



בראשית

Congregation Beth Israel of the Palisades

שבת מברכים פרשת בראשית

Shabbat M'varchim Parashat B'reishit

October 6, 2018 | Tishrei 27, 5779

TORAH STUDY

**This Week: Shabbat M'varchim Parashat B'reishit
B'reishit 1.1-6.8, pages 3-34**

FIRST ALIYAH: On Day Two, God divides the waters above from the waters below, and called the expanse between them "sky." Unlike the first day or the third, He doesn't "see how good it was." Why not?

FOURTH ALIYAH: Consider what God says to Kayin (Cain) because his face had "fallen" after his offering was ignored. What is God's understanding here about the humans He created—and was He wrong?

The haftarah, Yishayahu 42.5-21, begins on page 36.

**Next Week: Shabbat Parashat Noach
B'reishit 6.8-11.32, pages 41-63**

**THERE WILL BE
NO FORMAL TORAH STUDY
THIS SHABBAT.**

**STUDY WILL RESUME NEXT SHABBAT
WITH PARASHAT LECH L'CHA.**

The haftarah, Yishayahu 42.5-21, begins on page 36.

For haftarot, we follow S'fardi custom.

A 'Beginning' with a sense of purpose

The first portion of the Torah has a double role: it conveys its own story, and it sets the context of the entire Torah. The Torah's stories have been observed to be rich in background, as opposed to, for example, the epic poems of Homer. In Homer, each episode is self-contained: all the information that a reader needs is provided then and there, and all action is in the foreground.

That is fine, but it is not the way of the Torah. To read the Torah at any level beyond "Sunday school," one must have a sense of the whole when one reads the parts. To comprehend what happens in the exodus and in the revelation at Sinai, you must know what has happened in Genesis 1. Like some films that begin with a sweeping shot that then narrows, so the first chapter of Genesis moves gradually from a picture of the skies and the earth down to the first man and woman. The story's focus will continue to narrow: from the universe to the earth to humankind to specific lands and peoples to a single family. (It will expand back out to nations in Sefer Sh'mot.) But the wider concern with skies and the entire earth that is established here in the first portion will remain.

When the story narrows to a singular divine relationship with Avraham, it will still be with the ultimate aim that this will be "a blessing to all the families of the earth." Every biblical scene will be laden—artistically, theologically, psychologically, spiritu-ally—with all that has come before.

The first portion initiates the historical flow of the Torah (and of the entire Tanach). It establishes that this is to be a related, linear sequence of events through generations. That may seem so natural to us now that we find this point obvious and banal. But the texts of the Torah are the first texts on earth known to do this. The ancient world did not write history prior to these accounts. The Torah's accounts are the first human attempts to recount history. Whether one believes all or part or none of its history to be true is a separate matter. The literary point is that this had the effect of producing a text that was rich in background: every event carries the weight of everything that comes before it. And the historical point is that this was a new way to conceive of time and human destiny.

There is also a theological point: this was a new way to conceive of a God. The difference between the Torah's conception of God and the pagan world's conception not merely arithmetic: one versus many. The pagan deities were known through their functions in nature. But the God of the Torah was different, creating all of nature and, therefore, not knowable or identifiable through any one element of nature. One can only know God through the divine acts in history. One never finds out what God is, but rather what God does—and what God says.

Parashat Bereshit establishes this by beginning with accounts of creation and by then flowing through the first 10 generations of humankind. (Those "begat" lists are thus more important than people generally think.) The Torah's theology is thus inseparable from its history, and from its literary qualities. Ultimately, there is no such thing as "The Bible as Literature" or "The Bible as History" or "The Bible as . . . anything." There is: the Bible.

—Adapted from the writings of Prof. Richard Elliott Friedman

CBIOTP STANDARDS & PRACTICES

1. Men must keep their heads covered in the building and must wear a talit when appropriate. Women may choose to do either or both, but it is not mandatory.
2. Anyone accepting a Torah-related honor must wear a talit, regardless of gender.
3. Only one person at a time may take an aliyah.
4. No one should enter or leave the sanctuary during a K'dushah. One should not leave the sanctuary when the Torah scroll is being carried from or to the ark.
5. No conversations may be held in the hallway outside the sanctuary, or while standing in an aisle alongside a pew.
6. The use of recording equipment of any kind is forbidden on sacred days.
7. Also forbidden are cell phones, beepers and PDAs, except for physicians on call and emergency aid workers (please use vibrating option).
8. No smoking at any time in the building, or on synagogue grounds on Shabbatot and Yom Kippur.
9. No non-kosher food allowed in the building at any time.
10. No one may remove food or utensils from the shul on Shabbatot. An exception is made for food being brought to someone who is ailing and/or homebound.

MAZAL TOV CORNER

[If we don't know about it, we can't print it;
if we can't print it, we can't wish it.]

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Friday

Ronit Clickman

Присоединяйтесь к нам
дл освящение и обед

This week's kiddush & luncheon
are sponsored by

OUR THREE
SIMCHAT TORAH
HONOREES

ERROL KAGET,
WILLY HENIK,
NADIA MASSUDA

Please join them and us!

*Have you joined the Kiddush Club?
It's only \$136 a year per person,
and you help add joy to our Shabbatot.*

THE IMAHOT:

Following is the text adopted by the Ritual Committee
for use by the Prayer Leader in reciting the Amidah, and
those wishing to insert the Matriarchs in their Amidot:

ברוך אתה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲמוֹתֵנוּ, אֱלֹהֵי
אֲבֹרָה וְשָׂרָה, אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְרַבֵּקָה, וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב, רַחֵל
וְלֵאָה. הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא, אֵל עֲלִיוֹן, גּוֹמֵל
חֲסָדִים טוֹבִים, וְקוֹנֵה הַכֹּל, זוֹכֵר חֲסָדֵי אֲבוֹת, וּמְבִיא
גּוֹאֵל לְבָנֵי בְנֵיהֶם לְמַעַן שְׂמוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה.

Recite this only between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur:

זְכַרְנוּ לְחַיִּים, מִלֶּךְ חַפֵּץ בְּחַיִּים, וְכָתַבְנוּ בְּסֵפֶר הַחַיִּים,
לְמַעַן אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים.

מִלֶּךְ עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמַגֵּן. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מִגֵּן אֲבֹרָה
וְעִזְרַת שָׂרָה.

This week's Shabbat Booklet
is sponsored by

JUDY GOLUB

to mark the yearzeit of her late daughter

CAROL GOLUB FABRIKANT

and

LIBBY AND WILLY HENIK,

to celebrate

SYLVIA ZELTZER

becoming a bat mitzvah!

תודה רבה!

THANK YOU

to all those
who volunteered their time
to make the High Holy Days and Sukkot
wonderful and meaningful experiences.

CREATION AND HUMAN BROTHERHOOD

The biblical account of the creation of man seeks to teach one grand lesson valid for all times: The foundation of the world is belief in One God as Creator and Father, and its corollary, brotherly love, accompanied by a constant awareness that all human beings are of one human father (Adam). The prophet Malachi asked of us: "Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother?" (Malachi 2.10). Man's failure to realize this breeds misunderstanding, prejudice, and ill-will leading to fratricidal hate; it is the great illness which produces suicidal strife, ruin and desolation, and has brought us to our present all-too-justified fear of total destruction.

This one fundamental idea is familiar to all; we know it well. Yet we are far from accepting it in practice. Our physical and material progress goes on apace with tremendous speed; but our moral progress lags woefully behind. It is our task to speak to the heart of man. This profoundly true principle which is so clearly enunciated in the Torah, and in the Prophetic writings, has been constantly studied and emphasized by our Sages. Here I present the thought of our great teachers and scholars on this subject, as manifested in our talmudic-midrashic literature.

Talmud Yerushalmi, Nedarim, ch. 9, 41c, reports an interesting and highly significant discussion between two of its most outstanding scholars, Rabbi Akiva and Ben Azzai, a sometime student. The former declared: "'You shall love thy neighbor as yourself' (Vayikra 19.18) is the greatest principle of the Torah." Whereupon Ben Azzai observed: "This is the book of the generations of Adam (man) (B'reishit 5.1) is an even greater principle."

Ben Azzai's statement lays down a fundamental tenet of Judaism. For in the verse quoted the scholar saw the basic declaration of human brotherhood: by tracing back the whole of the human race to one single ancestor, created by one God, the Torah taught that all men have one Creator—the heavenly Father—and one ancestor—the human father. Thus, all men, notwithstanding differences and variations produced by external conditions, are brothers. If, then, Rabbi Akiva saw in the command to love one's neighbor the prime motivation of Judaism, Ben Azzai went behind this precept, as it were, seeking the basis upon which it rests and the sanction which gives it validity, and he found it in this biblical account of Creation.

Korban Aharon comments: "A still greater principle is that all human beings have God for Father. The Holy Writ intends to say: This is the book of the Torah which tells of the generations of the first man, and teaches that all are the children of one Father, that they are all made in one image and one imprint, the form of God. Wherefore men should not be haughty towards nor hate one another."

Rabbi Yehuda Gedaliah writes on the same passage: "Our sacred Torah is a book for all the generations of man; for we all have one father (Adam), and the Holy One, blessed be He, created all human beings in His likeness and image. Therefore, should all endeavor to cling to His attributes (lovingkindness, compassion,

and justice); every man should love his neighbor even as his own self, and assist him to observe the mitzvot and practice good deeds, and so attain to holiness."

A manuscript commentary on the Midrash to B'reishit writes: "Since all nations are one, and all human beings are descended from one man, humanity is like a single body divided into many organs; as the organs of a body are mutually helpful to one another, so should all human beings be mutually helpful to each other. That is why one Sage held that 'This is the book of the generations of Adam' is a greater principle."

Thus, our Rabbis say: "For this reason was man created alone, to teach that whosoever destroys a single soul is as guilty as though he had destroyed a complete world; and whosoever preserves a single soul is as meritorious as though he had preserved the whole world" (BT Sanhedrin 37a). It is hard to imagine a more emphatic assertion of human worth. From this it is a natural step to insist first upon peace and then upon the essential equality of humanity: "God created only one man at first. Why? Lest the righteous boast that they are the descendants of a righteous first man, whilst the wicked plead that their first progenitor was evil." (It is interesting to note how this ancestral equality is made to serve the cause of righteousness by depriving the wicked of the plea of a hereditary disposition to evil.) Another reason: "So that families should not quarrel with each other" (BT Sanhedrin 38a).

Thus, the precept, "You shall love thy neighbor as yourself," follows as a natural corollary to this conception of a humanity united in and through a common ancestor. In keeping with this Hillel gave his famous reply to the heathen who wished to learn the whole Torah whilst he stood on one foot: "That which is hateful to you, do not unto your neighbor; that is the whole Torah. The rest is commentary; go and learn it" (BT Shabbat 31a).

Let us now examine the text more closely. Its significant words are "love" and "neighbor": what does love imply, and who is "your neighbor"?

Rabbi Israel Al-Nakawa (Menorat Hama'or IV, 305) points out that "your neighbor" is in the dative instead of the accusative (I'reacha instead of eht reacha), so that the text actually reads, Thou shalt love for thy neighbor as for thyself; in other words, whatever you would love or desire for yourself, that you should desire for your neighbor too.

The famous medieval moralist Rabbi Bachya writes in a similar vein, but with more detail: "Inasmuch as a man associates with his fellow-men in all that pertains to social welfare, such as sowing, plowing and reaping, or in labor or commerce, he should make a spiritual accounting with himself, to what extent his own activities have contributed thereto. In all these matters, he should love for his neighbor what he loves for himself; hate for others what he hates for himself; have compassion upon his fellow men and save them, insofar as it lies within his power, from aught that might harm them. That is the meaning of the Scriptural injunction, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Duties of the Heart, on "A Spiritual Accounting," par. 22).

"You shall love thy neighbor as yourself" applies even to the

sinner. This conception stemmed from the teaching that "God is long-suffering towards and patient with the sinner, desiring his repentance rather than his death"; indeed, therein lies His essential greatness. This led to the principle that we ourselves must not hate the sinner—a humanitarian principle that many find it particularly difficult to learn.

This teaching is expressed with remarkable clarity in the following passage: "Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: 'Why were they (the members of the Synod convened by Ezra and Nechemiah) called the Men of the Great Assembly? Because they restored the crown (of the Almighty) to its pristine greatness. Now, Moshe had described Him as the great God, the mighty, and the awe-inspiring (D'varim 10.17). When, however, the Temple was destroyed, the Prophet Yirmiyahu exclaimed: "Idolaters are dancing in His Temple! Where then is His awe?" Thus, he omitted "awe-inspiring" as one of His attributes.

Then came Daniel and complained: "Idolaters have enslaved His children: where then is His might?" And so he omitted "mighty." Then came the Men of the Great Assembly and taught: "On the contrary. Therein He shows His might and awe. He shows His might in suppressing His anger and in being long-suffering with the wicked. And He proves His awe-inspiring nature, for but for that, how could one nation [Israel] maintain itself among 70 nations?" Thereupon they restored the epithets, and decreed that He should again be thus described in the daily services" (BT Yoma 69b).

It is of interest to observe that in this passage God is described as being long-suffering with the wicked heathens, to whom it refers. In that same spirit the Midrash Rabbah on Ruth (3:2) writes: "We have learned: When a person sees an act of idolatry performed, what must he say? 'Blessed be He who is long-suffering toward those who transgress His will.'"

Justice and social stability may demand that the wicked be punished, even destroyed; but the Almighty takes no pleasure therein. So, He is pictured as rebuking the angels who sought to sing praises to Him when the Egyptians who pursued the Israelites were engulfed by the returning waters of the Red Sea: "My creatures, the work of My hands, are drowning in the sea, yet you would utter song!" (BT Sanhedrin 39b).

The Sages observed that Scripture bids the Jew rejoice on the Shavuot and Sukkot, but Scripture does not order rejoicing on Pesach, although as the festival of Liberation it was certainly no less a joyous occasion than the other two. Why was this? Because it involved the punishment of the Egyptians. For the same reason, the full Hallel is only recited on the first two days of Pesach, but not after (for the Egyptians were drowned on the seventh day). As the Babylonian sage Sh'muel explained it, citing Mishlei (Proverbs) 24.27, "Rejoice not when your enemy falls" (Pesichta d'R. Kahana, p. 189): We do not sing full praises, for human beings died, their enmity to us notwithstanding.

Here we find a contradiction. Whilst Sh'muel, on the basis of Mishlei, emphatically repudiates rejoicing at the downfall of the wicked, Midrash T'hillim on Psalm 94 states: "David composed 103 Psalms, yet did not say Halleluyah (Praise the Lord) until he beheld the fall of the wicked."

Seder Elijah Rabbah (chap. 18) long ago grasped the contradiction between the two views, which appears, moreover, in Mishlei itself. Thus, it observes: "Scripture says: When your enemy falls, do not rejoice. Yet further it says: When the wicked are destroyed, there is joyous song (Mishlei 11.12). How can the two be reconciled? It seems to me that the joyous song mentioned in the latter verse, and the statement, 'Let the righteous one rejoice, for he has beheld vengeance,' refer to the time when the event is taking place. But one should not set a festival for generations because an enemy has fallen."

Perhaps, that is the reason the Sages preferred to ascribe the festival of Chanukah primarily to the miracle of the cruse of oil, rather than to the downfall of the Greek Syrians in the Maccabean war. On Purim, we commemorate not so much Haman's downfall as the delivery of the Jewish people through Esther from the extermination which his evil machinations had sought to bring about.

Intent on seeking the ethical purpose of the Torah, the Rabbis found sermons literally in stones. The Torah enjoins: Neither shall you go up by steps unto My altar, that your nakedness be not uncovered thereon (Sh'mot 20.23). This would certainly appear to have no connection whatever with human relations, yet the Rabbis found even here a warning to respect human dignity and worth. By exposing his nakedness, a man would fail in respect for the dignity and prestige of the altar. That the stones of the altar were consecrated did not prevent the Rabbis from commenting:

"The stones of the altar have no consciousness of either good or evil, yet the Almighty bade us respect their dignity; how much the more must you show the fullest consideration for and avoid shaming your neighbor, who was made in the image of Him who created the world by His command!" (Mekhilta, Yitro Chap. 11).

From that follows almost as an obvious corollary their dictum (Avot, chap. 4): "Who is honored? He who honors all human beings, as it says, For they that honor Me I will honor, and they that despise Me shall be held in contempt" (Sh'muel Alef 2:30). Now, the proof-text speaks of honoring or despising not one's fellow-man, but God! Yet it is automatically applied to man. The implication is obvious (so much so that he does not even state it): Honor or contempt of the Almighty is identical with honor or contempt of one's fellow-creatures.

Mankind's oneness becomes more and more evident—a unity of all humans which is paralleled and strengthened by a growing realization of a basic oneness in nature, as well. Science has taught us that time and space, hitherto regarded as separate and distinct, are one indissoluble concept. And now scientific thinking is on the verge of adding that energy, too, is an integral part of the single concept of time-space.

Thus, in the natural world which surrounds him, and in the universal community of humans among whom he lives, man must realize ever more intensely and irrevocably the fundamental oneness, which mutely attests to one Creator and one human ancestor. This is Israel's fundamental teaching to humanity—the reality of universal brotherhood, which will eventually bring the Messianic Era and the kingdom of God on earth.

—Adapted from the commentaries of Rabbi Menachem M. Kasher, as translated by Rabbi Dr. Harry Freedman

May He who blessed | מי שברך

May He who blessed our ancestors bless and heal all those whose names are listed here, those whose names will be called out, and those whose names we do not know because either we are unaware of their illness or they are. We pray He mercifully quickly restore them to health and vigor. May He grant physical and spiritual well-being to all who are ill. אמן

Sydelle Klein	Rifkah bat Chanah	Alter ben Hassia
Bonnie Pritzker Appelbaum	Rut bat Hadassah	Avraham Akivah bat Chanah Sarah
Deenah bat Sarah Leah	Shimona bat Flora	Aharon Hakohen ben Oodel
Rut bat Esther	Sura Osnat bat Alta Chayah	Chaim ben Golda
Miriam Zelda bat Gittel D'vorah	Tzipporah bat Yaffa	Ezra ben Luli
Miriam Rachel bat Chanah	Yospeh Perel bat Michlah	Gil Nechemiah ben Yisraela
Harav Mordechai Volff ben Liba Miryam	Michelle Blatteis	Mordechai Yitzchak ben Tirtzach
Michael Bybelezer	Diane Fowler	Harav R'fael Eliyahu ben Esther Malkah
M'nachem Mendel ben Chaya Dina	Marj Goldstein	Harav Shimon Shlomo ben Taube v'Avraham
Simchah bat Zelda	Judy Golub	Yidel ben Etil
Adina bat Freidel	Ruth Hammer	Yisrael Yitzhak ben Shayndel
Baila bat D'vorah	Goldy Hess	Yitzchak ben Tzivia
Basha bat Surah	Fay Johnson	Yonatan ben Malka
Chavah bat Sarah	Micki Kuttler	Yosef ben Flora
Chayah bat Flora	Katie Kim	Larry Carlin
Devora Yocheved bat Yehudit	Elaine Laikin	Michael Cunningham
Esther bat D'vorah	Mira Levy	Harry Ikenson
HaRav Ilana Chaya bat Rachel Esther	Robin Levy	Shannon Johnson
Malka bat Esther	Karen Lipsy	Itzik Khmishman
Masha bat Etil	Gail Schenker	Adam Messing
Masha bat Rochel	Linda State	Gabriel Neri
Mindel bat D'vorah	Mary Thompson	Jeff Nicol
Ninette bat Aziza	Michelle Lazar	Steve Saikin
Pinyuh bat Surah	Norma Sugerman	Fred Sheim
Ruchel Leah bat Malkah	Julia Yorke	Mark Alan Tunick
Rita bat Flora	Susan Yorke	

We pray for their safe return...

May He who blessed our ancestors bless, preserve, and protect the captive and missing soldiers of Tzahal—Ron Arad, Zecharia Baumel, Guy Chever, Zvi Feldman, Yekutiel Katz, and Zeev Rotshik—as well as those U.S. and allied soldiers, and the civilians working with them and around them, still missing in Afghanistan and Iraq, and all other areas of conflict, past and present.

And may He bless the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces and Tzahal, and those who serve the United States and Israel in foreign lands in whatever capacity, official or unofficial, members of our community or related to members, and their colleagues and companions. Guide them in peace and return them speedily to their families alive and unharmed. אמן

Are we in your will? Shouldn't we be?

When people prepare their wills, they usually look to leave a mark beyond the confines of their families. Thus it is that general gifts are left to hospitals, and other charitable organizations. All too often ignored, however, is the synagogue, even though its role in our lives often begins at birth, and continues even beyond death. We come here on Yom Kippur and other days, after all, to say Yizkor, the prayer in memory of our loved ones. Our Virtual Memorial Plaques remind everyone of who our loved ones were, and why we recall them. All of us join in saying the Kaddish on their yahrzeits.

Considering this, it is so unfortunate that, in our final act, we ignore the one institution in Jewish life that is so much a part of us. The synagogue is here for us because those who came before us understood its importance and prepared for its preservation. By remembering it in our wills, we will do our part to assure that the synagogue will be there for future generations, as well.

Think about it. We have always been here for anyone who needed us in the past. Do not those who need us in the future have the same right to our help? Of course they do. Do not delay! Act today! Help secure the future of your communal home.

YAHRZEITS FOR TODAY THROUGH NEXT FRIDAY

זכרונום לברכה — *May their memories be for a blessing!*

- | | | | |
|---|---|----|---|
| 6 | Freda Helsel*
Dora Levine
Morris Cohen*
Morris Greenberg*
Irving Tobey*
Samuel D. Eisen*
Morris Breakstone* | 9 | Harabbanit Esther Saltzman, <i>Rabbi Engelmayer's aunt</i> |
| 7 | Louis Faren*
Milton J. Stark*
Sen. Arlen Specter, <i>uncle of Judith Barzilay</i>
Isador Reiser* | 10 | Carol Golub Fabrikant*, <i>Judy Golub's daughter</i>
Isabelle Singer*
William Gruen*
Lester Feldman*
Sarah Libas*
Alex Stux*, <i>Michelle Stux Rodriquez's father</i>
Ira Kuntz, <i>Melissa Bellehsen's father</i>
Harry Lefkowitz, <i>Stephen Lefkowitz's father</i> |
| 8 | Leon Levy, <i>husband of Mira Levy</i>
Samuel Barsano, <i>father of Rebecca Kaplan</i>
Louis J. Megibow*
Bernard Liberman* | 11 | Rose Feldman Puteska*
David Lesser, <i>Gloria Weisinger's brother</i>
Blanche Zucker
Rose Klapp*
George Roth*
David Auslander, <i>Bernice Rock's father</i>
Dora Drutman, <i>Marion Drutman's mother</i>
Irving Lynn, <i>Roseline Lynn's husband</i>
Wilbur A. Kramer |
| 9 | Marion Wingers*
Bella Goldfischer, <i>mother of Dr. Jerome Goldfischer;</i>
<i>grandmother of Dr. Mindy Goldfischer</i> | | |

* A plaque in this person's name is on our memorial board; yahrzeits are observed beginning sundown the night before.

Congregation Beth Israel of the Palisades
mourns the passing of its dear friend and member,
STEVE SAKIN, ז"ל,
may his memory be for a blessing,
and may wife Barbara, daughter Shari and their family
be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

Is there a yahrzeit we should know about?

Kaddish list

Julius Birnbaum	Arline Levine
Robert Cohen	Qingshui Ma
Gertrude Favia	Marcia Weis Meyers
Larry Frank	enore Levine Sachs
Tamara Galperin	Marvin Sakin
Evyatar Shabbetai Gidasey	Steven Sakin
Raul Green	Evan Schimpf
Susan Jane Greenberg	Bila Silberman
DeMing Huang	Leah Solomon
Lisa Beth Hughes	Abe Tauber
Karol Lang	Regina Tauber



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to
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on
SYLVIA ZELTZER
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BAT MITZVAH

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Shabbat ends tonight with havdalah at 7:15 p.m. DST