



Message from the Rabbi



Not every prayer immediately makes sense to me. Prayer and liturgy is complex especially since our prayer book has been compiled over thousands of years and by countless people. The siddur (prayer book) has developed into a collection of prayers and readings responding to common themes. In an on-going effort to help "unpack" the meaning of our formal prayer liturgy, I will use the Scroll, the bimah and other opportunities to offer my reflections on specific prayers. I hope my initial effort will inspire your own discussions and debate about the meaning of a particular prayer. I have also included the page number where the prayer can be found so you can look at the text yourself.

"Praised are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe who has made me a Jew." (Shabbat Sim Shalom 65; Weekday Sim Shalom 10) This is one of the morning blessings which is recited each morning. I have frequently overlooked this prayer because it seems so simplistic. Of course I am a Jew, I tell myself. The mere fact that I am reciting this blessing, Baruch atah... shows that I am Jewish. At these moments, I catch myself and am reminded that a simple explanation is frequently like the calm surface of a lake which hides the greater depths below. So what does it mean to thank God "who has made me a Jew"? To be made a Jew is to have the opportunity to express a love of God and the world through our traditions, rituals, and community- both to express a love of God and to be open to receiving it as well.

To be a Conservative Jew specifically is to genuinely embrace the laws (halachot) and customs (minhagim) of our past while, if necessary, carefully finding new applications for our modern era. For me, to be a Conservative Jew is to affirm a life committed to both Jewish practice and modern living. While these values may be in tension at times, I cannot give up on either value. At a restaurant, on Shabbat, during holidays or countless other times, I encounter manifestations of this tension. These are difficult and personal decisions to make. To thank God for making me a Jew each morning is to rededicate myself to Jewish living, fully accepting the challenges as well as the rewards.

Rabbi Gregory Harris

Shabbat and Festival Services

Friday, September 20

Erev Sukkot
6:30pm Friday Evening & Festival Service

Saturday, September 21

1st Day Sukkot
7:30 and 9:15 am Shabbat and Festival Services
9:15 am William Aisenberg Bar Mitzvah
9:15 am Michael Morgenstern Bar Mitzvah
9:30 am Minyan Chaverim - APR
10:00 am Jr. Congregation - Chapel

Sunday, September 22

2nd Day Sukkot
9:15 am Festival Service
9:15 am Elizabeth Spergel Bat Mitzvah

Friday, September 27

Hoshanah Rabbah
6:30pm Friday Evening & Festival Service

Saturday, September 28

Shemini Atzeret
7:00 and 9:15 am Shabbat and Festival Services
Yizkor will be recited at both services
10:00 am Jr. Congregation - Chapel
10:30 am Nitzanim - APR
7:30 pm Simchat Torah Service

Sunday, September 29

Simchat Torah
9:15 am Festival Service

Friday, October 4

6:30pm Friday Evening Service

Saturday, October 5

7:30 and 9:15 am Shabbat Services
9:15 am Henry Scher Bar Mitzvah
9:15 am Jared Senator Bar Mitzvah
9:50 am Worship and Study Minyan - APR
10:00 am Gan Shabbat - MR
10:00 am Jr. Congregation - Chapel
11:00 am Shitufim - Rm 209



September 20, 2002

14 Tishrei 5763

Volume 52

No. 2

Sisterhood News

Sisterhood Book Group Selections

Mark your calendars for the first two Fall meetings of the Sisterhood Book Group. Everyone is welcome to join us on October 6 at 9:30 a.m. for a discussion of *Total Recall* by Sara Paretsky, and on November 3 at 9:30 a.m. when the selection will be *The Book Borrower* by Alice Mattison. Call Andrea Golden at 301-294-2375 for information.

Calling All Cooks—We Need Your Recipes!

Remember to send in your recipes for the Beth El Sisterhood Cookbook. Recipe forms are available outside the office, in Scroll #16, on the Beth El website, or we will mail you as many as you need. Recipes will also be accepted on plain paper, if they follow the desired format or send your recipe by e-mail attachment to cookbook@bethelmc.org. It's easy, so send us the recipes you and your family love. Comfort food or gourmet, simple or Cordon Bleu, for Shabbat, holidays, or every day, we want and need them all! Recipes are due by October 31 but send them in now and avoid the rush. Call Rachele Solkowitz at 301-897-8139 or Sara Greenbaum at 301-656-5263 for information or to receive forms.

Thanks for the Beautiful New Year Card

Sisterhood hopes that everyone enjoyed receiving the beautiful New Year greeting card from their many friends in the congregation. The card was designed and illustrated by Anita Lieb, who also made arrangements with the printer. Pat Danoff handled the entry of names and distribution details. Sisterhood would like to thank **Anita, Pat, and Rhonda Zahler** for their work on the card project. Thanks also to the many Beth El members who supported this successful Sisterhood fund-raising effort. We are hoping to have even more names on the card next year.

Remember to Join Sisterhood

It is not too late to become a member of Sisterhood. If you didn't send in your membership form with your High Holiday registration packet, just send a check now for \$36 (made out to Beth El Sisterhood) to the office. Please include a yellow membership form, if you have one, but it is not required. A one-year free membership is available to women who joined the congregation after March 1, 2002. Send a note or yellow membership form indicating you wish to have the free membership. For more information contact Adeen Postar at 301-564-4516, postar1@aol.com, or Gale Dutcher at 301-984-0025, gad695@aol.com. All Sisterhood members should see the Membership Dinner flyer in this edition of the Scroll and be sure to join us on October 17th.

**Sisterhood is no longer handling
Washington Jewish Week
subscription renewals.
Please send your renewal form and
check directly to WJW.**

Hold the date!

You are invited to celebrate the future of Beth El
Sunday, October 20, 2002, at 1:00 pm.

**Join us for the installation of
Rabbi Gregory Harris**

AND

for an opportunity to further develop the ideas
you have generated during the ATID process.

Clothing For Kostroma

We are again collecting clothing for Kostroma. Children's and teenagers' garments will be particularly appreciated.

Please be aware that the cost for shipping a 45-pound box is about \$125 which is paid for by the World Jewry Fund which, as you know, is funded largely by Beth El congregants. It is well worth it when the clothing is clean and in prime condition.

Do include your name, telephone number, and whether you wish (1) returned to you or (2) given to a local charity any part of your contribution which we feel we cannot send. Please deliver to the Beth El office, Claire Marwick's home (see Directory), or call her for a pick-up.

Warmest thanks from the World Jewry Committee and Kostroma!

Sisterhood Judaica Shop Grand Re-opening

**Sunday, October 6
9:00 am to 1:00 pm**

**Visit our re-decorated shop
and see the new merchandise, including
many beautiful things from Israel**

Select Items on Sale

**Save the Date
Sunday, November 3
9:00 am to 12:00 noon
Sisterhood Flu Shot Clinic
Watch the next Scroll for details**

From the President

Construction Plans (by Arthur Popper and Bert King)

A number of things have happened recently at Beth El that are important to our membership. Most exciting is the presence in our Gallery of the plans for the renovation of our building and property. Over the past months many people have been working very hard to revise and improve the plans, and we hope that all of you will have a chance to study these in detail. The plans have been vetted with constituency groups and we have tried to devise a building that meets the current and future needs of our congregation as a whole, as well as the needs of specific groups. We will just mention a few features of the new building that particularly appeal to us, and you can decide what you like best.

As many of you know, we have had a long-standing problem with having too small and too few classrooms. The classrooms in the new structure will be larger and more numerous, and most will have windows. The same goes for the Nursery School classrooms, and we even managed to increase the size of the playground.

We will have wonderful new worship space in a chapel that will generally be set up for 100-150 but can accommodate over 400 if we make use of the attached new small social hall (which has its own kitchen). While we realize that many members wanted to maintain the atrium, this could not be done without a major space sacrifice. But to "compensate," the new chapel will have large windows that will look out on gardens. We are not doing much renovation of the main sanctuary, but we will have new hand rails (that really provide support for people going up and down the stairs), and accessibility from behind the bimah, and we are still looking into moving the Ark back to give more space on the bimah for people to move around. While I know that Art (jokingly!) promised many of you individual temperature controls at each seat, this will not work, but we will have a new heating and air conditioning system.

Two welcome features are a youth lounge and more open space in the redesigned entry way. This space will provide seating for schmoozing and waiting. We have a much enlarged cloak room, accessible bathrooms, a large

and much improved kitchen, elevators, and an enlarged gift shop. While many of you do not often come in to the administrative space, those of you who do are well aware of the cramped quarters used by our administrative staff and our clergy. We will have a much more effective office space, and the rabbis and hazzan as well as the rabbi emeritus will have comfortable offices where they can meet with congregants.

We continue to be grateful to all the people who have worked so hard to bring the plans and ideas to fruition. We are truly fearful of trying to list all of these people since we know we will miss some. Thus, we are going to limit our thanks here to two individuals who have imparted particular leadership and wisdom on the project, Construction Chair **Don Silverstein**, and our Executive Director **Sheila Bellack**. We do want everyone else who is participating in the project to know that their efforts are greatly appreciated and valued, and without everyone who has been involved, this project could not continue to move forward.

While we cannot yet give you a time-table, the next steps in the renovation are to get prices for the construction and come to the congregation to get approval to go ahead with the project at the projected price. I don't know specifically when this will be, but I am hoping we will call a special congregation meeting in the next few months to ask for approval. Prior to that we will develop ways to provide you with more information about the project, and answer questions that you might have, and hear ideas that you might want to share with us. Again, at the same time as we are moving forward for congregation approval of the project, we will seek to consummate the purchase of the adjacent house. Only if we get the needed house can we change the entrance to the parking lot and building.

Once we have congregation approval for the renovation we need to go to the County for approval of the plans. At this point we are not sure how long this will take, but we hope to move this forward as fast as we can, within the limits of the County system. As we move along on that project we will keep you informed and up-to-date. As we have said before, we are hoping that the renovation, as now envisioned, will have only limited impact on the operation of Beth El since our plan is to complete the new

BETH EL SCROLL

Congregation Beth El
of Montgomery
County
8215 Old Georgetown
Road Bethesda,
Maryland 20814-1451

Phone Number:
301-652-2606

FAX Number
301-907-8559

Web Site
www.bethelmc.org

AFFILIATED WITH UNITED SYNAGOGUE OF
CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM

Rabbi

William D. Rudolph
wrudolph@bethelmc.org

Assistant Rabbi

Gregory Harris
gharris@bethelmc.org

Rabbi Emeritus

Samuel Scolnic
rabsam8709@aol.com

Hazzan

Abraham Lubin
alubin@bethelmc.org

Executive Director

Sheila H. Bellack
sbellack@bethelmc.org

Education Director

Louis A. Nagel
lnagel@bethelmc.org

Family Education Director/ Assistant Education Director

Sarah L. Roark
sroark@bethelmc.org

Nursery School Director

Johanna M. Sohinki
jsohinki@bethelmc.org

Youth Director

Sheldon Novek
snovek@bethelmc.org

President

Arthur N. Popper
apopper@bethelmc.org

Executive Vice President

Brent A. Berger
bberger@bethelmc.org

Religious Vice President

Gail Ross
gross@bethelmc.org

Youth Vice President

Bert King
bking@bethelmc.org

Administration Vice

President
Judy Sherman
jsherman@bethelmc.org

Education Vice President

Susan Levine
slevine@bethelmc.org

Program Vice President

Marvin Yudkovitz
myudkovitz@bethelmc.org

Development and Finance

Vice President
Cary Feldman
cfeldman@bethelmc.org

Treasurer

Judy C. Futterman
jfutterman@bethelmc.org

Secretary

Jerome V. Danoff
jdanoff@bethelmc.org

Publication Chair

Helen A. Popper
hpopper@bethelmc.org

Scroll, USPS Number 009813, is published semi-monthly, except July and August, by Congregation Beth El of Montgomery County, 8215 Old Georgetown Rd., Bethesda, MD 20814. Periodical postage rate paid at Bethesda, Maryland and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Scroll, 8215 Old Georgetown Road, Bethesda, MD 20814.

wing (with the new chapel and classrooms) before doing most of the work on the main part of the building. Thus, we will always have worship space and a social hall available for events, even at the height of construction and renovation.

Our 50 Years (by Arthur Popper)

I am sure you have all received the marvelous booklet "The First 50 Years" of Congregation Beth El. On behalf of all members of our congregation, I want to express my sincerest thanks to the many people who helped put this wonderful review of our history together. These people are listed in the front cover of the booklet and I cannot take the space to thank them individually, but please look at this list of people and next time you see any of them be sure and say thanks, and tell them your reaction to the booklet. I will, however, single out two very special people, and good friends, **Beryl Frank** and **Judy Sherman**, for bringing together the team led by **Janet Meyers**, that produced this testament to our history. These people represent various generations of Beth El members who share a love of our shul, its history, and its future. I also want to express our sincerest gratitude to **Michael** and **Ruth Wald** for financing the project in memory of one of Beth El's founders, **Haskell Wald**. If you have not read the booklet, I encourage you to do so and to kvell in the history of our shul and of 50 (now 52) years of our wonderful family.

The Foundation for Jewish Studies



Congregation Beth El is pleased to host the Foundation's Bible Heritage Lecture on Tuesday, October 29 at 7:30 pm, featuring Rabbi Arnold Jacob Wolf who will speak on "Who Cares About Leviticus?" Rabbi Arnold Jacob Wolf was educated at the University of Chicago, the University of Cincinnati, and the Hebrew Union College, where he was ordained and was later awarded a Doctorate of Divinity. A prolific writer, he is the author of five books and more than three hundred and fifty essays. He is presently theology editor for the scholarly quarterly *Judaism*.

Zip Code List Available - New at the Beth El Office!!!

Looking for a carpool, to just trying to find out what members live nearby? The Beth El office can put together a listing, by zip code and you are welcome to the information. Please call Pam Kocher at the office 301-652-2606 ext. 303 and she will be able to assist you with your request.

Shalom Haverim

Again, a hearty Shanah Tovah from the entire youth staff. Hoping that the holidays have been enjoyable (and delicious) so far, and that the remaining "Chagim" will be as much fun for the whole family. We've gotten off to a great start, and let's keep that momentum going! Starting with this issue of the Scroll, we will be spotlighting each of our youth advisors, so that you can all get to know something about them. We will begin with Julia Kramer who comes to us from New England via GW!



My name is Julia Kramer and I am a sophomore at the George Washington University majoring in International Affairs. I am from Winston-Salem, North Carolina and previously taught Sunday school at Temple Emanuel in Winston-Salem for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten. I am currently the president of my school's Circle K which is a service organization and have served in the past as president of my temple's BBYO group (B'nai B'rith Youth Organization). I look forward to working with you and am excited for a great year!

Below is a calendar through the beginning of October.
USY:

September 27—Friday night services and dinner in the sukkah at the synagogue 6:30 till 9:30 pm RSVP to Sheldon by September 19.

October 5—Seaboard Region Fall Kickoff dance—8:30PM at Beth Emeth in Herndon VA—more information to follow concerning transportation to and from Beth El.
Kadima:

October 6—Afternoon at Rounding 3rd Family Entertainment Center with: laser tag, go-karting, batting cages and arcades! Leave synagogue 1:15, return by 4:30.
Machar:

October 6—Rock climbing at Sportrock indoor climbing arena—meet at synagogue at 1:15—return by 5:30.

Bonim:

October 6—Pizza lunch, extreme arts & crafts project and more! At the synagogue from 1:15 till 3:15.

Please feel free to contact Sheldon with any questions. More information about each event will be available shortly. Hope to see as many of you as possible at these first activities of the year. Again, happy, healthy New Year to you all...

B'shalom, Sheldon

Eat Lunch in the Sukkah

Join Rabbi Harris for an informal lunch in the Beth El Sukkah during Chol HaMoed Sukkot, (Monday 9/23 and Wednesday 9/25) from 12:30 - 1:30 pm. Take your lunch hour from work or make this your sole plan for the day! Please bring a brown-bag dairy lunch and we can all eat together.

New Members

The Beth El community extends its warm welcome to the following members who have recently joined or rejoined the synagogue. If one or more of these families live in your neighborhood, please reach out and personally welcome them. We encourage the new members to take advantage of the wonderful activities Beth El has to offer and hope you will let us know if you have questions or concerns that we can help to address.

Avram and Anat Bar-Cohen , 4767 Berkeley Terr, NW, Washington, DC 20007 Talia Bar-Cohen	202-248-4473 barcohen@starpower.net
Jonathan and Laura Ann Bodner , 5801 Kingswood Road, Bethesda, MD 20814	301-564-1825 bodnej@yahoo.com
Laura and Raymond Bouvier , 7204 Honeywell Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814 Rachel Bouvier, Leah Bouvier	301-656-6973 laura.bouvier@marriott.com
Robert and Audrey Bredhoff , 7110 Exeter Road, Bethesda, MD 20814 Michael Bredhoff	301-718-0763 bredhoffa@sec.gov
Judye Groner , 6800 Tildenwood Lane, Rockville, MD 20852	301-984-8826 karmen@aol.com
David and Louise Kahaner , 8604 Garfield Street, Bethesda, MD 20817	301-530-8720
Ruth Ann Kelty , 6504 43rd Avenue, University Park, MD 20782	301-277-1994 ruth.kelty@noaa.gov
Joshua and Lauren Kolko , 2601 Woodley Place, NW #715, Washington, DC 20008	202-299-9787 lmarkoe@krwashington.com
Gary and Sarah Lesser , 2 Currier Court, Rockville, MD 20850	301-762-7939 glessers@aol.com
Seth Levita , 4718 Tallahassee Avenue, Rockville, MD 20853	301-929-0783 levita@starpower.net
Alisa Lipkind , 6124 Tuckerman Lane, Rockville, MD 20852	301-530-5574 alipkind@hotmail.com
Sheldon and Liat Novek , 13632 Middlevale Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20906 Asher Novek, Jonah Novek	301-460-3376 novek2001@msn.com
Joshua and Jennifer Odintz , 6210 Hollins Drive, Bethesda, MD 20817 Aviva Odintz	301-530-6018
James Papirmeister and Ava Dauerman , 12015 Coldstream Drive, Potomac, MD 20854 Michael Papirmeister, Rachel Papirmeister	301-299-0060 jnpsad@erols.com
Amy Rosenthal , 6101 Plainview Road, Bethesda, MD 20817	301-229-3162
Arthur and Marianne Rosen , 4974 Sentinel Dr, Apt. 204, Bethesda, MD 20816	301-229-0306 artrosen2@aol.com
David Rubin , 7901 Springer Road, Bethesda, MD 20817	301-229-1340 drubin@wso.williams.edu
Greg and Sharon Schaner , 9135 Sligo Creek Parkway, Silver Spring, MD 20901	301-562-4137
Jeremy Schulman and Celeste Murphy , 8806 Garfield Street, Bethesda, MD 20817	301-897-8811 jschulman@milbank.com
Hank and Annamarie Schwinger , 222 Midsummer Drive, Gaithersburg, MD 20878 Joseph Schwinger, Joshua Schwinger	301-948-4316 hschwinger@aol.com
Steve and Lisa Sidel , 7207 Exfair Road, Bethesda, MD 20814 Rachel Sidel	301-656-6745 scsidel@aol.com
Steven Silverman and Nina Falk , 7303 Cedar Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912	301-588-0064 arcovoce@aol.com
Steven Weinstein and Sandra Cushner , 8300 Whitman Drive, Bethesda, MD 20817	301-365-5860 stevenweinstein@erols.com
Mark Wernick , 11 South Eutaw Street, #1303, Baltimore, MD 21201	410-547-3487 mwern001@umaryland.edu

Baruch Dayan Emet

Congregation Beth El offers its sincere condolences to **Fran Leibowitz** on the death of her cousin, **Marla Bennett**; to **Edward Bloom** on the death of his father, **Sidney Bloom**; to **Amy Gooft** on the death of her mother, **Lillian Kaufman**; to **Marilyn Kweller** on the death of her sister-in-law, **Leila Kweller**; to **Gary Jacobs** on the death of his father, **Larry Jacobs**; and to **Michael Mates** on the death of his mother, **Ruth Mates**.

All in the Family

Mazal Tov to **Barbara and David Eisenstein** on the engagement of their daughter, **Amy Eisenstein** to **Alan Weinberg**.

Evening Minyan

The following people are asked to help us with our daily Evening Minyan for the next three weeks. On Sunday through Thursday, the Minyan begins at 8 p.m. and concludes at 8:15 p.m. **On Wednesdays, October 2 through November 13, Minyan will be at 8:20 pm.** During the week of your assignment, we would appreciate your attending as many evenings as possible so that those who are saying Kaddish will have a Minyan they can attend at Beth El.

September 22 – September 26

Jeffrey and Marilyn Glick
Scott and Deborah Glick
Frances Glovinsky
Lewis Goetz and Patti Waksal
Alan and Barbara Gold
Alan and Andrea Golden
Andrew Goldstein and Heidi Sigmon
Daniel Goldman and Katie Smeltz
Deborah Goldfarb
Diane Goldman
David and Joan Goldstein
Elizabeth Goldman
George Goldberg
Harvey and Dale Gold
Irving and Annette Goldberg
Jack and Beatrice Goldman
Judith Goldman
Luta Goldman
Max and Mitzi Goldman
Mark and Cathy Goldsmith

September 29 – October 3

Mason and Betty Goldman
Mark Goldstone and Mindy Lieberman
Neil and Carolyn Goldman
Phil and Susan Goldberg
Robert and Arlene Goldman
Seth and Joan Goldberg
Steven and Janet Goldhill
Stuart Goldberg and Virginia Maycock
Steven and Susan Goldstein
William and Emily Goldman
Bea Golfer
Arlene Golub
Ann Goodman
Hattie Goodman
Eugene and Amy Gooft
Harvey and Libby Gordon
Nathan and Helen Gordon
Phillip and Vivian Gorden
Jonathan and Deborah Gottlieb
Melvin and Harriet Gravitz

October 6 – October 10

Barry and Madalene Greene
Eli and Marcia Greenblum
Jerrold and Karen Greenberg
Jeffrey and Sarah Greenberg
Naomi Greenwood
Robert and Jean Greenberg
Warren and Judith Greenberg
Yael Greenberg
Marvin and Audrey Griff
Sid and Beth Groeneman
Erwin and Leena Groner
Alan and Barri Gross
Ames Gross and Stephanie Lowet
Seymour and Shirley Gross
Juan and Leilia Gruner
Milton and Libbie Gussow
Donald Gutman and Ivy Fields
Paul Haar
Murray Haber

New This Year: A Kick-off Event for Saul Bendit Adult Institute

Wednesday, October 2, 2002, 7:30-9:30 pm

Experience free for one night the stimulation and fun that Beth-El's award-winning adult education program has to offer

At 7:30 pm., Special Keynote Lecture

Noted author, lecturer, and George Washington University Professor Eric Cline, speaking on

THE TEMPLE MOUNT CONTROVERSY: AN ARCHAEOLOGIST'S PERSPECTIVE

Meron Benvenisti, former deputy mayor of Jerusalem, has described the rival Jewish and Muslim claims to the

Temple Mount as "a time bomb...of apocalyptic dimensions."

Following a brief break for refreshments and the evening Minyan (at 8:20), we will have

ISRAELI FOLK DANCING

led by Rocky Korr, the Washington area's pre-eminent Israeli folk dance instructor.

We invite you to register for Saul Bendit classes during the evening. Registration opens at 7:00 p.m.

SAUL BENDIT ADULT INSTITUTE

FALL 2002

Six Wednesday Evenings, October 9, 16, 23, and 30; November 6 and 13

7:30 to 8:20 p.m.

September 11 and its Challenge to Jewish Values Rabbi William D. Rudolph
 Midrash: Technicolor of the Bible Rabbi Gregory Harris
 Back to Basics: Jewish Customs and Traditions Hazzan Abraham Lubin
 God's Messengers Rabbi Samuel Scolnic
 Jewry Between the World Wars, 1918-1939 Dr. Frans Coetzee and Dr. Marilyn Shevin-Coetzee
 Hebrew Prayerbook Reading Beyond the Basics (runs for 12 sessions) Cheryl Kreiser

8:20 to 8:40 p.m. - Coffee Break

8:40 to 9:30 p.m.

The Jewish Life Cycle: Joy and Pain Rabbi Gregory Harris
 Jews Along the Silk Road Jeffrey Kaplan
 Israeli Folk Dancing Rocky Korr
 Jews in American Film Michael Abell
 History of the Conflict Between Israelis and Arabs Dr. Bernard Reich

NEW FEATURE: MONTHLY CLASS (7:30-8:20 p.m., on Oct. 9, Nov. 6, Dec. 11, Feb. 5, Mar. 5, and Apr. 9)

Reading Israel: A Taste of Recent Israeli Fiction in Translation Michlean Amir

NEW FEATURE: TUESDAY EVENING CLASS (7:30-9:00 p.m., on November 5, 12, and 19, at the Ratner Museum, 10001 Old Georgetown Road, Bethesda)

Bible as Art Phillip Ratner

Six Tuesday Mornings, October 8, 15, 22, and 29; November 5 and 12

8:10 to 9:00 a.m.

A Taste of Talmud Rabbi Samuel Scolnic

9:00 to 9:55 a.m.

Reading Hebrew with Ease for Emerging Readers (runs for 12 sessions) Betsy Roth

10:00 to 10:50 a.m.

September 11 and its Challenge to Jewish Values Rabbi William Rudolph
 The Jewish Life Cycle: Joy and Pain Rabbi Gregory Harris
 God's Messengers Rabbi Samuel Scolnic
 Reading Hebrew with Ease (runs for 12 sessions) Betsy Roth

10:50 to 11:10 a.m. - Coffee Break

11:10 to Noon

Midrash: Technicolor of the Bible Rabbi Gregory Harris
 Back to Basics: Jewish Customs and Traditions Hazzan Abraham Lubin

TWO-HOUR CLASS 10:00am TO NOON

Lay Educators Institute Teacher training experts from the Board of Jewish Education

BROCHURES ARE NOW AVAILABLE

Note: The evening minyan will start at 8:20 p.m. (rather than 8:00 p.m.) on evenings when Institute classes are scheduled. Questions? Call 301-652-2606, Ext. 349.

Congregation Beth El of Montgomery County, 8215 Old Georgetown Road, Bethesda, MD 20814-1451

Please enroll me in the following A.M. P.M. course(s):

1. _____ 2. _____

Enclosed is a check for \$ _____ made payable to Beth El.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ Phone _____

One 1-hour course (Six 1-hour sessions) (Talmud - no fee).....\$30 member; \$35 nonmember
 Hebrew courses (Twelve 1-hour sessions).....\$60 member; \$70 nonmember
 Bible as Art (Three 90-minute sessions).....\$30 member; \$35 nonmember
 Reading Israel: A Taste of Recent Israeli Fiction (Six monthly sessions).....\$30 member; \$35 nonmember
 Lay Educators Institute.....No fee

The following article was a part of the 50th Anniversary speeches and was inadvertently omitted from the last issue of the *Scroll*.



How Did Beth El Become Egalitarian?

By: Joe Young

As long ago as 1984, Beth El's public stance on egalitarianism was quite clear. We said in the introductory material in the congregational directory that "Women's rights is not an issue...as women are treated equally, sharing responsibilities on the Board of Directors, functioning as part of the daily Minyan, serving as Readers on the Sabbath and the holidays, and receiving Torah honors." But it clearly was not always that way.

As reported by those present at the creation, Beth El was not particularly different from the norm for Conservative congregations in the '50's. Men and women sat together, women could open the ark, read English readings, and address the congregation from the bimah, when appropriate. However, they were not counted in the Minyan, they did not lead services or read Torah or Haftarah, and girls' Bat Mitzvah ceremonies were on Friday night.

So, how did Beth El change? How did we evolve from a typical liberal and observant, but not egalitarian, congregation into the shul we have now? And why is this MAN standing up and talking about it? The process of change is typically complex, no less so in this case, but in this case, it was documented in an article by Leila Rosen Young, published posthumously in the Summer, 1986, issue of the journal *Conservative Judaism*, entitled *Women in Synagogue Life: Models of Congregational Change and One Congregation's Path of Change*. It will not surprise you that the "one congregation" discussed in the article, though not named explicitly, was Beth El. Nor will it surprise you that Leila was my first wife, whose life was ended prematurely by the cruel ravages of breast cancer.

This talk, then, will be informed by Leila's article. In addition, you'll see that the evolution of egalitarianism at Beth El has been intimately connected to the Young family.

The first hint of change at Beth El came in 1969, when the congregation voted to count women in the Minyan, a move that directly affected only the weekday Minyanim, since attendance had not been a problem on Shabbat or Yom Tov. The congregational vote to count women came after Rabbi Scolnic explained that he found it awkward to have a woman regularly attending the daily Minyan, often to say Kaddish, and not be able to proceed because of the lack of a sufficient number of men, although, counting women, there would be enough to move forward.

This early change came about before the Youngs moved to Bethesda in 1972. When we did arrive, we found that Beth El was beginning a year of intensive halachic study of the question of whether to allow women to have aliyot. It seemed clear to us that Beth El was likely to vote to give aliyot to women, especially when we saw that women were allowed to carry the Torah for hakafot on Simchat Torah in 1972. But with our older daughter Michal in second grade at what was to become the Jewish Day School, we had the luxury of waiting a year to see if the vote was indeed in favor of aliyot for women before we actually joined Beth El.

When the congregation saw no valid halachic reason to deny aliyot to women, the vote was to allow them. At that point, everyone automatically assumed that other issues would be resolved in a simple manner, and to a great extent they were. Women assumed they could read Torah and Haftarah, as well as serve as shaliach tzibur to lead the congregation in prayer, and they could. For example, a group of women recruited a knowledgeable male member of the congregation, originally opposed to aliyot for women, to teach them (and at least one man) how to read Torah, and they read as soon as they were prepared. It probably won't surprise you that Leila was one of these women. At that time, there was a "Torah reading club" for young people, and girls began to join and to read, when prepared, on the same terms as their brothers. It also won't surprise you that Michal was one of the first girls in that club.

This did lead to the odd situation, however, that girls who were so inclined could read Torah before their Bat Mitzvah and after their Bat Mitzvah, but not as a part of their Bat Mitzvah. Yes, Beth El still scheduled Bat Mitzvah ceremonies only on Friday night, where no Torah reading took place and where girls typically read a Haftarah, often not the one for the weekly portion, a practice certainly not a part of the traditional Friday night service! In fact, at least one daughter of a Beth El family had her Bat Mitzvah ceremony elsewhere on Shabbat morning in order to be able to read Torah.

The Young family was beginning to be panicked about this matter as we were approaching the time when Michal's September 1978 Bat Mitzvah had to be scheduled. We and other concerned congregants, including some in families with only boys, lobbied for change in this matter. After another year's study, a motion was brought forth at a congregational meeting that was short of what was appropriate, and a substitute motion passed that essentially allowed girls to celebrate their B'nai Mitzvah either on Saturday morning or Friday night, at the family's option, as of the 1978-79 year, which had not been scheduled yet. For the 1977-78 year, no scheduled Bar Mitzvah ceremonies were to be displaced, but girls would

be allowed to change their Bat Mitzvah ceremony to Saturday morning if there was no Bar Mitzvah scheduled then.

That brought relief to the Youngs, as it would be possible to schedule Michal's Bat Mitzvah on an appropriate Shabbat morning in September 1978. As an aside, only one Bat Mitzvah ended up being held on Shabbat morning during 1977-78, one involving two sisters past the regular Bat Mitzvah age who had foregone Bat Mitzvah ceremonies at the usual time because they would have had to be held on Friday night. That, coupled with Michal's September birthday, made hers the first solo Shabbat morning Bat Mitzvah ever held at Beth El.

So, it seems that we were now REALLY egalitarian. Michal went on to be the first girl to be the leader of the Torah reading club. Women led services and read Torah and Haftarah, but they had not yet begun to wear tallit and, at weekday shacharit, tefillin.

But a Shabbat morning Bat Mitzvah was an *option* for girls, not yet a *requirement*. Girls could still have Bat Mitzvah ceremonies on Friday night if they wished. What happened to that option? Nor surprisingly, it faded into oblivion and was already in total disuse by the time Beth El decided to abolish late Friday evening services.

What about tallit? At present, most Jewish men wear a tallit at morning services, but many women do not. But all Bat Mitzvah girls wear a tallit! This certainly was not always the case; while Michal had the first solo Shabbat morning Bat Mitzvah, she did not wear a tallit. It took three years until my younger daughter Avigayl became the first Bat Mitzvah girl to be presented with a tallit, a practice then a part of each Bar Mitzvah celebration.

What I am suggesting is that permitting women to become full participants in the ritual life of the synagogue doesn't ensure that all will avail themselves of the opportunity, but the opportunity does allow for evolution. Some evolution takes place within the individual, with women taking on roles they previously had not embraced, and some takes place intergenerationally, with younger sisters taking on obligations before older and daughters taking on roles their mothers could not or would not.

Let me give a few additional family examples of which I am very proud. The same Michal who had the first Beth El solo Bat Mitzvah was the moving force behind the arrival of egalitarianism in the Conservative shul in South Bend, IN, and is now an extremely active layperson in her Sharon, MA, shul, serving on committees, reading Torah and Haftarah, and generally functioning as a full participant in the religious life of her congregation.

In addition to being the first to receive a tallit at her Bat Mitzvah, my daughter Avigayl is the first woman brought up in Beth El to be ordained as a rabbi by the Jewish Theological Seminary. Avigayl is now Rabbi-In-

Residence at the Solomon Schechter Day School of Bergen County, New Jersey.

Equally remarkable is the evolution in thinking of my wife Ina. She was raised Orthodox, unaccustomed to taking an active role in the religious life of the shul. Before I knew her, she raised three boys and celebrated their B'nai Mitzvah at Beth El without once stepping foot on the bimah. But she has evolved religiously not only to accept aliyot, but also to learn to read Torah and to read regularly in the early service, Minyan Chaverim, and the main service.

Yes, Beth El has come a long way in its 50 years towards viewing women as having the same religious rights and responsibilities as men. I predict that the next 50 years will bring continued evolution in the roles of men and women in the general society, the Jewish community at large, the Conservative movement, and, yes, here at Beth El.

Sisterhood Education Program 2002-2003

Menopause A Guide to the Perplexed

Save The Dates

9:30-11:30 AM

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| October 27, 2002 | Medical Perspectives on
Managing Menopause |
| December 8, 2002 | Nutrition and Lifestyle |
| February 2, 2003 | Rosh Hodesh with Rebbitzin
Leah Kaplan
Women and Change –
A Spiritual Exploration |
| April 27, 2003 | Exercise is not a 4 Letter Word!
Build Better Bones and Have a
Healthier Heart |

**Please join us; we have something for
woman of all ages.**

***Everything, including this program, is subject to
change (as if you didn't already know!)***

PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE ANNUAL
Sisterhood Membership Dinner

Thursday, October 17th
6:30 pm

Presentation of Torah Fund Awards to
Amanda Ford & Judith Spector

Musical Entertainment by
Renee Brachfield & Mark Novak
Stories and Songs from the Jewish Tradition

Dinner is free for members of Sisterhood
Guests may attend for \$18 per person
(Beth El women must be Sisterhood members to attend)

No payment will be accepted at the door
No phone reservations

Please RSVP by Tuesday, October 8th
Please respond early to avoid disappointment

There is still time to join Sisterhood!
Call Gale Dutcher (301) 984-0025
gad695@aol.com
or Adeen Postar (301) 564-4516
postar1@aol.com

**Sisterhood Membership Dinner
Reservation Form**

Name of Member _____

Phone _____

Name of Guest(s) _____

Number of Members (free) _____ Number of

Guests _____ (\$18 per person)

Amount of check, if included \$ _____

(payable to Beth El Sisterhood)

Mail to arrive before Oct. 8, 2002 to:

**Gale Dutcher
1708 Farmland Dr.
Rockville MD 20852**

The form may also be left at the synagogue office
before Oct. 8.

This year there will be no reserved seating

Set the Table with Torah

September 22

Sukkot - Leviticus 22:26 - 23:44

By Rabbi Gregory Harris

Sukkot is my favorite holiday of the year. The Torah reading for this day speaks about Sukkot but it also gives an overview of Passover, Rosh Hashanah, and Yom Kippur. Sukkot follows the intensity of the High Holidays. We shift from the spiritual exploration to the physical human senses - smell, touch, sight, taste, and hearing. **In a Sukkah, how is each sense stimulated?** Jewish law instructs us to temporarily live in our sukkah. People eat meals in the sukkah and some even sleep in the sukkah. This is the only mitzvah you can fulfill in your sleep! **Select two objects you would bring with you when you "move in" to the sukkah. Why are these objects so important to you? What do they say about you?** Sukkot is 7 days so I hope you can find a sukkah to celebrate in.

September 28

Shemini Atzeret - Deuteronomy 14:22 - 16:17

By Rabbi Gregory Harris

This week, the Torah lays out three holidays that people should travel to Jerusalem to celebrate in *Eretz Yisrael* - the Land of Israel. "Three times a year - on Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot, your males will come before the Lord your God in the place that God chooses." (16:16) While we can not travel to Israel *that* frequently, **what does it mean for Jews to have a "homebase" when we are spread around the world?** Israel is in the news frequently. **How can we love Israel and argue at the same time? Have you ever done this with your parents - love and argue simultaneously?** This portion also says that "There will be no needy among you... if only you heed the Lord your God and take care to keep all this Instruction that I enjoin upon you this day." (15:4-5) Many people think this is a statement that if we have faith in God, we will be rewarded. This could also be a statement reminding us that the laws of the Torah demand we fight poverty and aid the needy. The result of our work would be an elimination of people in need. **Is this verse about Faith or Action? Whichever you decide, how does this affect how you live?**

October 5

Bereshit - Genesis 1:1 - 6:8

By Rabbi Gregory Harris

This week we again begin the reading of the Torah. In six days, God created the world, the animals, stars, waters, and all else. On the seventh day, God created Shabbat. We were told to be caretakers of this divine creation. **What can you do as a family to care for the world?** After Adam, God also created Eve. This is when God created companionship, the need of people to be together. The Torah says "It is not good for people to be alone" (2:18). **Have you ever thought of your friendships or relationships with family as something important to God? How does this affect how you treat others?** Finally, in this reading, there is also the story of two siblings. The famous question "Am I my brother's keeper?" (4:9) is asked. **Do you have a special responsibility to help your sibling(s) succeed?**