

The Parasha Project
Introduction by Rav Steven Exler
The Bayit

Dear Bayit family and Torah lovers around the world,

The weekly reading of the Torah on Shabbat morning is the heartbeat of the Jewish week, the moment when we recreate the Mt. Sinai experience inside our Jewish communities and strive to hear God's voice reaching us across time and space from its first collective call 3300 years ago. That less-than-an-hour experience is meant to be the capstone of our week which has passed, and to stay with us as fuel, as spiritual nourishment for the week ahead.

The success of that experience depends not just on the words of Torah themselves and the community in which they are shared, but on the quality, voice and character of the ba'al keriah, the Torah reader who follows in the footsteps of Moshe Rabenu, and of God, relaying the Godly message to us. The ba'al keriah's voice transports us into the stories of Bereishit, takes us out of Egypt and through the Yam Suf and exalts in our salvation, mourns the tragic losses of our leaders, and weaves around us the tapestry of the hundreds of laws, ritual and ethical, that shape who we are to be.

In our Bayit, we are blessed beyond words that for the last 30 years, we have heard the words of the Torah from the mouth – and the heart – of our Ba'al Keriah Bernie Horowitz. Bernie's Torah reading is exactly what Torah reading is meant to be – emotive, precise, musical, engaging, educational and inspiring. It is recognized, loved and sought by people all around the world

And Bernie not only amplifies the Torah, he lives the Torah. His love of learning, commitment to our Bayit and to his family, his gentle kindness and spirit of inclusivity, and his deep moral compass guide us in the path of the Torah. His sharing of his passion for Torah reading with generations of students, boys and girls, with his careful personal attention and commitment to teaching them the skill of Torah reading, and not just their Bar/Bat Mitzvah parasha, is a gift that keeps giving. In essence, Bernie is a model ba'al keriah.

In his humble way, Bernie was reticent to make this a public project. But we urged him, because the generations to come of our Bayit, and in fact students of Torah around the world, deserve to hear the word of God through Bernie's voice.

With deep thanks to Bernie for his decades of Torah reading and broader service to the Bayit – may they continue for many years in good health! – and specifically for making these recordings; with profound appreciation to Barry Kanner who dreamed of and persisted in and poured tens of hours into making this project a reality; and with boundless gratitude to Avi Bloom and Richard Langer for their devoted partnership and technical expertise in making this repository of Torah reading accessible, user-friendly, and beautiful:

The Bayit is delighted to announce the launch of The Parasha Project, an online repository of audio recordings of the entire Torah, arranged by parasha and aliyah, featuring our exceptional Ba'al Keriah Bernie Horowitz! Go listen and learn at thebayit.org/parasha! Honor and celebrate Bernie and this gift by dedicating any parasha (or more than one; each parasha may have multiple dedications) for your loved ones.

B'virkot hatorah uv'avahavah,
With blessings of Torah and with love,

Rav Steven