

The Beth Jacob Beat

The beat goes on...

There's no need to take this home on Shabbos... these announcements can be found on our website at www.BethJacobOakland.org.

ה"ב

Parshat Lech Lecha

8 Cheshvan, 5775, November 1, 2014

MAZEL TOVS

- **Birthdays:** Jacob Rubenstein (15), Neva Rubenstein (15), Ludmila Feigelson, Zoe Minkoff (3), Gabriel Yanowitz (23), John Sutton, Nancy Waldman
- **Anniversaries:** Leora Hahn-Randell and Jason Randell, Julie and Roni Ovadia, Meg Goldman and Alan Titus

KIDDUSH

- Kiddush this week is sponsored by Rabbi Howard & Debby Jacoby Ruben in appreciation for the warmth of the CBJ community welcoming us and our many house-guests these last few months and in celebration of the engagement of Howard's son, Daniel, and the 58th wedding anniversary (wow!) of Debby's parents Mark & Arlene Jacoby visiting from Beit Shemesh.
- **BJC Kiddush Crew** – The kiddush crew very much needs volunteers to prepare kiddushes each week. Please consider volunteering! To learn more or to volunteer, please email bjckiddushcrew@gmail.com.

MINYAN TIMES

Shacharit: Sun: 8:00 AM; Mon-Fri: 6:45 AM

Maariv: Mon-Thurs: 6:45 PM

PARSHAT LECH LECHA OCTOBER 31 – NOVEMBER 1	
Candle Lighting Friday, November 1	6:01 PM
Friday Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat/Maariv	5:50 PM
Shabbat morning services	9:00 AM
Latest Time to Say Shema	10:13 AM
Shabbat Mincha	1:20 PM*
Shabbat Ends	6:53 PM
Maariv (Motzei Shabbat)	7:05 PM

*NO 3RD MEAL THIS WEEK

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Cholim List:** We are restarting our cholim list. Please send all names you would like listed, regardless of whether they have been included previously, to office@bethjacoboakland.org. Please include both English and Hebrew names. All names

(including those shared with the gabbaim) must be sent to the office.

EVENTS & CLASSES

- Please watch out for our annual program guide, This Year at Beth Jacob Congregation, coming to your inbox soon!
- **Shabbat University, the Pursuit of Higher Education:** Every other week. Join our rabbis at "Shabbat University" after Kiddush for classes covering a diverse array of subjects catering to different levels of Jewish Studies backgrounds. Next class: Nov 1 at approximately 12:20 PM in the main Sanctuary, taught by Rabbi Albert (Topic: Dealing With Shemitha In Modern Day Israel) and Rabbi Fox (Topic: Moving From Bleachers to Box Seats- Is it Allowed?).
- **Sunday Morning Breakfasts and Tefilah Talks:** Learn together on Sunday mornings after Shacharit. Once a month, a more formal Tefilah Talk will take place. Please note: there will not be food at this week's (Nov 2) Tefilah Talk.
- **Shulchan Ivrit- The Hebrew Table:** Interested in improving your Hebrew? Come join the Shulchan Ivrit, a relaxed, informal Hebrew table! Gidon Bar Chama, our local Shaliach from Israel, and resident Hebrew expert, will lead conversations on any topics of interest. Learn to speak and understand Hebrew – by speaking it! Open to all beginner and intermediate level Hebrew speakers. **First Mondays of the month, beginning this week, November 3rd.**
- **Meditation Group:** Join a group of Jewish meditators at an ongoing Monday evening meditation session at 7:15 PM in the small sanctuary. Anyone welcome to join (no RSVP required). For information contact Marc Schweitzer at marcschweitzer@comcast.net.
- **Explorations in Jewish Thought:** Tuesday is "Philosophy Night" at Beth Jacob. Join Rabbi Gershon Albert and a room full of enthusiastic fellow students to explore a wide-ranging look at Judaism.
-This year we will focus on the **role of prophecy in Judaism**, as well as the transition to the post-prophetic world and to the world of the Talmud. Questions that will be discussed:
-Who were the prophets? Who can become a prophet?
-How did prophets relate to Hashem? What is the nature of prophecy?

-Why did prophecy end? And what was the impact of its demise in Jewish life?

-What is the role of Torah study, and how did it replace the traditional role of prophecy in Judaism? Take the full course, or feel free to attend the sessions that interest you, and don't forget to bring a friend! Classes will be self-contained but work towards developing a year-long theme.

Tuesdays at 7:15PM, beginning this week, November 4th. (Please note: there will be no class on November 11th).

- **The Book of Joshua:** Let's travel together back to the 13th century BCE to experience and understand these watershed years in Jewish history. Was Joshua successful in taking over as leader after the passing of Moses? How did the Jews conquer Israel? Did they really send spies *again*? How was the land divided up among the people? Why were there so many wars? Come ready to explore and learn with Rabbi Fox about this fascinating book, the first in the Books of Prophets. Open to all ages and backgrounds.

Wednesdays at 12 noon and 7:15PM, beginning this week, November 5th.

- **Lunchtime Talmud:** Join us to study the 9th chapter of Bava Metzia every Thursday at 12 PM at the home of Deborah and Michael Sosebee: 701 Trestle Glen Rd. (corner Brookwood).
- **Spiritual Growth through the study of Mussar:** R. Moshe Chaim Luzzato was one of the greatest Jewish thinkers, writers, and scholars in recent history. We will spend twenty minutes a week studying his classic work of mussar (Jewish ethics), Mesilat Yesharim, The Path of the Just, led by Rabbi Fox. It's a fascinating book intended to inspire self-introspection and spiritual growth. The Vilna Gaon said that had he lived during the time of R. Luzzato, he would have walked by foot from Lithuania to Italy to meet him. The least we can do is drive to Beth Jacob to learn from his book! Even if you can't come every week, feel free to join any class, right after evening services.
Thursdays from 7:10 – 7:30PM, beginning next week, November 13th.

BJC YOUTH (TOTS – 12TH GRADE)

- **Shabbat Groups:** 10 AM - All ages meet in the downstairs Social Hall. 10:30 AM - Tot Shabbat in

the first Gan classroom on the right, Kindergarten through 2nd grade in the second Gan classroom on the right, 3rd through 5th grade girls in the first Gan classroom on the left, and 3rd through 5th grade boys in the downstairs Social Hall. Parents, please pick up your children at the end of services (before Kiddush). The Gan will be locked at the completion of groups.

- **Foosball and Learning- Parent/Child Fun:** Grab a parent and bring him/her to a short class about the mitzvah of Kibbud Av va'Em, honoring one's parents. Then team up with your parent/s and compete to be the best parent-child team that Foosball has ever seen! **For all 3rd-6th graders. Saturday night, November 15th, 6-8PM at BJC.**
- **NCSY:** Join us for the following events:
9th-12th grade:
 - ~ Nov 2nd – Summer Program Fair at 5:45 PM @ BJC
 - ~ Nov 8th- Save the Date for our BJC Shabbaton! With guest speaker Rabbi Lashak, Fear Factor, Ropes Course, and more!

6th-8th grade:

- ~ November 15th: Save the Date for our BJC Shabbaton! Including the visiting Las Vegas NCSY middle school chapter and Saturday night BUBBLE SPORTS!

COMMUNITY MESSAGE BOARD

- **Friday Night Open Table:** Anyone and everyone is invited to a Shabbat Open Table – Hosted by Ken Maki and Kathy Hollander. Open Table is on hiatus and will return in November. All dinners are meat with a veggie option. RSVP to Ken Maki at ken@kenmaki.com. 1963 E. 38th St, Oakland.
- **JCHS Fireside Chats for East Bay Families:** The Moskowitz Family will host an informal and intimate Fireside Chat in Oakland. Join current JCHS students and parents, as well as Head of School Rabbi Howard Ruben, and Director of Admissions Ida Gruber to learn firsthand about JCHS. Parents, 7th and 8th grade students are welcome. Tuesday, November 11th at 7:00 PM (8 Tiffany Lane, Oakland). Please RSVP to Rachel Levy at rlevy@jchsofthebay.org or (415) 694-5771.

8 Cheshvan 5775 / November 1, 2014

By: Michal Kohane

Lech Lecha

עשרה נסיונות נתנסה אברהם אבינו עליו השלום ועמד בכולם להודיע כמה חיבתו של אברהם אבינו עליו השלום

“With ten tests our father Abraham was tested” - The rabbis in Pirkei Avot (5:3) tell that – “and he withstood them all--in order to make known how great was our father Abraham's love [for G-d]”.

The “tests” aim to answer some questions (why did G-d choose Abraham; why does it say that “G-d tested Abraham” (Genesis 22:1)) and leave many more unanswered (there is no agreement on what exactly are the ten tests; we struggle to explain why would G-d “test” anyone, let alone Abraham), but they do all agree that the last one was the akeida. After the akeida G-d doesn't speak to Abraham again. Some say that this is because Abraham failed, and G-d doesn't want anything to do with those who are willing to sacrifice their children; and others say that Abraham passed all the tests with flying colors, and therefore, G-d didn't need to give him anymore instructions.

I would like to offer a third option.

We're used to thinking that the first time we hear about Abraham's life is in the opening verses of this week's Torah portion, Lech Lecha, but that is not so. Abraham is introduced at the end of last week's parasha, Noah (Genesis 11:26-32). There is no “Action” and not much is told except for who are the main relatives in his family (all information we will soon need) so we tend to ignore it, but one detail should especially stand out: his marriage to Sarah. Indeed, the last time G-d speaks to Abraham is at the akeida, which coincides with Sarah's death.

Thus, G-d never speaks to Abraham without Sarah.

In my metaphor, Abraham and Sarah can be likened to a radio and antenna. He might be the one doing all the talking, but without the antenna, there is no reception at all. Alternatively, he might be like paint and she - like the canvas. He can be colorful and active, but without a good surface, he won't be able to truly express who he is.

In the beginning of Lech Lecha, the Torah tells us: “And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, *and the souls that they had gotten in Haran*; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came”. Rashi explains that the “soul they made (or - had gotten)” are people they converted: Abraham teaching the men, and Sarah - teaching the women”.

Abraham and Sarah provide a unique model. To each other, they are family relatives, husband and wife, and parents. But as we know, those are challenged again and again. Ultimately, Abraham will have another wife and more children. But what makes them so successful is their joint spiritual, life-long mission and their complementary work towards it. That is what gives it so much of its power and drive, which is expressed in G-d speaking with them, starting with lech lecha. Shabbat Shalom.

Michal's blog can be found at www.miko284.com