



Bethesda Jewish Congregation News

Rabbi Elhanan 'Sunny' Schnitzer

August 2010

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Kiriat HaRav—The Call of the Rabbi

Rabbi Elhanan 'Sunny' Schnitzer

Jewish religious life is regulated by two cycles, the cycle of the sacred year, and our life span.

Most Jews want to celebrate the life cycle. We want a rabbi for a wedding, a mohel for bris, a synagogue for B'nai Mitzvah. Almost everyone wants a rabbi for a funeral.

But the cycle of the sacred year has lost its hold on modern Jews. Go to almost any synagogue for Sukkot, Pesach, or Shavuot, and the numbers are few. On Shabbat is a struggle to get even 10% of our population into the pews.

The exception to the rule is the Yamim Noraim, the Days of Awe.

What is the secret of these days that brings Jews back like salmon swimming upstream?

I believe that these days are an affirmation of life. We gather to say I am grateful that I am alive and that there are still Jews in the world. The Yamim Noraim are a confrontation with the deepest self and with The Holy One of Blessing.

In August we begin the month of Elul. The word Elul can be read as an acrostic; Ani L'dodi V'dodi Li—I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine. God and the soul return like lovers after a separation.

Once I heard a teaching that Moses spent forty days on top of Mt. Sinai receiving the second set of Tablets of the Covenant. These 40 days were the month of Elul and the Yamim Noraim.

The first set of tablets were given on Shavuot. Forty days later, when Moses doesn't come down the mountain on time, the B'nai Yisrael committed the sin of the Golden Calf. On 1st of Elul, Moses goes back up the mountain. There is a debate over whether or not

Israel is worthy, whether or not their egregious sin will be forgiven. Finally on Yom Kippur Moses wrests from God the secret of the Thirteen Attributes through which God promises that they will *always* find forgiveness. That is why the repetition of these attributes is a part of our High Holiday service. Finally on Yom Kippur, Moses comes down with the second set of tablets.

This means that the holiest day of the year commemorates a nearly forgotten event, the giving of the second set of tablets. It is a renegotiated marriage between God and Israel. The first tablets were fashioned entirely by God. Israel was overwhelmed by this divinity. Humanity was overwhelmed.

By the time of the giving of the second tablets, God had learned a lesson about dealing with these humans. So God says, "carve for yourself two tablets of stone and I will write upon them."

This is the season where we renegotiate our covenant with the Divine. We write the words of the renegotiated promise on our hearts.

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BJC News

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The contract we hammered out last year is annulled. We are forgiven.

But, how do we know we have achieved this forgiveness? Sometimes we wonder.

Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev says that forgiveness is our right and he tells this story. A child asks to have an apple and the papa says no. So the boy says the blessing; "Borei P'ri Haeitz."

Now the father has a dilemma. Unless he gives the boy the apple, he causes the child to sin for having made a blessing in vain. So he gives the kid the apple and that's how the kid gets the apple.

So Levi Yitzchak says,

What right have we to say that God forgives? We say; "Blessed are You who forgives sin." By making the blessing, we bring it about! We are saying that whether you forgive or not, Blessed are You who forgives sin. We give the Holy One of Israel no choice. By making the blessing and by doing the process we bring it about. We make it happen.

A Thought or Two...From the President

Edward Stern

Dear Members and those who are thinking about becoming members:

Many of you are participating in the life and activities of this Congregation in one or more ways. You come to worship with us. You come to study with us. You come to have fun with us. You come to sing with us. You come to share your burdens and sorrows with us. You come to build interfaith understanding with us. You come to help the poor and needy with us. You come to schmooze and have a nosh with us. You come to help us run a vital and appealing religious school. And you come to help us hold wonderful holiday services and programs. Some of you come to meetings to help the Congregation by serving as officers, trustees, committee chairs, and committee

members to support and/or to lead the preceding list of activities. (I offer my special thanks to the lay leadership for their time and good sense. You are great.)

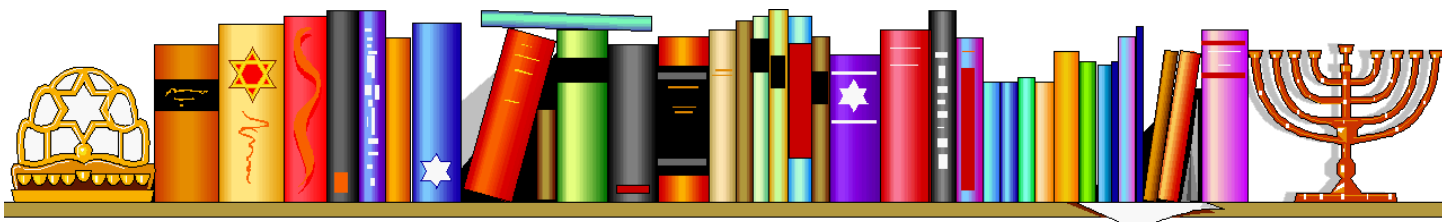
I list the broad categories of participation to remind you that there are many ways to be involved in this Congregation and to urge you to participate more with us. We have programs that provide an opportunity for you to do more for yourself and for the community. As Rabbi Hillel said, in the *Ethics of the Fathers (Pirke Avot)*, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am for myself alone, what am I? If not now, then when?" I suggest that a good answer to his last question (of when) is now. Do it this year. Do it with us. And if you are not a member, please join us this year.

Now, I want to answer the question Rabbi Hillel didn't ask, but that you might have. "If I join in that activity at BJC, will I enjoy the people? The answer is yes. I have participated in many, not all, of the BJC activities. I see decent, friendly, sensible people thinking and doing with others. I see people listening thoughtfully and respectfully to their colleagues. I see people with ability, good-heartedness, and humility. I like these folks. You will too. The question is: when? The answer is now, this year at BJC.

From the Rabbi

Please be in touch with me in times of joy, sadness or illness in your life or in the lives of a loved one or another member of the congregation. This is particularly necessary now that the HIPAA regulations have made getting any kind of information from the hospitals extremely difficult. I greatly appreciate your help in keep-

ing me informed of the health needs of our congregation. Office Number: 301-469-8636, #3.



Sh'ma Koli—Hear My Voice

Chava Gal-Or, Director of Congregation Education

Summer is always exciting. The rhythms of the days are different; people tend to take time to enjoy their lives a little more.

Summer is also a chance for all of us to take stock and regroup; that is true for the Religious School, the Adult Education, and the entire BJC community. So often, people ask me if I work during the summer; the question always makes me smile. In some ways, I work harder. There is so much to do to prepare for the new school year. Curriculums need to be planned, teachers need to be trained, and administrative tasks need to be accomplished. I also need to be more available for my family and make time to take vacations and advantage of learning opportunities available to Jewish educators. Summer is both thrilling and incredibly busy.

As we move forward in the planning, please note two very important dates.

- Saturday, Sept. 11—Religious School Begins at 9 a.m. for everyone!
- Saturday, Oct. 23—Hebrew Marathon for Adults 9 a.m.-3 p.m. (Note: This class, a day-long opportunity to learn or relearn the complete Hebrew Alphabet and beginning reading of prayers/Hebrew, was a tremendous success last year.)

Reflecting about how you can become involved is always exciting and nerve wracking. We all have so much to do and we need to consider what projects we can consider for the upcoming year. Please think about becoming involved in the learning environment at BJC. Let me know if you would like to volunteer or become involved in the Education Committee or one of the subcommittees (Curriculum, Holiday Planning, or Youth Activities).

I hope that your summer is a rejuvenating time for you and your families.

Congregation News

BJC Open House for Perspective Members

Don't keep your love of BJC a secret. Share your passion for our unique expression of Judaism with others. Bring your friends to our Open House. On Friday, Sept. 3 at 7 p.m. BJC's special "Hasidic" all music service with the band will follow. Let's get the word out about our warm, inspiring, and exciting synagogue and school. We'll be stronger for your efforts.

BJC Selichot Program and Service

Join us on Saturday, Sept. 4 at 9 p.m. in Covenant Hall when Stephen Dachi returns for *The Story of the Jews in India*.

Those who were in attendance last year for Stephen Dachi's absorbing account of the finding and identifying of the remains of Joseph Mengele will be delighted to learn that he is coming back for another talk before Selichot services. Stephen Dachi is a retired Foreign Service Officer who served as Minister Counselor for Cul-

tural and Information Affairs at the American Embassy in New Delhi from 1991-1994. While in India, he traveled extensively and compiled a wealth of historical material, slides and illustrations of most of India's many religions. He visited all the Jewish communities and synagogues in India and met and interviewed numerous leaders and members of those communities.

Stephen tells a highly informative, upbeat and heartwarming human interest story, richly illustrated with slides, about the past, present and possible

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future of the Jewish communities in South Asia, as well as their social customs, religious practices and political standing in contemporary India.

Stephen's presentation will be followed by a fancy dessert reception and our annual Selichot service, which ends just after midnight. The final hour of the Shabbat before Rosh HaShannah was deemed by our rabbis to be a time of special power. Around the world Jews gather at midnight to begin the process of repentance with special prayers and songs. Make sure not to miss this. It's definitely worth getting a baby-sitter for.

Participants Wanted for Yom Kippur Musical Program

This year's Yom Kippur Musical Interlude will be held in the main sanctuary on Sep. 18 at 3:30 p.m. It is BJC's tradition to enhance the Yom Kippur experience by reaching out to the many musicians in our community to perform short musical selections appropriate to the High Holidays. Yom Kippur, Jewish-themed or meditative selections are welcome.

This year Lois Rose will be handing over the responsibility of coordinating the Yom Kippur musical interlude to Dale McMillen. We are very grateful to Lois for coordinating the musical interlude for the past 15 years.

We encourage musicians and singers to join us in performing at the Yom Kippur Musical Interlude. For more information, or to sign up to perform, please contact Dale McMillen at 301-869-3471 or dale@lyricpiano.com.

Save the Dates

BJC Siddur Search Committee "Test" Services

- Friday, Sept. 24 and Oct. 22
- Saturday, Sept. 25 and Oct. 16

Open Book Discussion: *The Elegance of the Hedgehog*

Please join us on Sept. 22 to discuss *The Elegance of the Hedgehog* by Muriel Barbery. The story follows events in the life of a concierge, Renée



Michel, whose deliberately concealed intelligence is uncovered by an unstable but intellectually precocious girl named Paloma Josse, the daughter of an upper-class family living in the upscale Parisian apartment building where Renée works.

Featuring a number of erudite characters, *The Elegance of the Hedgehog* is full of allusions to literary

High Holidays 5771

Selichot

Saturday, Sept. 4 9 p.m.

Rosh Hashanah

Wednesday, Sept. 8 8 p.m.

Thursday, Sept. 9 10 a.m.

Children's and Pre-K Service 1:30 p.m.

Tashlich 3:30 p.m.

(Cabin John Park, 7400 Tuckerman Ln., Bethesda)

Yom Kippur

Sunday, Sept. 27, Kol Nidre 8 p.m.

Monday, Sept. 28, Morning Service 10 a.m.

Children's and Pre-K Service 1:30 p.m.

Yom Kippur Discussion 2:30 p.m.

Musical Interlude 3:30 p.m.

Chant Circle 3:30 p.m.

Reading of the Book of Jonah 5 p.m.

Yizkor and Neilah Services 5:30 p.m.

Sukkot

Sunday, Sept. 19

Build Indoor Sukkah 5 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 3

Sukkot Service 10:30 a.m.

Simcha Torah

Friday, Oct. 1

Light Dinner 6:30 p.m.

Service 7:30 p.m.

Tickets for non-members: \$195 per person for services are available in the BJC office now. Tickets for Children's and Pre-K Services are only \$75 for families. Baby sitting is available at no charge for all adult services (excluding Yizkor and Neilah) Tickets will be available after July 15, 2010.

BJC does not furnish the High Holy Day prayer books, but they are available for sale in the office now for \$25 per book.

works, music, films, and paintings. It incorporates themes relating to philosophy, class-consciousness and personal conflict.

Drop-ins and new members are always welcome. Contact Evelyn Ganzglass, 202-966-7037 or Ruth Rosenberg, 703-560-9525 for more information.

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August 2010 Calendar

Day	Date	Time	Event	Location
Friday	Aug. 6	8:00 p.m.	N'tivim L'Shabbat Music Service	Covenant Hall
Thursday	Aug. 12	7:30 p.m.	BJC Board Meeting	Lounge
Friday	Aug. 13	6:30 p.m.	Family Service	Covenant Hall
Friday	Aug. 20	8:00 p.m.	Shabbat Worship	Covenant Hall
Friday	Aug. 27	6:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	Tot Shabbat Shabbat Worship	Lounge Covenant Hall
Thursday	Sept. 2	7:30 p.m.	BJC Board Meeting	Lounge
Friday	Sept. 3	7:00 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	Prosepective Member Reception N'tivim L'Shabbat Music Service	Gathering Space Covenant Hall
Saturday	Sept. 4	9:00 p.m.	Selechiot Program and Service	Covenant Hall
Wednesday	Sept. 8	8:00 p.m.	Erev Rosh Hashanah	Sanctuary

For the latest updates and weekly E-news, please refer to the BJC website.

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BJC Cuba Mission 2011

Join us for the 2011 BJC Cuba Mission, Jan. 8-18 and visit Havana, Santa Clara, Cienfuegos, Sancti Spiritus, and Camaguey.

Now is your opportunity to go on a trip that will make a real difference in your life and the lives of others. Our eight-year relationship with the Jewish communities of Cuba has been transformative for us and for the people we serve. It's not a vacation; it's an adventure.

Make Your Reservation Now! \$200 deposit holds your place. Traveling party will not exceed 30 people.

Price (\$2,650 pp / dbl occupancy, Single supplement \$220) includes:

- Flights RT Miami—Cienfuegos, Havana—Miami
- 9 Nights Hotel (1 night Miami, 3 nights Havana, 1 night Santa Clara, 1 night Sancti Spiritus, 1 night Cienfuegos, 2 nights Camaguey)
- All breakfasts and lunches, and 7 dinners
- Air Conditioned Motor Coach with Full Time Guide and Translator
- Cuban religious Visas
- Miami Departure Tax
- Plus Cuba Departure Tax \$25.00 (CASH ONLY)

(A Real Bargain—Comparable trips run as much as \$3,500)

Yahrzeits

Pearl Aronson, Mother of Joel Aronson
 Jack Barsky, Brother of Lisa Strauss
 Lucille Cifarelli, Mother of Mike Cifarelli, Grandmother of Artie and Maxi Cifarelli
 Adrian Curtis, Sister of Richard Fogel
 Maxwell E Davidson, Father of Ginger Silvers
 Simon Feldman, Father of Peter Feldman
 Lester Frank, Uncle of Roz Young
 Isadore Frankford, Father of Norma Stern
 Morris Jacob Heller, Father of Carie Schaefer
 Michelle Hume, Daughter of Harriet Kaplan
 Samuel Kline, Father of Norman Kline
 Isadore Kornfield, Father of Judy Folsom
 Sherri C Kost, Mother of Amy Kost
 Norman Samuelson, Father of Doug Samuelson
 Lillian Rosenberg Silbert, Mother of Earl Silbert
 Daniel Aron Sotnick, Son of Cliff Sotnick
 Nathan Sanders Wall, Husband of Charlotte Wall-Bluestone

Thank you...

Dee and Joel Aronson for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in honor of the Yahrzeit of Dee's mother, Sadie Salkind.
 Rochelle Banta for her generous donation in honor of the Yahrzeit of her father, Arthur Barrios.

יארצייט

תודה רבה

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Allan and Anne Gold for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in honor of the Yahrzeit of Allan's grandfather, Abraham Kaplan.

Jim Korelitz and Liz Sloss for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund.

David Laufer and Ellen Gleberman for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in honor of the Yahrzeits of Joseph and Lily Laufer and Harvey and Mimi Gleberman.

Ellen Lieberman for her generous donation to the Maran Gluckstein Family Education Fund as a thank you for Maran's teaching of Adult Hebrew.

Wendy Mellinger and Robert Poogach for their generous donation in honor of the Yahrzeit of Bob's grandfather, Irving Roger.

Kathie Stein for her generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in honor of the Bat Mitzvah of her daughter, Jasma Stein.

Amy Stern for her generous donation to the Maran Gluckstein Family Education Fund as a thank you for Maran's teaching of Adult Hebrew.

Ed and Norma Stern for their generous donation in memory of Dr. Blaine Eig.

Lisa Strauss for her generous donation to the Maran Gluckstein Family Education Fund as a thank you for Maran's teaching at Adult Hebrew.

Stephen Turow and Linda Blumberg for their generous donation to the Social Action Fund.

Lorrie Van Akkeren for her generous donation to the Maran Gluckstein Family Education Fund as a thank you for Maran's teaching of Adult Hebrew.

Lorrie Van Akkeren for her generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund.

Bill Van Berg for his generous donation to the Maran Gluckstein Family Education Fund as a thank you for Maran's teaching of Adult Hebrew.

Darryl and Jane Walter for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in honor of the B'Nai Mitzvah of their daughters, Lela and Hannah Walter.

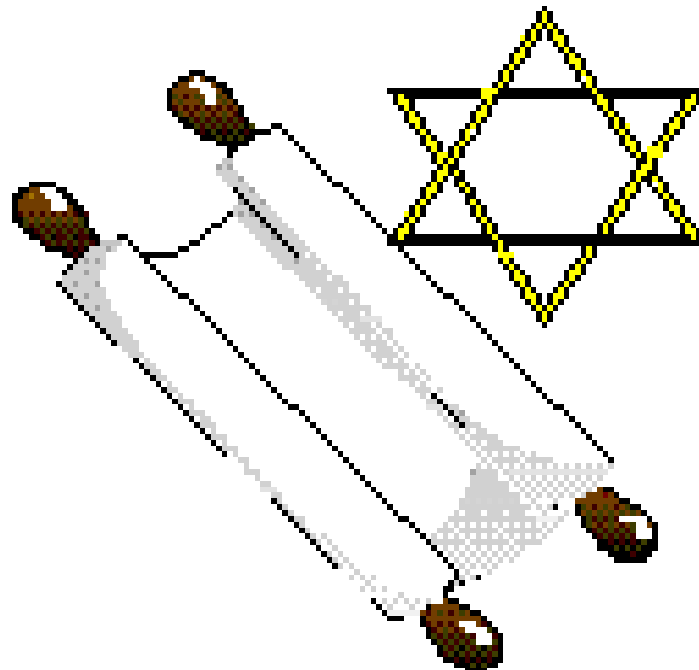
Janyce G. Wolf for her generous donation of Tanakhim in memory of Steve Chiaverini.

A very special thank you to those of you who traveled on our last two Cuba missions for their help for the Centro Sefardi Synagogue in Havana.

A special thanks to all of those who have 'rounded up' in the payment of their dues for 2010-2011.

For their generous donations to Enhancing The Flame:

Carol E Holtzmann
Lorraine McMillen
Lorrie Van Akkeren
Larry and Davi Walders



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so you don't have to

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Yvonne Bryant**

The deadline for submitting articles for the Sept. newsletter is Aug. 6.
Please email your article in an MS Word attachment.

Put your ad in the BJC Newsletter

To place your card or other-sized ad in the Sept. newsletter, mail it to the BJC office with your check made payable to BJC.
Deadline: Aug. 6. Rate structure for a business card: \$20.00 per month, 3-month minimum. Rates are slightly higher for cards that are not camera-ready art.