



Bethesda Jewish Congregation News

Rabbi Elhanan 'Sunny' Schnitzer

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Kiriat HaRav—The Call of the Rabbi

Rabbi Elhanan 'Sunny' Schnitzer

Where's the Fire Buddy?

In America it seems that we want everything fast. Fast food, instant photos, TV shows sent directly to our telephones, email, instant messaging...the list goes on and on. Only half a generation ago, mail took days, we thought nothing of being out of telephone contact for hours or even days, we waited for dinner to be prepared. We are indeed a fast food nation, but the notion of the need for speed goes beyond what we put in our mouths. It has permeated every facet of our lives including the spiritual.

I recently officiated at a shiva where the evening service was scheduled for 7 pm. While people were slowly trickling in, and many had yet to arrive, one of the hosts who had been staring at her watch for ten minutes demanded, "It is 7:00 p.m. Let's get started." The sad part was that there was nowhere else to go. Still there was no time for prayer or reflection. She was in a hurry to nowhere.

We've lost the ability to move into time. Instead, we rush through it. We rush through our Pesach seders so we can get to the food, we rush through Shabbat services so we can get to the Oneg, we rush through Yom Kippur to break the fast. We make it all about the meal, not the meaning. And because of this the meaning for our lives is diminished. We sense that this is true. Some are even acutely aware that their lives are full of activities designed to fill a void, not necessarily to give us lasting pleasure. We go for the quick fix, the instant gratification.

This is not a new phenomenon. In the early nineteenth century French aristocrat, and observer of American democracy, Alexis de Tocqueville noted:

"It is hard to give an impression of the avidity with which the American throws himself on the vast prey offered him by fortune... An almost limitless continent stretches before him, and he seems in a hurry not to arrive too late that one might think him afraid of finding no room."

He goes on in his musings to state; "Their taste for physical gratifications must be regarded as the original source of that secret disquietude which the actions of the Americans betray and of that inconstancy of which they daily afford fresh examples. He who has so his heart exclusively upon the pursuit of worldly welfare is always in a hurry, for he has but limited time at his disposal to reach, to grasp, and to enjoy it."

One hundred and sixty-five years ago, in what we consider now to be a slower and more idyllic period in our history, de Tocqueville observed that here is a constant tension in our society between "getting it done" and the "search for meaning." It is rare that both desires are satisfied in a single

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BJC News

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event. So many of us feel constantly hurried and hassled. The world moves too fast and its demands are relentless. We are exhausted and look for a change, but we have a hard time surrendering to the change that is needed.

The answer is, I believe, to consciously jettison the need for speed

that, as Tocqueville points out, may be hard-wired into our national ethos. It is a worthy discipline and spiritual practice to let go of the urgency to get to the “next thing” and appreciate the “thing” that is before us now. That is the task that has been handed to us. It is a choice that we must make. For our sanity and our society, the time has come to make the right one.

A Thought or Two...From the President

Edward Stern

Recently, I was searching for *The Wisdom of Israel*, an anthology of Jewish wisdom literature from ancient to more modern times, from 1945. I came across a book with the same title, *The Wisdom of Israel*, from 1908—out of copyright and now digitally copied by Google. The older book has parables from the Talmud and Midrash. One section addresses the Temple sacrifices—a matter that has puzzled many. Maimonides gives an explanation in the Guide of the Perplexed (Part III, Chap. 32), but the parables have more punch. I wanted to share this with you and your teenagers. The implications are deep.

The Greedy Prince; The Vine Is Not Watered With Wine

God needs no sacrifice, but the sacrificial worship had, for one of its objects, the weaning of Israel from idolatry and from temptation to the cruelty to animals practiced by idolaters in

sacrificing to devils and the supposed powers of evil.

Rabbi Phineas said, in the name of Rabbi Levi:

“This may be likened to a king’s son, who was greedy and who used to eat at the tables of all kinds of people, and learned their ways, and used to eat unclean food. Then the king said, he shall always eat at my table, and there he shall remain.”

Thus, because the children of Israel were yearning after the idolatry they had seen in Egypt, and “sacrificing unto devils,” they were commanded to bring sacrifices to the God of life and to Him alone; to kill only in a merciful manner, and not to shed the blood of animals at all without the solemnity of an offering.

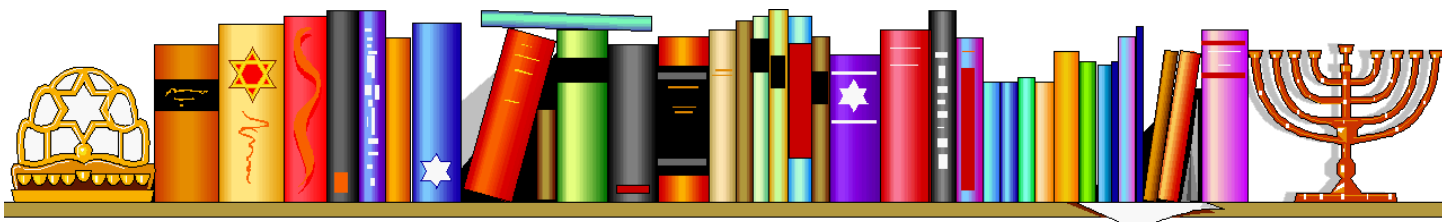
But the heathen thought their gods required food, whereas even mortal man, when in close intercourse with God, requires neither eating nor drinking; for Moses was forty days in the mount without food. How much less can the Holy One of Israel be in need of the flesh of sacrifices! The idea is ridiculed in the Psalms. Rabbi Chiya bar Abba says: “Even the lowest of God’s creatures are not in need of their own produce; how much less then is the Creator in need of what He has created. Have ye ever heard it said, ‘Irrigate this vine with wine, so that it may produce much wine, or this olive-tree with oil, that it may produce much oil’? These plants are in no need of their own products to nourish them; shall, then, God be in need of what He has created?”

VaYikra Rabbah, Chap. XXII., and Barmidbar Rabbah, Chap. XXI.

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.



Sh'ma Koli—Hear My Voice

Chava Gal-Or, Director of Congregation Education

Each of you are members at BJC because our community offers you something that makes your life more meaningful. At least, that's what I hope. I am not so bold to say how that might look for you. For some of us, it could be religious connections, social connections, learning opportunities, Religious School experiences, tikkun olam (repairing the world) opportunities, connecting with past and future generations of Jews, etc.

By the way, I am thrilled that you are here at BJC and that I am here to serve you in my professional capacity of Director of Congregational Education.

On a personal level, I have been considering my roles in both my personal life and my life as a part of the BJC professional staff. Often I find myself asking what it means to be involved in the larger world, the world outside my body, outside of my immediate family. Two questions come to mind quite frequently:

1. What do you want from me?
2. How can I serve you?

When I say *you*, I am speaking to the larger universe outside of myself. And the answer that comes to mind always is Hineini (Here I am). So much so that in January I ordered that single word to be on my license plate. (A good friend of mine, Melissa Schaffer wrote a chant with these two questions and the response Hineini. She should get credit creating a chant that I find myself utilizing quite frequently.)

We are all parts of many communities, our families, our work, our interests, our children's schools and interests (if we have children). Sometimes we take the sideline and let others take leadership roles, but someone has to take the leadership roles or the communities we are part of disintegrate over time.

Knowing that your voice is important can be empowering, but it can also add challenges. Our lives are busy, but our communities

can only thrive if you step up to the plate at some point and get involved.

Here is what I need from you. Consider actively and pro-actively getting involved in one of BJC's committees. Specifically, I am looking for people that have a love of learning both formally and informally. The education committee needs you so that we can continue to transform our children's learning environment. You can be part of the committee; you can offer to volunteer in the school by facilitating an activity, sharing your skills. You can help coordinate an adult education opportunity. Quite honestly, you can call me up, e-mail me, and help me brainstorm on ways that I can bring more learning to the community.

What do you want to learn? Think about it; let me know what you are thinking or what you want. And if you are interested in taking this one step further, consider finding a group of five or more people that share an interest with you and let's use that as a basis for creating a new opportunity.

Hineini, Here I am!

Where are you?

Congregation News

American Red Cross Blood Drive at BJC

You can provide life-sustaining blood to someone in need by donating at BJC during the American Red Cross blood drive on Saturday, May 9 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. We also need volunteers willing

to register donors and provide refreshments during the blood drive. Volunteers qualify for Montgomery County

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SSL credit. Contact Roz Young at admin@bethesda-jewish.org or 301-469-8636 to make an appointment to donate (the entire process takes about one hour) or to volunteer. For more information about donating, go to www.givelife.org. Please make time on Saturday, May 9, to make a difference.

Joint Study with Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church (BHPC)

What Happens After I Die?

Judaism and Christianity enjoy a very rich vision of the afterlife. For Jews, this world is an antechamber to the "world to come," and focus of spiritual life is on the here and now. Yet, within the Jewish tradition there is a belief in resurrection, reincarnation, and eternal life.

For Christians during the season of Easter, it's important to consider the Biblical tradition about what our resurrection might look like.

Join us on Tuesday, May 11 at 7:30 p.m. in Covenant Hall as our communities learn from and with each other.

BJC Annual Meeting

Please come to the BJC Annual Meeting on Thursday, May 13 at 8 p.m. in Memorial Hall to vote to ratify BJC's new slate of officers and trustees and to review and approve the 2010-2011 budget.

We need a quorum, so make time to attend.

Confirmation Shabbat

Our Jewish tradition teaches us to honor scholars at "Zeman Torateinu", the Season of the Giving of our Torah. Join us on Saturday, May 15 at 10:30 a.m. in Covenant Hall, as we honor our young students as they observe special milestones in their Jewish education. This year our confirmands, Rebecca Hughes, Olivia Stearn, and Paige Keller have created a special Shabbat liturgy you're sure to enjoy.

BJC Spring Speaker Series

Join us at BJC for a provocative three night series of speakers from across the political spectrum who will share with us their ideas and their hopes for Israel, the United States, and the possibilities for peace.

Israel and the US—What Now, What Next?

Sunday, May 16, 5 p.m.—J Street-Jeremy Ben Ami, Executive Director

Sunday, June 6, 5 p.m.—American Jewish Committee—TBA

Sunday, June 20, 5 p.m.—AIPAC—speaker TBA

The longstanding relationship between Israel and the United States, arguably the strongest relationship between two democracies in the world, 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.

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, May 21 at 7 p.m. BJC's new "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.

Open Book Discussion: An Island Called Home, Returning to Jewish Cuba

Please join us on May 26 at 8 pm in the library at BJC to discuss *An Island Called Home, Returning to Jewish Cuba* by Ruth Behar. This is a touching and lyrical account of Jews in Cuba that mixes memoir and ethnography in ways that enrich both. Although Dr. Behar was only a child when she left Cuba with her family after the Communist takeover, her many interviews with Jews still living in Cuba have allowed her to document how Jewish lives and the practice of Judaism have evolved through three time periods: 1. prior to the revolution, 2. during Cuba's officially atheistic period, 1959-1992, and 3. during its secular period, 1992 to the present. Contact Evelyn Ganzglass, 202-966-7037 or Ruth Rosenberg, 703-560-9525 for more information.

Yahrzeits

יָאָרְצֵיט

Arthur Barrios, Father of Rochelle Banta
Pauline Borden, Mother of Vicky Bailer
Henry Robert Bluestone, Husband of Charlotte Wall-Bluestone
Bernice Dubin, Mother of Alan Dubin
Adolph Feder, Father of Harriet Kaplan
Janet Feldman, Mother of Lisa Ginns
Sandy Glatt, Wife of Ted Glatt
Sonia Gold, Mother of Judy Scott
Elliot Himberg, Father of Harvey Himberg
Hilde Hirsch, Mother of Evelyn Ganzglass
Harry Jerome, Grandfather of Karen Jerome
Abraham Kaplan, Grandfather of Allan Gold
Adrienne Louise Kaplan, Daughter of Harriet Kaplan
Elaine Levine, Mother of Meryl Simon
Harry Mendelson, Grandfather of Mark Shmueli
Manuel Patz, Father of Eileen Newman
Bridgit Perline, Mother of Carol Perline-Feder
Harvey Rabin, Husband of Evelyn Rabin
Linda Ratner, Wife of Richard Ratner
Mozart Ratner, Father of Gary Ratner

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May 2010 Calendar

Day	Date	Time	Event	Location
Saturday	May 1	8:45 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	Adult Hebrew Religious School Shabbat Worshup	Lounge Classrooms Covenant Hall
Wednesday	May 5	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	Religious School Kemach and Torah	Classrooms Library
Friday	May 7	8:00 p.m.	N'tivim L'Shabbat-Music Service	Covenant Hall
Saturday	May 8	8:45 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	Adult Hebrew BJC Blood Drive Religious School Shabbat Worship	Lounge Memorial Hall Classrooms Covenant Hall
Tuesday	May 11	7:30 p.m.	Joint Study with BHPC	Covenant Hall
Wednesday	May 12	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	Religious School Kemach and Torah	Classrooms Library
Thursday	May 13	8:00 p.m.	BJC Annual Meeting	Memorial Hall
Friday	May 14	6:30 p.m.	Family and Friends Shabbat	Covenant Hall
Saturday	May 15	8:45 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	Adult Hebrew Ed Stern's Adult Ed Religious School Shabbat Worship—Confirmation	Lounge Outer Office Classrooms Covenant Hall
Sunday	May 16	5:00 p.m.	Spring Speaker Series—Jeremy Ben Ami, Exec. Director—J Street	Memorial Hall
Wednesday	May 19	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	Religious School-Last Wednesday Shavuot Service and Study	Classrooms Covenant Hall
Friday	May 21	7:00 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	Prospective Member Open House Simcha B'Shabbat All Music Service	Gathering Space Covenant Hall
Saturday	May 22	8:45 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	Adult Hebrew Last Day of Religious School Shabbat Worship	Lounge Classrooms Covenant Hall
Sunday	May 23	1:00 p.m.	March for Darfur	Raoul Wallenberg Plaza, DC
Wednesday	May 26	6:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	Kemach and Torah Open Book Discussion: <i>An Island Called Home</i> , <i>Returning to Jewish Cuba</i>	Library Library
Friday	May 28	6:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	Tot Shabbat Shabbat Worship	Library Covenant Hall
Saturday	May 29	10:30 a.m.	Shabbat Worship—Lela and Hannah Walters—Bat Mitzvah	Covenant Hall
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.	Shabbat Worship—Jacob Magin—Bar Mitzvah	Covenant Hall

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

Charles Stern, Grandfather of Melissa Keller
Leo Stern, Husband of Fanny Stern, Father of Edward Stern
Mabel Young, Grandmother of Roz Young

Thank you

תודה רבה

Bruce and Linda Baum for their generous donation in honor of the Yahrzeits of Linda's father, Sam Schwartz, and Bruce's mother and grandmother, Edith Baum and Rose Kline Levine.

Mike and Ann Cifarelli for their generous donation in memory of Rabbi Schnitzer's aunt, Shirley Sandler.

Edward Elson for his generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund.

Peter and Judy Feldman for their generous donation in memory of Joel Aronson's brother, Dan Aronson and Chava Gal-Or's uncle, Phil Grayson.

Kenneth and Dionne Fine for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in honor of the Rabbi's ordination.

Richard Fogel for his generous donation in honor of the Rabbi's ordination.

Paul and Marla Hewitt for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in honor of the Rabbi's ordination.

Harri Kramer and Russ Hogya for their generous donation to the Social Action Fund in memory of Steve Turow's mother, Goldjean Turow.

Richard and Rori Kochman for their generous donation in honor of Yahrzeit of Rori's grandmother, Shirley Tahler and in memory of Chava Gal-Or's uncle, Phil Grayson.

James and Maxine Perlmutter for their generous donation in honor of Rabbi Schnitzer's ordination and in memory of Joan Wolf's husband, Steve Chiaverini.

Steve Turow and Linda Blumberg for their generous donation for the Yachad project and the Darfur Walk.

Jeanne Tustian for her generous donation in memory of Joel Aronson's brother, Dan Aronson.

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

Ronald and Jilda White for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in honor of the Rabbi's ordination.

For their generous donations to Enhancing the Flame

Elizabeth Short
Larry Slifman
Lorrie Van Akkeren

Community News

March to Demand Peace and Justice in Sudan

Please Join the BJC, BHPC, and The Darfur Interfaith Network as we march to demand peace and justice in Sudan.

The Darfur Interfaith Network is proud to sponsor The Hope for Darfur-Justice in Sudan March and Rally scheduled for Sunday, May 23 at 1:30 p.m. The march will begin at the athletic field on Raoul Wallenberg Plaza behind the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Concerned citizens and members from congregations of many faiths throughout the DC area will begin gathering around 1 p.m. At 1:30 p.m. we will

begin the short march to Lafayette Park, across from the White House.

The rally at Lafayette Park will include survivors from Darfur and southern Sudan, dynamic informative speakers representing Sudan activists who will inform us of the latest situation on the ground, clergy from several denominations, and music. All activities should be concluded by around 3:30 p.m. The peaceful march is less than one mile and we encourage families and children to join us. There will be plenty of signs to carry!



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Yvonne Bryant**

The deadline for submitting articles for the June newsletter is May 7.
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 June newsletter, mail it to the BJC office with your check made payable to BJC.
Deadline: May 7. 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.