

Congregation Beth Mordecai

224 High Street, Perth Amboy NJ 08861

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Rabbi - 732-442-2431

OfficeBethMordecai@gmail.com

June 2014

SERVICES

Please see
page 5 for
events and
service times

Officers of Beth Mordecai

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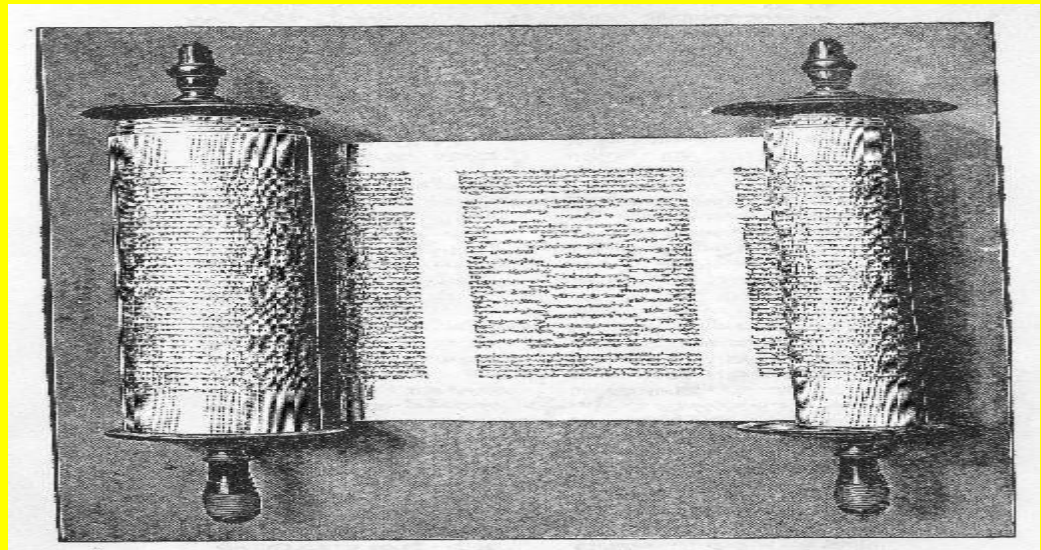
**Like Us
On
Facebook**

**A synagogue has to give you
something that you feel in your
heart, that you take with you in
your life.**

**Not all can do that. They have
to touch you emotionally.**

**We humbly ask that you invite
YOUR friends and family to visit
and join with us.**

**Beth Mordecai is a...
“Jewish Home for the Soul.”**





Our Unique Godly and Human Torah

This is the written text of Rabbi Saks' sermon delivered during the Cantor Showcase (May 30th, 2014) as part of the Shabbat of Unique Torah. It is shared here in the hopes that its message of discovering, sharing, and engaging in our Unique Torah will be a foundation upon which the values of the community are built...

Some of you may remember a story my father told during my installation on this same *bimah* over a year and a half ago. I was a little boy in Benton Harbor and my father and I had just come back from shul on *Simhat Torah*. As we approached home I started making a frantic pointing motion in a not-so-specific direction (with the requisite grunting of a child). So my father, in attempting to respond my neediness, took me on a walk trying to follow my random pointing. Eventually we ended up back at shul where my pointing got even more excited. So we went inside, walked up to the *bimah*, took out the Torah, and after my incessant nagging, my father danced with the Torah and myself for a few more hours. After that moment it was clear to my father that I loved Torah and he might have a future rabbi on his hands.

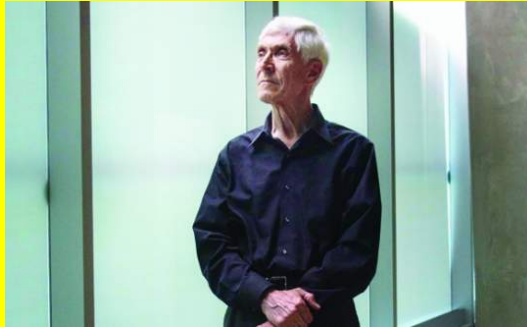
Such is the legend in my family, yet I have no recollection of that moment which means it could very well be factually inaccurate. Still, it's there. Yet, if I were to truly choose a moment for the beginning of my love affair with Torah, it would be a few years later when I was a nine year old boy in second grade, but this time I actually remember the story. The story also took place in shul, though this time the shul was outside of Philadelphia in Bensalem, PA. Every Shabbat I would go to junior congregation and towards the end of the service, our local do-it-all-lay-rabbi-cantor-torah reader Izzy would come into our little shul-for-tots to take a few of us to "Torah Club" so that we could learn how to read Torah from the *bimah*. These many years later I still remember the drills – reciting the trope over and over again until we had it memorized, working with flash-cards to sing the trope on sight – leading to eventually (nearly six months later, to be more precise) having the opportunity to get up on the *bimah* during an adult service and read the third aliyah of the weekday cycle for Parashat Sh'mini in the book of Vayikra (Leviticus). Each time since I've had a chance to read those three verses, a smile creeps across my face as I remember just how much I loved reading them the first time. Man, it was awesome to be able to read Torah! I wanted to do it again and again. So I did, reading parts here and there at shul, at school, and at camp until my bar mitzvah when I finally had the freedom to read in different synagogues in my area. Eventually it got to the point where I was reading the entire Torah portion twice each week for a shul in New York towards the end of my undergraduate studies. While of course there were those moments when it was taxing to read so much Torah, most of the time it just felt...well, awesome.

But what was so awesome about it? What is it about the act of reading from a physical scroll – that has been crafted with parchment and ink in the same manner for generations – that makes it so awesome? What is it about figuring out how to put together Hebrew letters and words – without

(Continued on page 14)

Hidden in Plain Sight

Please click on the link below to read the article



http://www.jewishjournal.com/yom_hashoah/article/hidden_in_plain_sight

Beth Mordecai is pleased to announce that we have a new “Caring Committee” that will do outreach to those who cannot get out, are ill at home, or in the hospital and would like some help, or an ear to speak to.

Please call the committee chairperson if you would like to contact us. See page 7 for mission statement. Sherry Weber at 908-756-7854.

Solved! How ancient Egyptians moved massive pyramid stones.



Please click on the link below to read the article

<http://www.livescience.com/45285-how-egyptians-moved-pyramid-stones.html>

SHEVCHENKO MONUMENTS

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NJ Lic No. 4105

23 Ford Ave. Edison-Fords
420-424 East Ave. Perth Amboy
Brendan J. Flynn Mgr.
NJ Lic. No 2958
James J. Flynn Mgr NJ Lic No 4152

**Please be sure to tell us
of any news
you might
want to
share with
us.
We are all
ears.**



Happy Birthday

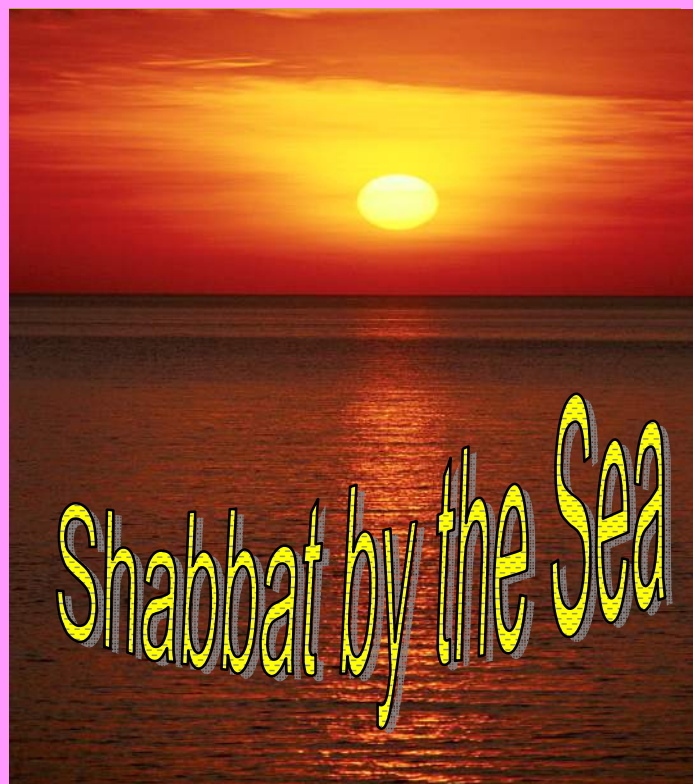
June



Larry Deutchman
Alyson Roy
Sandra Sher
Avi Duvdevani
Norma Witkin

Anniversaries

Benjamin & Barbara Block
Steven & Marilyn Davidoff
Felice & Larry Gruber
Sandy & Paulette Katz
Bob & Anita Krentar
Scott & Kari Gursky



Shabbat by the Sea

Friday June 13th 6:30pm
Mark your calendar to join us.

We meet at the synagogue and walk two short blocks to the park overlooking Raritan Bay.

Enjoy the sweetness of Shabbat in the open air as the sun sets & the cool breeze sails in.

Please RSVP for dinner afterwards, \$18 per person.

Services and Events

June

June 4th – 10 am – Shavout Yizkor services

June 6th – 6:30 pm Family Shabbat

June 13th – 6:30 pm Shabbat by the Sea



What's on our Facebook page?

(www.facebook.com/CongregationBethMordecai)

KIDZ KORNER

(Sundays, Tuesdays, & Thursdays @ 2 pm)

JEWISH CURRENT

EVENTS UPDATE (Mondays & Wednesdays @ 2 pm)

BLAST FROM THE PAST

(Wednesdays and Thursdays @ 5 pm)

RABBI'S JOURNAL (Daily)

ONLINE PARASHAH

CLASS (Fridays @ 12:30 pm)

PLUS Israeli news, interesting articles, fun videos, communal conversations, advertisements and much, much more!

Our Facebook page: Your daily source to connect with your Jewish Home for the Soul!

Beth Mordecai—"A Jewish Home for the Soul"

Here are some opportunities to donate to Beth Mordecai:

Rabbi Discretionary Fund
Programming Fund
Temple Fund
Sisterhood Tribute Fund
Sponsor Shabbat evening Oneg 50.00
Sponsor Shabbat morning Kiddush 100.00
Memorial Tablet 300.00
Memorial Plaque 1200.00

Please use form to mail a donation.

Send to:

Address:

In Honor Of/In Memory Of/Other

Name & address of contributor:

Amount of Gift:

\$ _____

Please indicate to which fund you are donating:

☐ **Friday night Oneg \$50**
☐ **Shabbat morning Kiddush \$100**
☐ **Programming Fund**
☐ **Rabbi's Discretionary Fund**
☐ **Sisterhood Tribute Fund**
☐ **Temple Fund**
☐ **Memorial Tablet \$300**
☐ **Memorial Plaque \$1200**

Please send this form with a check to:
Congregation Beth Mordecai
224 High Street
Perth Amboy, NJ 08861

To donate on line with Paypal, click below.

<http://bethmordecai.org/donate/>

Friday Candle Lighting Times – June

June 7 9:37 pm

June 14 9:41 pm

June 21 9:43 pm

June 28 9:43 pm



Perth Amboy
Time

For your zip code times please click link below.

Hebcal.com

[http://www.hebcal.com/hebcal/?](http://www.hebcal.com/hebcal/?v=1&geo=zip&zip=08861&m=72&vis=on&month=6)

[v=1&geo=zip&zip=08861&m=72&vis=on&month=6](http://www.hebcal.com/hebcal/?v=1&geo=zip&zip=08861&m=72&vis=on&month=6&year=2014&nh=on&nx=on&s=on&c=on&mf=on&ss=on)
[&year=2014&nh=on&nx=on&s=on&c=on&mf=on](http://www.hebcal.com/hebcal/?v=1&geo=zip&zip=08861&m=72&vis=on&month=6&year=2014&nh=on&nx=on&s=on&c=on&mf=on&ss=on)
[&ss=on](http://www.hebcal.com/hebcal/?v=1&geo=zip&zip=08861&m=72&vis=on&month=6&year=2014&nh=on&nx=on&s=on&c=on&mf=on&ss=on)

If there is some Nuus that you would like us to know about please send an email to the office.

We want to hear from you.

OfficeBethMordecai@gmail.com

Caring Committee Mission Statement

The purpose of Beth Mordecai's Caring Committee is to reach out to members of our community in times of need. We believe that this is what it means to be part of a caring Jewish congregation and community. We want to offer friendship, comfort and companionship especially at times when it is most needed. We want people to know we are a family in our Jewish Home for the Soul.

Ways in which we can help:



We will do our best to provide rides to the synagogue when needed.

We will help to organize a minyan when a family is sitting shiva.

We will pick up a few items at the grocery store, or pick up a prescription for people who are homebound.

We will make phone calls to people we are unable to visit.

We will try to arrange visits to people who are hospitalized, in a nursing home or a rehab facility especially during Jewish holidays.

We will try and make brief visits to people who are homebound so we can chat and possibly share a cup of tea or coffee. We are not professional healthcare aids or medical professionals and as such cannot provide care in a professional manner, but we do want to offer our friendship and compassion when it is most needed.

How you can help us accomplish our mission:

We welcome any members of our congregation who feel that they would like to join us and help us to reach out to others in our community when needed. Please don't hesitate to call us if you think we can be of assistance.

Contact: Sherry Weber 908-451-9708

Rabbi Ari Saks: 732-442-2431 ari.saks@gmail.com

Volunteers Needed

Catholic Charities Diocese of Metuchen Connections Program is looking for volunteers, both men and women, to participate in one-to-one activities and become a mentor to the youth of Middlesex County and Franklin Township.

Do you:

1— Have 3 hours a week to offer a child?

2— Like having fun?

3— Want to make a difference in a child's life?

4—Enjoy being appositve role model?

Then please call Jeanette Cullen at 732-738-1323 for more information.

**Mazel Tov to Ronna &
Richard Silberberg on
the birth of their
grandson,
Zackery Price, on
March 7th.**



Challah French Toast



Challah has such a unique crumb. The air bubbles it contains are smaller than your average loaf of bread, but it is still so light! It is a delicious treat with a hint of sweetness to its flavor – almost like it's asking to be used to soak something up. An egg custard mixture, perhaps.

[http://www.kitchendaily.com/recipe/challah-french-toast?
ts=1398568814&ncid=txtlnkusfood00000070](http://www.kitchendaily.com/recipe/challah-french-toast?ts=1398568814&ncid=txtlnkusfood00000070)

In Memory Of
 Margaret Saverslak
 Lottie Severslak
 Joseph Jacob Dienstein
 Ada Aneckstein
 Israel Shangold
 Ethel Aneckstein
 Malvina Silberstein
 Kalman August
 William & Jeanette Bergner
 Dora Welks
 Sadie Cutler
 Ida Denes
 Max Eichen
 Fred Spector
 The Fass Family
 Janet Klein
 Alexander Fenyves
 Herbert Gordon
 Barbara Goldman Schneiderman
 Herman Krauser
 Frank Isaacson
 Max Gampel
 Boris Karlin
 Bertha Pliskin
 Steven Joel Kravet
 Joyce Yaffe
 Louis & Lena Ginsberg
 Eugene Blau
 Kate Lipman
 Dora Pasternak
 Alexander Cohen
 Dr. William Wedeen
 Minnie Miller
 Sarah Lewkowitz
 Ronie Polnerow Hirschorn
 Belle & Samuel Lonky
 David Robinson
 Philip Rosengarten
 Harry Rubenstein
 Pinchus (Abraham) Schwartz
 Miriam Cohen
 Philip Cohen
 Betty Cohen
 Oscar Sher
 Lillian Shevell
 Max Spivak
 Solomon Baron
 Ada Baron
 Fay Gast
 Seymour Gast
 Morris Gussaroff
 Minnie Weiss
 Lillian Stein Gutman
 Ruth Wurtzel
 Mary Wagner
 Davis Klein
 Joseph Uram
 Harry Zimmerman



By
 Adams, Hannah Rose
 Adams, Hannah Rose
 Adams, Hannah Rose
 Aneckstein, Arthur
 Aneckstein, Arthur
 Aneckstein, Arthur
 August, Dorothy & Cheryl
 August, Dorothy & Cheryl
 Bergner, Sam E. & Lynn
 Brown, Sheila & George
 Cutler, Martin & Paula
 Denes, Michael
 Eichen, Phil
 Eisner, Jerome & Barbara
 Fass, Dora
 Gilbert, Judy
 Goldstein, Irene & Marty
 Gordon, Beatrice & Eric
 Hannotch, Franklin & Anita
 Isaacs, Charles & Krauser Isaacs, Paula
 Isaacson, Muriel
 Jaffe, Penny
 Karlin, Sergey & Leah
 Kopald, Susan
 Kravet, Dr. Alvin & Ginette
 Lemelson, Dorothy
 Lemelson, Dorothy
 Levinson, Shirley
 Lipman, Janet
 Mattes, Alvin & Lillian
 Meyer, Susan Cohen
 Miller, Seymour & Arlene
 Monsky, William & Roslyn
 Pivnick, Bobby
 Polnerow -, Ronnie Hirschorn
 Preminger*, Ann
 Robinson, Fredda
 Rosengarten, Barry & Rosengarten, Nicole
 Rubenstein, Dr. Carl & Debbie
 Scher, Donna Cohen
 Scher, Donna Cohen
 Sher, Louis & Sandra
 Sher, Louis & Sandra
 Sher, Louis & Sandra
 Shevell, Mike
 Solkowitz, Jordan & Dorothy
 Spitzer, Jeanne
 Spitzer, Jeanne
 Walker, Judith & Stanley
 Walker, Judith & Stanley
 Weingarten, Allen & Libby
 Weiss, Paul A.
 Witkin, Nate & Norma
 Wurtzel, Les & Judy
 Wurtzel, Les & Judy
 Wurtzel, Les & Judy
 Zalma, Rabbi Melinda & Zalma, Adam
 Zimmerman, Nate

Beth Mordecai Says “Hola, Argentina”

Experience the culture in the largest Spanish Jewish area



Tour the oldest and largest temple in Buenos Aires

Feel the thunder of Iguazu Falls



Watch and learn the Argentine tango



Explore the exciting
of Buenos Aires

cosmopolitan city

Many more sites and activities to be determined

Trip planned for early November 2015 (Argentine springtime)
for 9 - 10 nights

Approximate cost - \$4000 - \$4500 per person

Includes flights, hotels, touring, breakfasts, etc.

Exact itinerary and cost will be available by January 2015

A minimum of 15 people is required

If you are intersted:

Please email Anita Krentar --- neatsea.ak@gmail.com

or

call Felice Gruber --- (908)-753-5259

by June 1, 2014.

Where's the Rabbi?

Ask the Rabbi

On Thursdays, Rabbi Saks, at 12:10 pm is in the food court at Menlo Park Mall in Edison. He will answer any and all questions from everyone.

Learning with the Rabbi

Every Thursday, Rabbi Saks, at 9:00 am will be in the Woodbridge Panera across from WEGMANS.



General Donations

General Donations

General Donations

General Donations

Rabbi Discretion Fund

In Honor Of Louise & Sherry for another great Temple trip.

General Donation

General Donation

IHO birth of grandson

IMO Ed Sandler

August*, Cheryl

Bernstein*, Susan

Silberberg*, Rona & Richard

Fertik*, Marc & Betty

Siegel*, Alan & Louise



***Congregation Beth Mordecai Cemetery
has plots available.***

***Please contact the office if you are
interested in a purchase or would like to
donate back a plot for a possible tax
deduction.***

“Final Salute” Honors Holocaust Survivor, Veteran



Click on link below

<http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/13973/final-salute-honors-holocaust-survivor-veteran/>

(Continued from page 2)

any vowels or annotations – that makes it seem so holy? What is it about Torah that makes it so unique? This upcoming week we celebrate the holiday of Shavuot, the culmination of the 49 day Omer – a period of introspection and spiritual refinement – which prepares us to crown the freedom we achieved at Passover with the acceptance of Torah from God. In other words, Shavuot is the moment that according to tradition God reveals God's Torah to us and we accept Torah into our lives. Perhaps then it is the divine character of Torah that makes reading from it so unique. As Norman Lamm, a former President of Yeshiva University, the body that ordains Modern Orthodox rabbis, once said: Torah is not only "*min-hashamayim*" (from heaven) but also "*she-hi shamayim* (it is heaven). There are many rabbinic statements that also testify to how Torah is part of heaven. One of my favorites is a beautiful midrash on the first word of the Torah – "*b'reishit*." The midrash says "don't read ***B'reishit*** *Bara Elokim*, which means "at the beginning God created;" rather read ***b'REISHIT*** *Bara Elokim*," which means "that which existed before Creation did God use to create." And what existed before creation? Wisdom, in the form of Torah. In other words, when we read from the Torah we are experiencing a moment in which heaven is brought to earth.

But how is this possible? How can heaven or God or anything in the divine realm be brought down to earth? The fact that Torah is written in human language, in discreet words and letters that we human beings can read and understand, testifies that at some point Torah is no longer just divine, it is also human. And to some theologians, like Dr. Rabbi Neil Gillman (a professor of theology at my alma mater, The Jewish Theological Seminary) the fact that the Torah is written in discrete words and letters means that it is a human document, a snapshot of the human condition in trying to understand God and the divine realm.

So is the Torah godly or human? Is it revealed by God at Sinai, as we will celebrate this week, or is it created by humankind? I believe the answer, as you may suspect, is both...and that's what makes Torah so unique. That's what makes Torah so special to read from the bimah, that it is both a human experience and a divine one. To explain why I think it's both, I want to turn your attention away from the Written Torah that is read from the bimah, to the Oral Torah, the compilation of conversations and debates that Rabbis and their fellow Jews have had throughout the centuries on issues as *hol*,

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(“mundane”) as how to get dressed in the morning, and as *kodesh* (“holy”) as how to appear before the throne of God. These are conversations that happened in specific contexts, whether it was in Babylonia, Israel, or elsewhere, in which Jews were dealing with and talking about life, much like we do today. What’s more, the fact that the Oral Torah retains many unanswered questions, and debates of lively unresolved conversations, indicates just how human of a document it is. It is filled with gaps of understanding that are uniquely human. Yet, despite its human character, *Rabeinu Yonah* (13th Century, Spain) among other rabbis teaches us that when *Pirkei Avot* (“Ethics of Our Ancestors”) begins by stating that “Moses received the Torah from Sinai,” it is teaching us that Moses received from God “*bein Torah shebikhtav, bein Torah sheba-al peh*” – both the Written Torah and the Oral Torah. In other words, the written Torah, the one that fills me with awe as I read from it, the one we kiss when parade it around the sanctuary, is not holier than the Oral Torah that is debated, discussed, and argued wherever two Jews meet. Torah then, by its very nature, is both human and godly. There is no separation between the two. And as such, perhaps we are supposed to learn by this nexus between the human and godly realms that human life – all of the details of how we live and experience our lives as human beings – has the possibility of becoming godly when we attach our life stories to the Ultimate Story, the story of God.

This is the nexus between the Torah of our lives – the Oral Torah of how we live life – and the Torah of our tradition – the written Torah that teaches the unbreakable tradition which began the moment God revealed God’s self to the Israelites in the desert. This is the nexus that comprises our Unique Torah. We discover our Unique Torah the moment we realize that all of Torah – written, oral, or otherwise – are connected, are both human and divine. It is the moment when look at an event or experience of our lives and see in those moments a sign of God and eternity. When we meet a stranger who helps us in a great moment of need and we see in that stranger the presence of an angel, that is a moment of experiencing our Unique Torah. When we meet fellow Jews in an unfamiliar synagogue for holiday services while we’re serving in the armed forces in Europe and we see in that meeting the brotherhood of Judaism, that is a moment of experiencing our Unique Torah. When we hear a familiar tune in services and we remember in that instant

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how a teacher, or a parent passed down that tune to us, that is a moment of experiencing our Unique Torah. All of us have many experiences that have the possibility of becoming exalted, and our responsibility as a community is to help make those experiences godly, to turn our Unique life stories, into our Unique Torah.

The story I shared with you earlier tonight about the moment I decided to become a rabbi – about how, for the briefest of moments, I felt a divine presence – that story could not have happened without the many prior moments in which Judaism came alive for me, moments like the ones I mentioned, whether mythic or real, that filled my life with a love of Torah. And there are many other experiences, many of which not inherently connected to Judaism – my love of sports, interest in politics, and history – that I have tried to make a part of my Unique Torah and that I try to share through my teaching and my activism in the community. A little later the Cantor will share with you a particular story on some of the music of his Unique Torah, and then make that story come to life in a creative way in our service. Many of you here have shared some stories of your Unique Torah, and I hope a little later we will be able to hear some more of them. But we must also find ways to make those stories come to life, in our activism, our engagement, our creativity, both in and out of the synagogue. And so on this Shabbat before the celebration of the gift of revelation, when God gave us the ability to connect our Torah with God's Torah, let us work to make our collective Unique Torah come alive for all to share in its human and divine glory.