



# Bethesda Jewish Congregation News

Rabbi Elhanan 'Sunny' Schnitzer

February 2014

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## Kriat HaRav—The Call of the Rabbi

Rabbi Elhanan 'Sunny' Schnitzer

Last month I posted in this newsletter a famous story by Reb Nachman of Bratslav, The Mirror Image.

Some of our members responded with wonderful insights ranging from the metaphysical to the existential to the political. Some even shared more stories.

There is no single way to understand the meaning in a Reb Nachman tale. All interpretations are valid and provide holy insight. Like the Rebbe's life itself, each tale has different meaning depending upon who you are in the moment you hear the story. That is Reb Nachman's genius, as it is the genius of the Maggid, the rabbi/storyteller.

On a pshat (plain) level, our society generally believes that a craftsman who does fine work is worthy of reward, and should be held in high esteem. There is one ironic ending to this story that leaves the industrious craftsman with two bags of gold and the lazy man receives only a reflection of those two bags as his reward. (Thank you, Dale McMillen).

But, I will argue that to reflect and amplify the work of others is also meritorious. Not everyone will be able to write like Shakespeare, hit 70 home runs in a season, or create the next level personal computer.

But there is merit in telling stories of those who do create wonder, reflecting their light, and amplifying their work. We cannot all have original thoughts, but it is meritorious to spread those thoughts.

The moon has no light of its own. It reflects the light of the sun. That makes it no less beautiful or necessary.

The cleverness displayed by the "late starting craftsman" is also

an art. Many of us walk around feeling as if we got started late in life on our true path. "If only I woulda, shoulda, coulda..."

This was also Rebbe Nachman's story, not that he got a late start (he was only 38 years old when he died), but rather that he was profoundly troubled by his inability to sustain his moments of AHA! (spiritual ecstasy and enlightenment) and fell into the trap and depression of woulda, shoulda, coulda.

Reb Nachman was an incredibly complicated figure and his teachings at once delight and perplex us. Was he a mystic, a budding existentialist, or something else? Great minds who have studied his work, Martin Buber, Gershon Scholem, Art Green, Zvi Marks cannot agree.

Understanding Rebbe Nachman, his personal manic depressive struggles, opens a door for us.

Great teachers often teach what they themselves are trying to learn. In the Rebbe's teachings we can see hints

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### BJC News

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of his personal battle to build self-esteem. He is a wounded teacher—and that is the source of his greatness.

I looked at this story and was taken by the desire within. The craftsmen's desire is to be one with God by becoming "of use" in the construction of a *heichal*, a dwelling palace for the Divine Presence. This is one of the practices in *hibodedut*, a Jewish meditation methodology that uses imagery or letters to create Divine constructs. Rabbi Nachman was a devotee of *hitbodedut* as a means of *deveikus* (devotion).

"The perfection of hisbodedus is to attain *deveykus*—to cleave to God until you become utterly subsumed

within the Divine Oneness. The word *hisbodedus* is a construct of *badad*, meaning either 'seclusion' or 'oneness,' as in the phrase 'they shall be one with one [i.e., of equal weight]' (Rashi on Exodus 30:34). That is, you must become 'one with God' to the extent that all sensory awareness ceases, and the only reality you perceive is Godliness. This is the mystical meaning of the verse, 'Ein ode milvado...There is nothing but God alone' (Deuteronomy 4:35). This, too, is why the Torah calls Israel 'a people that dwells alone [badad]' (Numbers 23:9). The destiny of each Jew is to attain complete unification with God, without any intermediary" (Rebbe Nachman in *Zimras Ha'aretz*, I, 52.)

In *hitbodedut*—if one succeeds in "breaking through"—one discovers that God stands on both sides of the relationship.

May we all experience a breakthrough "*bimheirah b'yameinu*", speedily and in our days.

How would you interpret the meaning of this tale? Please feel free to write to me with your thoughts and share this story with friends. I will share my interpretation next month.

## The President's Column

Joan Wolf

You're going to be busy at BJC in March!

On March 15 at 7 p.m., you'll either be in the phenomenal cast of "The Megillah According to the Beach Boys" or amongst the enthusiastic and non-judgmental audience, laughing like crazy.

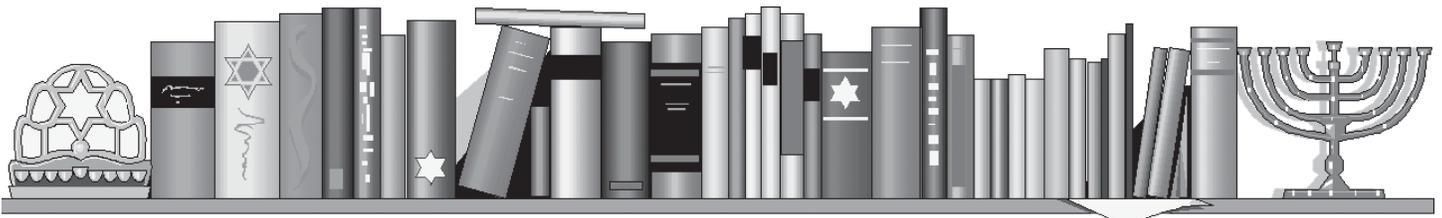
Additionally, I am thrilled to announce that BJC, thanks to Marty Ganzglass and his committee, will launch a new Speaker Series on March 30 at 3 p.m., beginning with father-daughter journalist team Marvin and Deborah Kalb! They will join us to discuss their book, *Haunting Legacy: Vietnam and the American Presidency from Ford to Obama*, which presents the

history of presidential decision-making in light of the Vietnam debacle.

Deborah Kalb, a freelance writer and editor, worked as a journalist in Washington for more than two decades, including writing for Gannett News Service, *Congressional Quarterly*, *US News & World Report*, and *The Hill*. Award-winning reporter Marvin Kalb spent 30 years working for CBS News (he was the last reporter recruited by Edward R. Murrow) and NBC News. His work at CBS landed him on Richard Nixon's "enemies list". Marvin is the Edward R. Murrow Professor of Practice (Emeritus) at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and founding director of the Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy. He will also discuss his newest (13th) book about the presidency and US foreign policy, *The Road to War: Presidential Commitments Honored and Betrayed*.

The Kalbs will autograph their books, following the lecture, in a signing event organized by Politics & Prose. See you in March!





## Director of Education

Mindy Silverstein

Have you ever had an “aha” moment—a time when all the sentiments, sayings, and words you’ve heard from the past, all come together with significant meaning for you? I had my “aha” moment several weeks ago concerning the word “community.”

For years, I’ve heard the phrase “caring community.” I thought I knew what it meant, but based on my “aha” moment, I now understand I never fully comprehended the concept. It wasn’t until I made a shiva call to a congregant that I truly connected with the phrase.

Somehow, I got the message growing up, that one makes a shiva call only to people you know. This particular time, I made a shiva call to a family I never met. All I knew was that they were BJC members and they experienced a loss. I arrived at the home, introduced myself, and asked the family to talk about their loved one. The smile that that simple request brought was overwhelming for me. They had the opportunity to talk, to share, and to remember. Yes, the conversation did bring tears to their eyes, but I believe they were tears reflecting the love that this family had for their loved one.

At that moment, I understood what it meant for me to be part of a community. It is about connecting emotionally with another person—regardless of whether or not you know them and it is about permitting yourself to participate in tradition.

In Exodus 24:7, we read ‘All that God has spoken, we will do and we will hear.’ I think this is one of the first descriptions in Torah on how one reaches an “aha” moment. Do the action first and trust that the reasoning and understanding will follow.

### Upcoming Events:

- Friday, February 7, Tot Shabbat, 6:30 p.m.
- Saturday, March 8, 10 a.m.-Noon  
Stop Hunger Now program  
BJC and Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church are once again team-

ing up to bring the Stop Hunger Now, an international hunger relief agency that has been fulfilling its commitment to end hunger for more than 15 years, to our site. Stop Hunger Now has a meal-packaging program that combines rice, soy, dehydrated vegetables and a flavoring mix into small meal packets. Each meal costs only 25 cents and our goal is to package at least 10,000 meals. All Religious School, Saturday School and Tichon students will be participating in this activity. BJC members are invited to participate as well.

Additionally, we are looking for financial contributions to help offset the cost of the meals. If you are able to help, please contact Mindy at [eddirect@bethesdajewish.org](mailto:eddirect@bethesdajewish.org). All help and financial contributions are greatly appreciated.

## 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.

# Congregation News

## American Red Cross Blood Drive at BJC

On Saturday, February 1, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., BJC will host a blood drive for the American Red Cross. Please consider donating to help someone in need. The process takes about one hour. We also need volunteers to register donors and to provide refreshments. Student volunteers qualify for Montgomery County SSL credit. To make an appointment, donate and/or if you are willing to volunteer, contact Roz Young, [admin@bethesdajewish.org](mailto:admin@bethesdajewish.org). For more information, visit [www.redcrossblood.org/donating-blood](http://www.redcrossblood.org/donating-blood).

## Modern Jewish History with Rabbi Schnitzer

Join us on February 5, 12, 19, & 26, 7:30 – 9 p.m. for a continuation of last year's very popular Judaism 101 class. In this four-session course, we will take a look at Jewish history in the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, & 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Judaism and the Jewish people have changed radically in the last 300 years from the Haskallah (the Jewish Enlightenment) to the American Jewish experience, the Shoah, and the end of a 2000-year exile from the Jewish homeland of Israel.

Syllabus and materials will be provided to all students. Advance registration is preferred. Please call the BJC office.

## Open Book Discussion: *The Lady In Gold*

Please join us on February 26 to discuss *The Lady in Gold: The Extraordinary Tale of Gustav Klimt's Masterpiece, Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer* by Anne-Marie O'Connor. This is the story of the attempts by a number of Jewish families to reclaim paintings that were stolen by the Nazis during the Second World War, in particular those by Austrian artist, Gustav Klimt. The book also sheds light on the Viennese world at the time of the painting's inception: a glowing, golden, culturally rich city where intellectual Jewish society was at the foreground. It traces the rise of Nazism in Austria, how the Jews at the core of this cultural blooming were dispossessed of the world they had built and the artworks they treasured.

We meet at 8 p.m. in the Library. Drop-ins and new members are always welcome. Contact Evelyn Ganzglass, 202-966-7037 or Ruth Rosenberg, 703-560-9525 for more information.

## CE21—Where We've Been, Where We're Going

We've now concluded our Congregational Conversations. In all, we held 10 sessions both at BJC and in congregants' homes, including one meeting that was led by a high school student for current students. At



the conclusion of each of these conversations, several things became very evident. First, we are an opinionated bunch! Had we not committed to spending a defined amount of time, most of the conversations would have gone on for quite a long time.

Second, at the risk of sounding like Sally Field at the Oscars, it's clear that we truly like each other. There were an amazing number of threads and connections as participants played "Jewish geography" and congregants realized how connected we are. These small conversations have helped create bonds among us that will last into the future.

Third, generally we are a reasonably content congregation. We heard a great deal of, "I like BJC; it doesn't need to change, but how about adding [fill in the blank]." Our quick assessment is we need to do more without radically changing who we are.

And, in the same vein, it is clear that those who participated in the conversations felt a strong sense of pride in our congregation and our community. Plaudits abounded for the Rabbi, our Executive Director, and our Education Director, and our community. We heard many complimentary and complementary perspectives on the unique spirit and qualities that set BJC apart from other synagogues.

Where do we go from here? The CE21 Leadership Team and Task Force are now collating and analyzing the tremendous input we collected. From there, we will see what is practical and doable in both the short and long term. All of this will unfold as we continue the CE21 journey.

If you want to know more, or get involved, just get in touch at [CE21bjc@gmail.com](mailto:CE21bjc@gmail.com) or 301-469-8636.

*Harri j. Kramer, Chair, Leadership Team*

## In Search of Volunteers and Participants

Have a spare hour or two to join in more BJC activities? We are always looking for volunteers/participants for all of our events. We want to hear of your interest and ideas, so please send a note to [BJCVolunteer@gmail.com](mailto:BJCVolunteer@gmail.com). All are welcome!

- *Meetcha Mocha Cafe*—Open every Saturday morning when Religious School is held! Speakers on various topics on the second Saturday of every month. We need volunteers to donate and set-up breakfast foods between 8:30-9 a.m.

- *Discussion of "Trinitarian Monotheism"*—Sunday, February 2, 2:30–4:45 p.m., sponsored by The Jewish-Islamic Dialogue Society of Washington (IIDS)
- *Stepping Stones Shelter*—Cook dinner for families in transition @Stepping Stones Shelter, from 4:30-6 p.m., February 10, March 10, April 22, May 20, June 9, July 15, August 11, September 16, October 13, November 10, December 16
- *Social Action Committee Meetings* (3rd Tuesday of every month, 7:30 p.m.)—February 18; March 18; April (TBD); May 20; June 17
- *Habitat for Humanity Builds* @the Maple Hill Townhome community: No February dates; resumes in March
- *Rally for Darfur* at Sudanese Embassy—Sunday, April 27
- *Fellow Gardeners Unite*—Fight weeds around our building! No meetings, just pull weeds during the growing season to avoid a jungle in the fall. Join our weed-fighting corps!

### Three Cheers for Bottoms Up!

On December 25, BJC raised over \$1,000 for Bottoms Up with our newest annual "Take Out and Movie" fundraiser.

Hats off to our Social Action Committee who had the vision for this event, pulling it all together so that over 40 congregants spent an enjoyable afternoon and evening together while raising the funds for desperately needed medical and related supplies for Jewish Cuban infants and children. Thanks also goes to Rabbi Schnitzer for procuring the movie, *Man of Steel*, and for sharing his knowledge and insights about Superman's true Jewish identity (who knew?) and the role that Jews played in the entertainment industry in the '40s and '50s, as well as creating the

comics, stories, and characters that many of us grew up with and continue to delight today's generation.

A hearty thanks goes to Seven Seas Restaurant which provided the delicious fare and \$25 gift cards, too! If your plans did not allow you to participate this year, we hope that you will consider joining us for next year's December 25 Bottoms Up fundraiser—good food, great company and fun for the entire family!

### A Meal at Lebanese Taverna For A Good Cause

BJC members have expressed an interest in socializing more with fellow members, so here is a way to do that, have a great meal and support a good cause at the same time.

The Lebanese Taverna is offering to send BJC 20% of each check for all meals our congregants have all day Sunday, March 2, 2014. These monies will be sent to STOP HUNGER NOW, a longtime BJC commitment.

We will reserve two tables for 6-8 people at 6:30 p.m. under the name BJC. Please feel free to join BJC members you find there. Or, reserve your own table with your invited friends. Clip out the "coupon" below and bring it with you to ensure credit for our tikkum olam BJC effort. The coupon will be accepted at the Bethesda location on Arlington Road all day—breakfast, brunch, lunch or dinner.

If you e-mail Stacey ([staceyfitz2@gmail.com](mailto:staceyfitz2@gmail.com)) and tell her your plan to join the dinner group specifically, she will ensure sufficient group tables. Or, call Stacey FitzSimmons, 301-951-1820.

This could become a first Sunday of the month event with different designated causes, as sponsored by your BJC Social Action Committee!

Cut out "coupon" below. You *must* bring it with you!

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### Dining at Lebanese Taverna (Bethesda Location)

Request 20% of any meal bill on Sunday, March 2, 2014 to go to BJC Social Action cause: STOP HUNGER NOW

Bethesda Jewish Congregation, Attn: Stacey FitzSimmons, 6601 Bradley Boulevard, Bethesda MD 20817

# February 2014 Calendar

Day	Date	Time	Event	Location
Wednesday	Jan 29	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	Religious School Kemach and Tanach Tri-Cycle Program	Classrooms Library Rm 109
Friday	Jan 31	6:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Family Service Potluck Shabbat Dinner	Covenant Hall Memorial Hall
Saturday	Feb 1	9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m. 12:30 p.m.	Adult Hebrew Religious School Shabbat Worship Class of 2014 Family B'Nai Mitzvah Class	Lounge Classrooms Covenant Hall Lounge
Tuesday	Feb 4	6:30 p.m.	Tichon Class	Youth Lounge
Wednesday	Feb 5	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Religious School Kemach and Tanach Modern Jewish History	Classrooms Library Lounge
Friday	Feb 7	6:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	Tot Shabbat N'Tivim L'Shabbat Music Service	Lounge Covenant Hall
Saturday	Feb 8	9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m. 12:30 p.m. 4:30 p.m.	Adult Hebrew Religious School Meetcha Mocha Café Discussion Shabbat Worship Class of 2014 Family B'Nai Mitzvah Class Chant Circle	Lounge Classrooms Rm 109 Covenant Hall Lounge Covenant Hall
Wednesday	Feb 12	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Religious School—Tu B'Shevat Seder w/Tichon Kemach and Tanach Modern Jewish History	Classrooms Library Lounge
Thursday	Feb 13	7:30 p.m.	BJC Board of Directors Meeting	Lounge
Friday	Feb 14	6:30 p.m.	Service of Meditation	Covenant Hall
Saturday	Feb 15	9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	No Adult Hebrew No Religious School Shabbat Worship	Covenant Hall
Tuesday	Feb 18	6:30 p.m.	Tichon Class	Youth Lounge
Wednesday	Feb 19	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Religious School Kemach and Tanach Modern Jewish History	Classrooms Library Lounge
Friday	Feb 21	8:00 p.m.	Simcha B'Shabbat All Music Service w/band	Covenant Hall
Saturday	Feb 22	9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	Adult Hebrew Religious School Shabbat Worship	Lounge Classrooms Covenant Hall
Wednesday	Feb 26	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	Religious School Kemach and Tanach Modern Jewish History Open Book Discussion: The Lady in Gold	Classrooms Library Lounge Library
Friday	Feb 28	8:00 p.m.	Shabbat Service	Covenant Hall

Saturday	Mar 1	9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	Adult Hebrew Religious School Shabbat Worship—Schecter Bar Mitzvah	Lounge Classrooms Covenant Hall
Tuesday	March 4	6:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Tichon Class Adult Ed-History of Purim Spiel	Youth Lounge Lounge

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

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## Adult Education

Join us on Tuesday, March 4, 7-8:30 p.m., when Jean Freedman, Ph.D. in folklore, will discuss the customs and traditions of Purim, specifically focusing on one of BJC's highlights, the Purimspiel.

## Yahrzeits

יארצייט

Dan Aronson, Brother of Joel Aronson  
Herman Bachrach, Father of Burt Bachrach  
Harold Coplan, Uncle of Lois Rose  
Samuel Druckman, Grandfather of Linda Blumberg  
and Mark Blumberg

Anna Dubrow, Grandmother of Laurie Dubrow  
Morris Dubrow, Grandfather of Laurie Dubrow  
Curtis Evey, Father of Bunny Roufa  
Harry Goldberg, Father of Madeline Killefer  
Beatrice Haber, Mother of Miles Haber  
Leon Jacobson, Father of Annie Cifarelli  
Minnie Kerwin, Mother of Aleen Chabot  
John Krettmeyer, Father of Nancy Glassman  
Theodore Landsman, Father of Sandi Medlin  
Marchia Olney, Mother of Phyllis Hoffman  
Shirley Ratner, Mother of Gary Ratner  
Sarah Roger, Grandmother of Bob Poogach  
Nathan Rosenberg, Father of Lorraine Levin  
Ernest Schmalz, Father of Lorraine McMillen  
Estelle Schneider, Mother of Cindy Bogorad  
Shirley Selditch, Mother of Renee Asher  
Sylvia Simon, Mother of Martin Simon  
Reve Sugarman, Mother of Elsa Weinstein  
Shirley Tahler, Grandmother of Rori Kochman  
Judith Taylor, Mother of Lyne Taylor-Genser  
Lolly Toll, Wife of Steve Toll  
Goldjean Turow, Mother of Stephen Turow  
Harry Walders, Father of Larry Walders  
Miriam Winkler, Mother of Robin Doroshov

## Thank You

תודה רבה

The Bayuk Family for their generous donation in honor of Roz's decade of service to the congregation.  
Mark and Patricia Brody for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund.  
Susan Berkowitz for her generous donation to the Cuba Fund.

John Camp for his generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund.

Judi Dash and Rachel Dash for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in memory of their mother Sara Dash.

Al and Judy Folsom for their generous donation to the Cuba Fund.

Nancy Glassman for her generous donation.

Mark and Carol Herman for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund.

Harri Kramer and Russ Hogya for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in memory of Sara Dash and in recognition for all the Rabbi does when our families are under duress.

Kurt Kohn for his generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in memory of his wife, Elaine.

Mitch Kraus for his generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund as a thank you for all the Rabbi does for the community.

Les and Marsha Levine for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in recognition of the contribution BJC makes in serving a diverse Jewish Community.

Laura Lippman for her generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund.

Jim and Maxine Perlmutter for their generous donation to the Maran Gluckstein Family Education Fund in honor of Roz's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with BJC.

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

David Wall and Wendy Shay for their generous donation.

Milton and Elsa Weinstein for their generous donation in honor of the Yahrzeit of Elsa's father, Joseph Sugarman.

## For Their Generous Donation to Enhancing the Flame

Lorrie Van Akkeren



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**Design Layout and Desktop Publishing:  
Yvonne Bryant—[ly\\_bryant@verizon.net](mailto:ly_bryant@verizon.net)**

The deadline for submitting articles for the March newsletter is February 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 March newsletter, mail it to the BJC office with your check made payable to BJC.  
Deadline: February 7. Rate structure for a business card: \$30.00 per month, 3-month minimum. Rates are slightly higher for cards that are not camera-ready art.