wednesday, August 4, 2021

Hazzan Lance H. Tapper Shabbat Parashat Ekev

Shabbat Service—Friday, July 30, 7:30 p.m.

SHABBAT SERVICES

Friday Evening 7:30 pm

SYNAGOGUE OFFICE HOURS

While the Beth Shalom office will be closed during the Covid 19 Shut Down, our office phone and email will continue to be attended to during regular working hours:

9:00a-4:00p Tue-Fri.
562.941.8744
bswoffice@verizon.net

YAHREZIT

Miriam Brookfield
in memory of husband
Howard Brookfield

Mark Hilliard
in memory of mother
Carol Zur Hilliard

Eileen Baptista
in memory of
Grace Galvin

If you know of someone who is ill, had surgery, or just needs a call now and then, please let us know so we can reach out. Thank you.

Memorial Plaques

We have brought all of the memorial plaques into our office, from the storage unit.

If you would like a family member's plaque, please contact the office and let us know the name on the plaque. We will find it and arrange for you to pick it up. If you know of anyone who might have had loved one's plaques on our memorial board, please let them know that they are available to be picked up.

Clergy Schedule

Virtual Services: www.facebook.com/bethshalomofwhittier

July 30--7:25 pm organ prelude; 7:30 pm service

Hazzan Lance and Mark Peterson

August 6--7:25 pm organ prelude; 7:30 pm service

Hazzan Lance and Ty Woodward

**Beginning August 13th, services and events will once again be open to in person attendance with proof of vaccination. See below "Updated Covid-19 Regulation". Services will continue to broadcast on Facebook simultaneously for those who cannot attend in person.*

August 13--Gala Reopening 6:00p Kosher Chicken Dinner catered by Panache; 7:25 pm organ prelude; 7:30 pm service

Hazzan Lance and Ty Woodward

August 20--7:25 pm organ prelude; 7:30 pm service

Hazzan Lance and Ty Woodward

August 27--7:25 pm organ prelude; 7:30 pm service

Hazzan Lance and Ty Woodward

August 28--Selihot 6:30p Dessert Reception; 7:25 pm organ prelude; 7:30 pm service Hazzan Lance, the Beth Shalom Singers, and Alan Kelly-Crawley organist/choirmaster

*Updated Covid-19 Regulation

As of now, masks are mandatory per the L.A. County Health Dept. for all indoor gatherings regardless of vaccination status.

Hopefully, we will be back to not having to wear masks if we are all vaccinated by Aug 13th. We will keep you posted but please plan on being prepared and come with a mask (and a copy of your vaccination card).

As with all of our in-person events at this time, proof of vaccination will be required to be shown at the door.

Are We Architects of Our Own Fate?

Torah Reading: Deuteronomy 7:12 - 11:25

Haftarah Reading: Isaiah 49:14 - 51:3

Parashat Ekev

By: Tamar Marvin, PhD, posted on August 21, 2019/5779

A central theme of Parashat Eikev is contingency: that a person's fate is predicated on their actions, and the future is not yet written. A core problem occupying medieval philosophers, including the classical Torah commentators, the question of causality continues to fascinate—and elude—us today. In our own time, it tends to be scientists who explore the way that cause and effect play out in time. Physicists debate the linearity of time, with some advancing the block universe theory in which causality is an illusion created by human cognitive processes. Biologists examine the delicate interplay of volition and neural firing, demonstrating that neurons can initiate movement before there is any cognitive sign of intent. The emergent conclusion is that free will may be a quirk of our human perspective, just as our sense of a stable and sensible physical world is belied by the laws of quantum mechanics.

Beth Shalom Services: Because of COVID-19, we continue to livestream our Shabbat and Festival services on our Facebook page, **Beth Shalom of Whittier**. When there is a livestream taking place, you can click on it and watch. We encourage everyone to continue to tune in each week and take part in our services virtually and leave messages of greeting to other who are watching. This is one way we can all stay in touch. Those with proof of full vaccination may join us in person beginning August 13th.

Directions for viewing livestream services: If you are a current Facebook subscriber, you need only to go to our Facebook page, **Beth Shalom of Whittier**, to view these announcements and videos. If you are not a current Facebook subscriber, you need to go to www.facebook.com and sign up with a username and password and then you can access our page at that point. Always log in 5 minutes ahead the video start time.

ROSE HILLS CEMETERY PLOTS

If you want to do your family the mitzvah of pre-planning, please call the office. They can give you information as to what gravesites are available and what steps to take to secure your plot(s). Plots are \$3500 each.

Book Club: Our next book group will be Wednesday, August 11, at 12:30 pm. The book is "The Winemaker's Wife" by Kristin Harmel. We will be meeting at Myra's in Seal Beach. Call Myra or Michelle for the address. Carpools are being formed.

Tribute Cards: To send a Tribute Card, please contact Michelle Hess with your request. Her e-mail is: michelleh3532@gmail.com

PayPal Donations: Paypal donations welcome: bswoffice@verizon.net

Simcha Sharing: Let us know about your Simcha's. Let the office know of your good news and we will share it in the next weekly. Weddings ★ Births

Birthday/Anniversary

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Eikev, meanwhile, insists that free will is at the heart of the covenantal relationship between the Jewish people and God. The opening word of the parashah, *eikev*, which we use to refer to it, is telling. *Eikev* literally means “on the heels of”; *akev*, the noun, means the heel of the foot, *ikvot* means footprints, and *Yaakov*, from the same root, means “he follows,” connoting the patriarch’s birth order in relation to his twin, Esav. In other words, the word *eikev* uses concrete physicality to express abstract causality.

The parashah thus opens with, “It shall be, *following* your hearing of these rules and your keeping and doing of them, that the Lord your God will keep the covenant with you that God pledged to your ancestors.” There is an integral relationship here between human act and Divine act.

Further into the parashah, Ibn Ezra and Ramban consider the purpose of Divine tests to an omniscient God. [Devarim 8:2](#) reads, “You shall remember the entire way that the Lord your God caused you to walk these forty years in the wilderness in order to afflict you and test you (*nassotkha*) so as to know what is in your hearts, whether you will keep God’s commandments or not.” But doesn’t God have perfect knowledge of this already? Why was such suffering necessary?

Ibn Ezra’s comment here merely says, “I have already explained this.” If we turn back in his commentary, all the way to Avraham’s sacrifice, we find that Ibn Ezra calls knowledge derived from Divine testing a great secret, known only to God, “the knower of all unknowns.” There he suggests that God’s testing of Avraham—*nissah*, the same verb used in our verse—is for the purpose of giving Avraham a reward. It is, in other words, a cultivated opportunity for a human to exercise free will. From his allusion to this explanation in parashat Eikev, we may deduce that Ibn Ezra sees the suffering of the wilderness generation as an opportunity they were given.

Ramban has no quarrel with Ibn Ezra’s approach, coming to the same conclusion. However, Ramban brings in a fascinating text to illuminate this verse. In Birkat Hamazon, one of our most frequently recited prayers, we are left to grapple with the statement (taken from Tehillim), “I once was young and have now grown old, and have yet to see a righteous person left to suffer, or their children go hungry.” But human history, and perhaps our own experiences, show us that innocent people suffer—that hunger is a sociopolitical condition, not a moral one. Here Ramban suggests that the verse speaks specifically of the wilderness generation. God could have led the people through inhabited areas, Ramban points out, but instead caused them to walk in the wilderness. God brought down manna, only to have the desert heat melt it away—and to renew the miracle, faithfully, consistently, over forty long years. Ramban writes, “God brought them through this trial (*nissayon*—notably, the modern Hebrew word for ‘experience’) because through it God knows that they will keep the commandments for eternity.” Trial—experience—is not necessary to God, but it may be needed by humans, Ramban suggests. For both Ramban and Ibn Ezra, then, the human experience of causality is a vector of meaning. Whatever the nature of time, our experience of its unfolding matters.



BETH SHALOM OF WHITTIER SHABBAT REOPENING!

AUGUST 13, 2021

**THIS WILL BE OUR FIRST SHABBAT IN PERSON WHERE ALL
WHO COME WITH PROOF OF VACCINATION MAY ATTEND**

First Friends
13205 Philadelphia St, Whittier, CA 90601

FELLOWSHIP HALL

6:00 PM—WELCOME BACK SHABBAT DINNER

Kosher Chicken Dinner catered by Panache

**NO COST, BUT RESERVATIONS ARE MANDATORY BY AUGUST 3, 2021
IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND, PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE AT 562-941-8744**

MEETING HOUSE

7:25 PM—PRELUDE

7:30 PM –SHABBAT SERVICE

**PRELUDE AND SERVICE WILL BE SIMULTANEOUSLY BROADCAST
ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE: BETH SHALOM OF WHITTIER**

OFFICIANTS:

Hazzan Lance H Tapper, Spiritual Leader

Ty Woodward, Organist

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