



Bethesda Jewish Congregation News

Rabbi Elhanan 'Sunny' Schnitzer

June/July 2010

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Kiriat HaRav—The Call of the Rabbi

Rabbi Elhanan 'Sunny' Schnitzer

The Search for a New Siddur

For the past six months, 20 members of BJC have gathered to study the rubrics of Jewish prayer and explore the prayer books currently in publication, with a focus on recommending a new Shabbat and Festival siddur for our congregation.

Readers may ask; why does BJC need a new siddur? The Shabbat prayer book currently in use by BJC, *Gates of Prayer*, was initially published in 1974. The condensed version you will find in our sanctuary, affectionately referred to as "Gates of Gray," was redacted from that original version in 1997. Modern Judaism has changed dramatically in 36 years, and so has BJC.

The inadequacies of *Gates of Prayer* have been a challenge during the last eight years and we have attempted to meet the challenge by creating many different photocopied Shabbat prayer services. However, all of these stapled self-generated services have their shortcomings. In the past six years a variety of new prayer books have come on the market that hold out the possibility of a prayer experience that is meaningful, spiritual, and intellectually stimulating while giving full expression to the sounds and rituals of Jewish tradition.

The BJC Siddur Study Group represents a cross section of BJC's membership. There are long time members and new members, parents of religious school students and empty nesters, folks who come to BJC only two or three times a year, and Friday and Saturday "regulars."

The group began its work with two sessions studying what is in a siddur, the rubrics of Jewish prayer, and what is the intent of those prayers? Then the group created a ranked list of fifteen selection criteria that uniquely fit BJC. The top five criteria are:

- Transliteration of all prayers
- Accuracy of translation
- Moving language
- Authenticity of the text
- Gender sensitivity

Then there was a comparison study of selections from the five texts, more discussion, and a straw poll to select the top two candidates.

These siddurim feature: a simple layout, usually with only one prayer on each page, traditional Hebrew text, linear, literally-oriented, full transliteration, titles for the main prayers, simple explanations, "stage instructions," gender inclusiveness, and additional thoughts.

In May, members of the group spent a Shabbat in NYC, to witness how some of these siddurim are used in a congregational setting and to experience a few of the varieties of Jewish prayer. The visit was "eye opening" to say the least.

Over the summer the group will visit more synagogues using the siddurim under consideration. Then in the autumn, at a series of services, all

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BJC News

Bethesda Jewish Congregation
6601 Bradley Boulevard
Bethesda, MD 20817-3042
Tel: 301-469-8636
Fax: 301-469-9529
www.bethesdajewish.org
admin@bethesdajewish.org



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BJC members will have the opportunity to worship using excerpts from the top two candidates and to share feedback, both anecdotally and through a written survey. In late 2010, the group will make a recommendation to the Board.

Our objective is to recommend a new siddur that will make the prayer

experience more accessible and meaningful to the worshiper, from the experienced davener to the person who knows little or no Hebrew. A new siddur will give us new liturgical choices and fresh inspiration while allowing us to maintain BJC's unique musical style and spirit.

I invite you to share your comments as we explore together.

A Thought or Two...From the President

Edward Stern

This March, the new Hurva Synagogue was dedicated in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem, where the Jordanian Army blew up its predecessor in 1948. Some Arab leaders declared this was a sign that the Jews would destroy Al-Aqsa mosque to build the Third Jewish Temple.

This prompted me to a "thought experiment": What if the Romans had not destroyed the Second Temple in 70 C.E.? They destroyed the city, but they could have used the Temple to worship one of their gods—as Antiochus IV did in 167 B.C.E., which led to the Maccabean revolt.

The Second Temple would have been a Roman temple when the Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity, and then a Christian Church until Caliph Omar took Jerusalem in 638 C.E.

Under the Moslem occupation, the "Temple Church" would have become the "Temple Mosque" or possibly Al-Aqsa ("the farthest") Mosque—the one Mohammed visited in a vision (the Night Journey). At the time, the Temple would have been almost 1,200 years old.

In 1099, the Crusaders arrived at Jerusalem, killed the Moslems and Jews, and recaptured the city and the Temple. Both would have changed hands several times before the Ottoman Turks took Jerusalem in 1517. (In the 6th century C.E. the Parthenon was converted to a Christian church. After

the Ottoman conquest, it became a mosque.)

In the 1948 War of Independence, the Jews would have fought for the Holy Temple and the Moslems for the "Temple Mosque". Following history, the Jordanian army would seize the Old City of Jerusalem, blow up the Hurva Synagogue, keep the "Temple Mosque", and keep the Jews out.

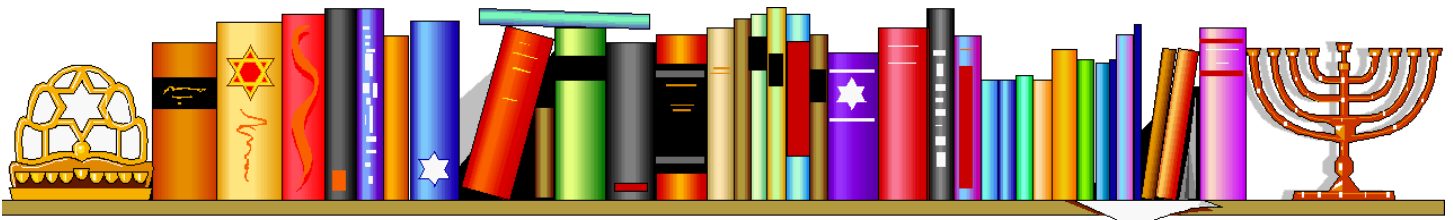
In 1967, in the Six Day War, Israel would take the Old City and the Temple, then close to 2,500 years old. At the urging of the entire spectrum of Jews, the Israeli Government would close the "Temple Mosque". After holding the Temple for almost half of its existence, the Moslem world would object. But, since it was THE Jewish Temple, many nations would understand. Then, what would happen?

For the last 2,000 years, some Jews studied laws on the ritual functions of the Temple. And they tracked the lineage of the priests, the Cohens, Cohns, Kahns, etc. (who can be identified today by DNA). With difficulty, the rabbinic authorities or the Government of Israel could even select a High Priest—just as the Romans chose the High Priest at the time of Jesus.

At last, Israeli Jews would control the Holy Temple; they would know how to carry out 2,000-year-old sacrificial rituals; and they could have priests to do it. But would they?

Some Jewish fundamentalists would want to reestablish the Temple rituals. Other Jews would oppose it. They would point to teachings in the Bible (Psalm 51:16-19) and Midrash (VaYikra Rabbah 22) that God has no need for animal sacrifices. And they would point to Maimonides' Guide of the Perplexed (Part III, Chapter 32) that explains that the sacrificial rituals were not for God, but for man—to wean him away from idol worship, while allowing him to keep old forms of worship.

After almost 1,300 years of Moslem use of the Temple, the ultra-orthodox would want their turn. But I see overwhelming Jewish opposition to reestablishing the Temple rituals. (I did this experiment without an intended outcome.) It prompts me to ask: If, upon recovering the real 2,500 year-old Temple, the Jews would not use it for rituals, why would they rebuild the Second Temple? Then a Lubavitcher Rabbi told me he supported rebuilding the Temple, because that's where the Messiah would appear. That worries me.



Sh'ma Koli—Hear My Voice

Chava Gal-Or, Director of Congregation Education

The first time I heard Michael Rosen's song/book, *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*, I knew this story was a perfect metaphor for life! I love it so much that I have made many of my students and campers learn the words. I think I even translated it into Hebrew once!

This single folk story guides every aspect of my life. Life is full of challenges, but we have a choice how we move through each part of the journey. We are all (children and adults) on pathways to gain knowledge, perspective, materials, or even the intangible and are searching for something; the bear is a metaphor for that something.

Any trek is much easier when you move forward while seeing the potential for success. When my heart feels heavy, I struggle to move forward; when my heart feels filled with life, the journey goes so much easier. Approaching life with optimism makes even the biggest challenges a little easier.

And yes, it is okay to admit your fear. We all have fears, but I have learned to move through the fears and not let those fears keep me from doing what I need to do. Listening to my inner voice is so important. That voice has the ability to protect me, but it also has the ability to nudge me forward.

The main verses/refrains go:

We are going on a bear hunt.

We are going to catch a big one.

What a beautiful day!

We are not scared.

Oh-oh!

Long, wavy grass.

We can't go over it.

We can't go under it.

Oh no!

We've got to go through it.

I love that this story is about going through all that you need to go through in order to get where you are going. If you don't do the work you need to do, you won't move in anywhere. Regardless of what is going on, each of us has to keep on moving.

I take these lessons as I move through every journey. My hope is that as you move through your own journeys you also take the lessons this book teaches you. If you want to learn Hebrew, grow with your own Jewish practices, or even climb a mountain. The bottom-line is that you really need to remember the following words "couldn't go over it, couldn't go under it...I had to go through it."

As the story continues, we have to not only go through the grass, but the river, the mud, a forest, a snowstorm, and then finally a cave. There is always more and more to every journey. As long as we are living, we have some place to go.

I have rarely backed away from a desired journey. I imagine that most of you can take this lesson with you wherever you go.

Have a great summer!

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

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Congregation News

Israel and the US – What Now, What Next?

The political situation in the Middle East is in a state of flux. New challenges and new agendas are stirring the pot and there are a multitude of opinions about what it means and what should happen next. Our first speaker was fantastic, provocative and informative. Join us for parts two and three of the BJC Spring Speaker Series as speakers from across the political spectrum share with us their ideas and their hopes for Israel, the United States, and the possibilities for peace.

Sunday, June 6 at 5 pm—David Bernstein,
Executive Director, American Jewish Congress
Thursday, June 17 at 7:30 pm—Stephanie
Schwartz, Washington Area Director, AIPAC

Rabbi Schnitzer to Speak at Jewish Islamic Dialogue Society

Join Rabbi Schnitzer, local Islamic clerics, and other rabbis on Sunday, June 13, 2:30-5 pm, for an open discussion on *God—Names, Attributes and Conceptions*.

Location: Congregation Or Chadash, 24800 Kings Valley Road, Damascus, MD 20872

BJC High Holiday Choir Rehearsals Begin

A vibrant and full sounding choir is a key part of creating for the congregation the spirit of the Days of Awe. It also can enrich the holiday experience of the singer as well. There is something deeply satisfying about leading worship through song. The BJC choir needs more voices, so consider joining or rejoining this year.

Rehearsals begin on June 23. All rehearsals will be on Wednesdays, from 7:30 to 9:30 pm. No one makes every rehearsal, after all it is summer, but by the time Sept. 9 (it's early this year) rolls around everyone is ready. Please call Rabbi Schnitzer if you would like to experience Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur from the inside.

BJC Book Club: *Destiny's Children, A Saga of Early California*

The BJC Book Club invites you to join us on June 23 at 8 pm for discussion with our former spiritual leader, Rabbi Roger Herst, about his novel *Destiny's Children, A Saga of Early California*. Come and hear Rabbi Herst talk about the stories of determined Californians fleeing from unfulfilled lives elsewhere to seek their fortune in the West. They include three eccentric yet loveable newcomers: Wong Po-Ching, a deserter from the Manchu army who confronts fierce hatred of the Chinese in his adopted country; Theo

Gallager, an engineer from General Grant's Army of the Potomac with a passion to lay a railroad through impassable mountains; and Dr. Harriet Horn, an iron-willed, pioneering Bostonian who battles her way to acceptance as California's first female physician.

The BJC Book Club will also meet on July 28 at 8 p.m. to discuss *Like a Tree* by Calvin Kytte. The novel explores Atlanta's and the South's complex racial and social past in a story of a family struggling to find itself in Depression-time Atlanta.

There will be no open book discussion in August. Please contact Evelyn Ganzglass, 202-966-7037 or Ruth Rosenberg, 703-560-9525 for more information.

Mark Your Calendars Now!

BJC Cuba Mission 2011 - January 9-19

Jewish-Islamic Dialogue Society Comes to BJC

The Jewish-Islamic Dialogue Society (JIDS) was founded last year by Jewish and Muslim friends to hold frank discussions and enhance mutual understanding and respect amongst Jews and Muslims. JIDS has been meeting once a month in various synagogues and mosques around Montgomery County (with some BJC and Jaferia mosque members, among others, as participants). Past topics have included subjects like Zionism, stories of Muslim and Jewish teenagers, and common barriers faced by Jews and Muslims in America. See their website for other past programs and publicity: www.jids.org.

BJC will host the group's meeting, on Sunday, July 11 at 2:30 pm, to discuss social action projects that a Jewish-Muslim group would be uniquely qualified to engage in. For more information, contact Gary Sampliner at gary.sampliner@do.treas.gov.

Yahrzeits

Sylvia Berkowitz, Mother of Susan Berkowitz
Burton Bernard, Father of Cathy Bernard
Roz Bogorad, Mother of Len Bogorad
George Borden, Father of Vicky Bailer
Robert Carson, Brother of Michael Carson
Dorothy Castleman, Mother of Mark Greenstein
Copel H. Cholok, Father of Alec Cholok
Herman Cohen, Grandfather of Donna Goldberg
Noah Cohen, Nephew of Nancy Glassman
Minnie Druckman, Grandmother of Linda Blumberg and Mark Blumberg
Anna Fagen, Grandmother of Karen Jerome
Maurice Folsom, Father of Al Folsom
Hedwig Gluckstein, Mother of Fritz Gluckstein

יארצייט

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June/July 2010 Calendar

Day	Date	Time	Event	Location
Wednesday	June 2	6:30 p.m.	Kemach and Torah	Library
Friday	June 4	8:00 p.m.	N'tivim L' Shabbat Music Service	Covenant Hall
Saturday	June 5	10:30 a.m. 5:00 p.m.	Shabbat Worship—Jacob Magin—Bar Mitzvah Speaker—Ambassador Akbar Ahmed Building Bridges Among the Children of Abraham	Covenant Hall Memorial Hall
Sunday	June 6	5:00 p.m.	Speaker Series—David Bernstein—American Jewish Committee	Covenant Hall
Wednesday	June 9	6:30 p.m.	Kemach and Torah	Library
Thursday	June 10	7:30 p.m.	BJC Board Meeting	Lounge
Friday	June 11	6:30 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat	Covenant Hall
Saturday	June 12	10:30 a.m. 4:30 p.m.	Shabbat Worship—Ali Dane— Bat Mitzvah Aaron Dane— Bar Mitzvah Chant Circle	Covenant Hall RM 305
Sunday	June 13	2:30 p.m.	Rabbi Schnitzer to Speak at Jewish Islamic Dialogue Society	Cong. Or Chadash Damascus MD
Wednesday	June 16	6:30 p.m.	Kemach and Torah	Library
Thursday	June 17	7:30 p.m.	Speaker Series—Stephanie Schwartz—AIPAC	Covenant Hall
Friday	June 18	8:00 p.m.	Simcha B' Shabbat—Last one until October	Covenant Hall
Wednesday	June 23	7:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	High Holy Days Choir Rehearsal BJC Book Club	Choir Room Library
Friday	June 25	6:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	Tot Shabbat Shabbat Worship	Lounge Covenant Hall
Wednesday	June 30	7:30 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal	Choir
Friday	July 2	8:00 p.m.	N'tivim L'Shabbat Music Service	Covenant Hall
Wednesday	July 7	7:30 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal	Choir Room
Friday	July 9	6:30 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat	Covenant Hall
Saturday	July 10	4:30 p.m.	Chant Circle	RM 305
Sunday	July 11	2:30 p.m.	Jewish Islamic Dialogue Society	Covenant Hall
Wednesday	July 14	7:30 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal	Choir Room
Friday	July 16	8:00 p.m.	Shabbat Worship	Covenant Hall
Tuesday	July 20		BJC Office Closed	
Wednesday	July 21	7:30 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal	Choir Room
Friday	July 23	6:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	Tot Shabbat Shabbat Worship	Lounge Covenant Hall
Wednesday	July 28	7:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal Book Club	Choir Room Library
Friday	July 30	8:00 p.m.	Shabbat Worship	Covenant Hall
Wednesday	August 4	7:30 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal	Choir Room
Friday	August 6	8:00 p.m.	N'tivim L'Shabbat Music Service	Covenant Hall

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

Freda Goldman, Grandmother of Stacey Rose-Blass
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Steven Kaufman, Husband of Lorraine Levin
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Thank you

תודה רבה

Bruce and Wynne Busman for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in memory of the Rabbi's aunt, Shirley Sandler.

Richard and Amy Harris for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in honor of the Bat Mitzvah of their daughter, Suzanne Harris.

Sylvia Stearn for her generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in honor of the Rabbi's ordination.

Lorrie Van Akkeren for her generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in honor of the Yahrzeit of her father, Gordon Goldstein.

For their generous donations to Enhancing The Flame

Richard Fogel

Larry Slifman

Stephen Turow and Linda Blumberg

Lorrie Van Akkeren



Community News

Ambassador Akbar Ahmed Speaks at BHPC

Come on Saturday, June 5, 5-7 pm to hear Akbar Ahmed speak at Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church (BHPC) on Building Bridges among the Children of Abraham: Empowering Women in Pakistan through Education

Akbar Ahmed, currently the Ibn Khaldun Chair of Islamic Studies at American University, is considered "the world's leading authority on contemporary Islam" by the BBC. He is the author of over a dozen award-winning books, including *Discovering Islam*, which was the basis of the BBC's six-part TV series *Living Islam*. The program also features Mrs. Harriet Mayor Fulbright, President of the J. William and Harriet Fulbright Center, who will give opening remarks highlighting the Center's motto, *Peace through Education*.

Tickets: \$12.00, in advance. You may contact BHPC at 301-365-2850.



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Roz Young

Newsletter Editor: Anita Farb—anita.farb@gmail.com

**Design Layout and Desktop Publishing:
Yvonne Bryant**

The deadline for submitting articles for the Aug. newsletter is July 2.
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 Aug. newsletter, mail it to the BJC office with your check made payable to BJC.
Deadline: July 2. 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.