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THE SCROLL IS A RECIPIENT
OF THREE SOLOMON SCHECH-
TER GOLD AWARDS FROM
THE UNITED SYNAGOGUE OF
CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM.

From the Clergy

Israel at 70

BY RABBI FABIÁN WERBIN

My father's name is Victor. He was born in August 1945 and was named in Spanish not after any relative. Rather, he was named Victor to honor the victory of the allies over the Nazis. But I am sure that if he had been born a few years later, after 1948, he would have been named Israel.

Not only because his grandfather's name was Israel but also because of the love my family had, and has, for Israel.

70 years is the same number of years that King David lived. According to the Midrash Yalkut Shimoni 5:41, God passed all the forthcoming generations before Adam, and Adam saw that King David was only allotted three hours of life.

“Adam: Master of the Universe, is there a remedy for this?”

God: This is indeed what I had in mind.

Adam: How many years of life have I been allotted?

God: One thousand years.

Adam: Are gifts permitted in Heaven? May I give a gift?

God: Yes.

Adam: Give 70 of my years to him.

Master of the Universe, great will be [David's] kingdom and the songs that will be given in this 70-year gift that [David]

should live and make music before You.”

This beautiful midrash not only explains the number of years of the lives of Adam and King David but also brings up the value of the gift of life.

Every time the number 70 appears in front of me, I can think only of King David, the Psalms, Jerusalem, the Kingdom. It is inevitable. 70 is related to King David and the song: *David Melech Israel Chai V'Kayam*. The King of Israel is alive. Israel is alive. Israel brings life, hope, talent, culture, passion, and more to this world.

It is difficult to describe all the accomplishments this young country has achieved in 70 years. There is no other country in this world like Israel and I am thankful to live in an era when we have Israel.

Every single day in the life of Israel is a small triumph. Every anniversary of the creation of Israel is new victory and we must celebrate it.

As we pray every Shabbat, we ask that Israel will be shielded with love and that its inhabitants will be blessed with lasting joy.

We look forward to celebrating 70 years more and more, endlessly.

We look forward to celebrating Israel's most important victory, peace. Amen. ■



SCROLL

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Tikkun Leil Shavuot A Traditional Shavuot Eve Nighttime Study Session Saturday, May 19 6 Sivan 5778

Programming for all ages will begin
with a light dairy dinner

ADULTS

Clergy and congregants will lead the adult program:

7:00 pm	First Teaching Session
7:45 pm	Dairy dinner
8:15 pm	Second Teaching Session
9:00 pm	Ma'ariv and Havdalah
9:15 pm–1:00 am	Multiple Teaching Sessions

CHILDREN

Don't miss out on educational and fun Shavuot programs for
kindergarten through high school:

7:00 pm	Dairy dinner
7:30 pm	Program
9:00 pm	Ma'ariv and Havdalah

RSVP for dinner to the Beth El synagogue office by
Tuesday morning, May 15.

Name(s) of adult(s) _____

Name(s) and grades of child(ren) _____

Cost: \$8.00 per person for dinner. No charge for program.

Make checks payable to Congregation Beth El and mail to
8215 Old Georgetown Road, Bethesda, MD 20814.

For more information on the adult program, contact the main
office at 301-652-2606 or info@bethelmc.org. For information
on the children's program, please contact Tali Moscovitz at
301-652-8569, ext. 309, or tmoscovitz@bethelmc.org.

May B'nai Mitzvah

May 5: Sean Snyder, Ellie Morrison

May 12: Ryan Kulp

May 19: Robert Anopolsky

May 26: Jonah Gross

Correction: The photo on page 8 of the April *Scroll* was
taken by David Friedlander.

OMG Israel!

BY AVIVA SOLKOWITZ

I'm on a gap year program called Nativ. It's a nine-month living abroad program of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. In the first semester, we study at Hebrew University or the Conservative Yeshiva. I chose to go to Hebrew University. You're treated like any other student, with the same classes, same grades, same assignments, and same opportunities. In addition to my classes, I participated in the musical. This year it was *Cinderella*. Living and studying in Jerusalem for five months was such an amazing experience. Every day at some point you have a moment; we call them "OMG Israel moments." It's when you stop and realize, "Oh my gosh. I'm in Israel right now. How cool is it that I have this opportunity to be here in Israel living and studying?" It's a pretty cool feeling to have. I lived here when President Trump declared Jerusalem the capital of Israel. I got texts asking me if I was okay, friends asking if there would be another Intifada, my parents asking what exactly is happening. The truth is, nothing changed but the headlines in the newspaper. I lived



literally next door to Prime Minister Netanyahu's house. There are always protests there keeping us up at night, and there always will be. An announcement declaring Jerusalem the capital made no difference in what was already happening.

In the second semester, we split up to do volunteer work around the country. I'm living in Tiberias. Most people have only one volunteering job, but I've taken on three. I work for two days a week at Magen David Adom as a medic. The other two days, in the mornings I work at a soup kitchen, and in the afternoons I work at a horse therapy center. Volunteering is a lot of hard work, but you see the immediate mark you're making. It's so rewarding and fun to be able to help people who need it while also contributing to the community here and meeting new people. It's too easy to take for granted what we have and what we can do here, which is why we need to take every moment and do our best to make the most of this experience. ■

A Student Leader at AIPAC

BY SAM KAPNER

As a freshman at the University of Texas at Austin, I've been a part of a pro-Israel campus and the AIPAC young leadership cadre. As an AIPAC young leader, I joined 50 other students attending this year's AIPAC Policy Conference in March. Unlike most of my friends, this was my seventh Policy Conference. This year, my job was to educate other UT students about the importance of AIPAC.

I've been fortunate to have attended AIPAC ever since my mother brought me after my bar mitzvah. I love the enthusiasm, seeing nearly 4,000 pro-Israel college students and learning from the many speakers about United States and Israeli politics; the Middle East; Israel's relationship with Africa, Asia, and India; and Israel as the Start-Up Nation. My favorite part probably was listening to Prime Minister Netanyahu's speech about Israel's many innovations and its role as a global leader in cybersecurity.

I attended a session on Israel-India relations with an Indian student leader from my campus. While I was able to engage this student leader on the United States-Israel relationship, she was able to educate me on Indian foreign relations. This student leader is someone I now consider a good friend, and the friendship began at AIPAC. I enjoyed bonding with other student leaders, Jewish and non-Jewish alike.

Hearing from Israeli and Palestinian innovators reinforced the idea that not all Palestinians are opposed to peace and that some are willing to work with Israelis to build a brighter future. Education is the key to strengthening relationships both in Israel, in Congress, and with future student leaders. AIPAC does a tremendous job educating current and future leaders across the political, religious, and cultural spectrum.

This year I lobbied my congressman, Jamie Raskin (D-Md.). I was excited to hone my advocacy skills and learned

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Alef-Bet-Gimel of Israeli Culture

Beth El Religious School fifth graders spend the year studying Israeli history and culture. Every year the school holds a Sunday family education program through which students explore Israeli culture as a way to discover the similarities and differences between Israeli and American cultures on a level relevant to children's daily lives.



Students work together through the 21 stations, each addressing a different aspect of Israeli society, learning how life in Israel is both similar and different than their lives in Maryland.



The “tav” station is for *tikshoret* – communication. Israel has a high newspaper readership rate, due to a combination of high literacy rate and a cultural interest in politics and current affairs. Fifth graders and their parents explored a recent newspaper, identifying what some of the stories were about.



The “zayin” station is our trash (*zevel*) station – students explore items used by an Israeli family, discovering what Israeli food packaging looks like and how one finds American products in Israel.

PHOTOS BY MITCHELL SOLKOWITZ

Found Art Portraits



As a part of Yom Ha'Atzmaut celebrations in the Religious School, students learned about Israeli mixed-media artist, Hanoch Piven. Born in Uruguay and now living in Israel, Piven is well known for celebrity caricatures, using common items and scraps of materials to create their portraits. After learning more about him, students broke out to create their own portraits using found items. ■

Israeli Dancing



On Thursday, April 19, Beth El celebrated Yom Ha'Atzmaut with performances by local Israeli dance troupes Kesem and Yesodot, followed by Israeli dancing for all attendees. It was a great opportunity for congregants of all ages and their families to join in. ■

TOP LEFT: KESEM MIDDLE SCHOOL DANCE TROUPE; BOTTOM LEFT: YESODOT HIGH SCHOOL DANCE TROUPE; BELOW: AFTER THE PERFORMANCES, ATTENDEES PARTICIPATED IN THE DANCING. PHOTOS BY DAN BENDER.



Historian Benny Morris Examines Israel's 1948 War

BY GREG ARONIN

To kick off the week of celebrating Israel's independence, Beth El's Am Yisrael Chai Committee hosted Professor Benny Morris, one of Israel's most prominent historians. In "Looking Anew at the 1948 War," Morris spoke about his extensive research on the War of Independence, the years preceding it and the years immediately following.

Morris explained that it was the high degree of organization among the Jews of Israel that led to their success over the Arab militias and the tens of thousands who invaded from surrounding countries. Further, he discussed the three sets of refugees created at the time of the War of Independence: Jews pressured to leave Arab countries, Jews forced to leave their homes within Israel, and Arabs who left their homes, by choice or pressure, during the War of Independence.

Finally, he clarified the perception of most people that the war, before and after Israel's declaration of Independence,

was one about territory and politics. Morris provided evidence that it was also a religious and cultural war as well, caused in part by calls to jihad by prominent clerics in the Arab world.



PHOTO BY DANIEL BENDER

The event provided the approximately 200 participants with a clear understanding of Morris's research on the War of Independence and its impact on events of today. Morris, who has received both praise and criticism from all sides, is comfortable challenging existing narratives and engaged in extensive questions and answers.

In the 70th year of Israel's independence, those who love the Jewish State continue to engage in profound discussion, strengthening our relationships with Israel and our understanding of Israel's history. ■

Watch the full discussion on the Beth El website at <https://www.bethelmc.org/israel-speakers>.

ISRAEL NEEDS US WE NEED ISRAEL

As wintery weather has continued through a good part of April this year, the arrival of May and its promise of warmth and renewal is especially welcome. May also will be a special time for our brothers and sisters in Israel. They will celebrate Lag B'Omer on May 3 with bonfires, barbeques, and going to the beach. They will also be celebrating Yom Yerushalayim on May 13. This year, it takes on added significance because the American Embassy in Jerusalem is scheduled to open the next day. Here are a few suggestions for keeping Israel in our hearts and minds during the month of May:

REPLICATE Israeli celebration of Lag B'Omer.

Although it may not be sufficiently hot to go to the beach on May 3, and obtaining a permit for a bonfire may be exceedingly difficult, there should be ample opportunity to have a barbeque, go on a picnic, hike in natural settings, or party. At Beth El, we will host a talk and demonstration by Shahar Abuhazira, CEO of Roboteam, an Israeli high tech company with offices in Gaithersburg, that manufactures life-saving robots.

REJOICE in our ability to walk in the footsteps of our Jewish ancestors, proud and free to share Jerusalem's spiritual, physical and historical rebirth. When Jews were exiled to Babylon following the destruction of the First Temple more than 2,600 years ago, our sages admonished the people not to forget Jerusalem lest their tongues cleave to their palates and their right hands lose their cunning. How fortunate we are to live in a time of revival of Jerusalem as the capital of the modern Jewish State of Israel.

BUY roses from Israel. This year, Yom Yerushalayim coincides with Mother's Day. Israel is a significant exporter of roses and other flowers. If you wish to give your mom roses, order them from Israel on the internet. Also consider adding a taste of Israel for Mother's Day by cooking an Israeli meal based on one of the recipes in *Eat in Good Health: the Sisterhood/Zhava Community Cookbook* or taking her out to dinner at an Israeli-themed restaurant.



Keeping Up with Israel via Podcast

BY MARCI KANSTOROOM

Even if you are already a fan of podcasts, you may not know there are some great ones about Israel. Here are a few favorites:

“Israel Story”



“Israel Story” is often described as an Israeli “This American Life.” The podcast was created by four young Israelis who were fans of the NPR program’s long-form radio storytelling and who wanted to create a version for their own country. Each episode of “Israel Story” has a theme and

includes several stories and interviews somehow connected to that theme. Some recent stories have included how Moshe Dayan’s wife and Yasser Arafat’s mother-in-law became bosom buddies, and other tales of unlikely friendships; “Israel Story” producers crisscrossing the country, visiting every 48 Herzl Street and collecting stories from whomever they encountered; and an Israeli couple flying to Nepal to pick up their three babies from two surrogate mothers and

discovering the transaction is not as straightforward as it seems. <https://israelstory.org>.

“Fault Lines”

Readers of “Off the Bimah,” the blog written by Beth El’s clergy members, will have already heard of the “Fault Lines” podcast, but the podcast is so good that it is worth another mention. In each episode, Daniel Gordis and Peter Beinart discuss some highly contested topic related to Israel or the Jewish community. Their goal is to demonstrate that meaningful conversations can take place across significant fault lines. Some of the topics they have discussed include alternatives to the two-state solution, the Trump administration’s positions on Israel, and the debates over Israel on college campuses. <http://forward.com/opinion/fault-lines>.

“Imagine Israel”

The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington has recently launched a podcast called “Imagine Israel.” Each episode features an interview with an Israeli influencer leading social change in Israel. Recent subjects include the founder of Israel’s largest food bank and the founder of Good Deeds Day. <http://shalomdc.org/imagineisrael/imagineisraelpodcast>. ■

STUDENT LEADER AT AIPAC CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

about the legislative agenda that helps strengthen the United States-Israel relationship. Although nervous, I asked the congressman to sign on to bipartisan pro-Israel legislation. AIPAC is great at understanding that in order to be successful in strengthening the relationship between our two nations, we need to put partisan politics aside and work with both sides of Congress. Congressmen are not always paying attention to Israel, with all the other issues on their plate. If we are not in their offices educating them about the importance of a strong partnership, then who is?

Following Policy Conference, I went with other UT students to Poland during spring break. We saw the graveyard of Jewish towns and communities. We learned about the current anti-Semitism in Europe. It brought me back to the lobbying agenda at

AIPAC and its focus on security challenges in Israel. When Iran is calling for the destruction of Israel, they are talking about destroying the largest Jewish community in the world...again. Why isn’t everyone taking this threat seriously? American Jews take for granted how blessed we are to be born in the United States. We don’t have to serve in the IDF, run into shelters when the sirens go off, or look over our shoulder for fear of being stabbed just because we are Jews.

Whether we like or dislike our president or Israeli prime minister, whether we are Democrats or Republicans, I encourage everyone to attend the Policy Conference. It is our opportunity to show both American and Israeli leaders that we are engaged. We care about the relationship between these two great democracies. Even in trying times, we need to support Israel,

not be cynical or apathetic. Next year, join me at AIPAC. I promise you will not be disappointed. ■



Mental Health Challenges and Resources

By KATIE SMELTZ

As part of Jewish Disability Awareness and Inclusion Month, the Men's Club hosted a panel discussion in February with representatives from community organizations devoted to mental health issues.

The first speaker was Whitney Reigel Houston of Cornerstone Montgomery, the largest provider of mental health services in Montgomery County. Houston spoke about the many classes that lay people can take from Cornerstone to learn about mental health issues, including one called Mental Health 101 and another called Mental Health First Aid.

According to the Cornerstone website, the Mental Health First Aid course "is a public education program that introduces participants to risk factors and warning signs of mental illnesses, builds understanding of their impact and overviews common supports."

In addition to classes, Cornerstone offers support groups for those with challenges, for their loved ones, and for community members who want to learn how to help. It was mentioned that NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, also has courses and support groups.

A Long Way to Go

Another participant in the discussion was congregant Bob Litman, medical director at CBH Health, a provider of services to patients with psychiatric disorders. Bob noted, "We still have a long way to go in providing needed rehabilitative services and, in general, treating mental illness."

Bob gave some examples of individuals with mental illness and their families who face great challenges in being able to live in the community – finding housing and the right rehabilitative programs to help them be successful in their lives.

While some panel members talked about new services in the community for the mentally ill, Bob pointed out that "even with the progress we have recently made developing new types of services and providing these services, it can't be emphasized enough that families and their mentally ill relatives still struggle a great deal and still find it very hard to make it."

Congregant David Barry, from the office of communications at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), part of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, also participated in the event. He offered advice to listeners who want to be helpful to those with mental illness.

"Do not be afraid to talk to someone who has mental health problems, such as depression," David said during the panel discussion. "Even just saying hello can make someone feel less isolated. It is not for you to fix them but rather just to reach out." David added that a member can always

tell the Beth El clergy or Ellen Levin, the Jewish Social Service Agency liaison to our shul, about someone they are concerned about.



Community Resources

Cornerstone Montgomery: Community- and evidence-based mental health and co-occurring mental health and substance use disorder treatments and interventions. <https://www.cornerstonemontgomery.org>, 301-715-3673.

NAMI Montgomery County: Grassroots education, support, and advocacy organization for all affected by mental illness. <http://www.namimc.org>, 1-800-273-8255 NAMI Helpline. ■

Fighting Stigma

By PHYLLIS DICKLER

I was eager to attend the program sponsored by the Men's Club on Sunday, February 18. The speaker was Whitney Reigel from Cornerstone Montgomery, a mental health program in Montgomery County. The talk was very good, offering much needed information about the care of the mentally ill. As a result of the talk, I understand that they are working on eliminating the stigma caused by mental illness. But there is much more work to be done. Stigma damages the future of people who suffer from these conditions. Mental illness is a disease of the brain. Patients should not be stigmatized by such a diagnosis any more than people diagnosed with heart disease, cancer, and other health issues. Individuals affected, and those close to them, are sometimes uncomfortable seeking counseling and comfort. Rabbi Harris is making every effort to encourage people to confer with him when they "need an ear" or are searching for resources.

People trying to help those suffering from mental illness can find comfort and coping skills in seeking out a support group of people in similar circumstances. Beth El is available to help form such group. We have a congregation that wants everyone to be part of its community. How fortunate we are to have such dedication to those in need.

Men's Club

Blue Yarmulke Man-of-the-Year



Howard (Howie) Stein, this year's honoree for the Blue Yarmulke Man-of-the-Year, was born in upstate New York and grew up in Utica. He majored in history at the State University of New York at Albany, where he met his wife, Holly. They married after graduation and moved to the Washington, D.C., area. They both found positions in

the Prince George's County Public Schools and worked in the school system for 30 years. They have two married children and four grandchildren; their daughter and her family are also members of Beth El.

After being a part of other synagogue communities in the area, Howie and Holly found their spiritual home in 1993 at Beth El. Howie joined the Bendit/Scolnic Adult Institute Committee and was a member for over 20 years. He also served on the Beth El Board, Social Action Committee, and a number of other synagogue committees. Both he and Holly enjoy their havurah and senior study group.

About six years ago, Howie decided to become a more active member of the Beth El Men's Club, serving as membership chair and vice-president. In addition, he co-chairs the Men's Club Walk for Shepherd's Table on Mitzvah Day and the Yellow Candle project for Yom HaShoah remembrance. Howie has also participated regularly in Hearing Men's Voices since it began about 15 years ago.

Howie has found that the friendships he has made through the Men's Club and participation in the congregation's stimulating programs have enhanced his love of Judaism and Beth El. ■

UPCOMING MEN'S CLUB EVENTS

THURSDAY, MAY 3, 8:30 PM Hearing Men's Voices.

Martin Sieff will lead a discussion on "What Do We Actually Enjoy About Getting Older?"

SUNDAY, MAY 6, 10:00 AM The conversation begun February 18 on mental health and wellness will continue. Congregant David Barry, a psychologist with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, will 1) discuss what you need to know to support your own mental health and the mental health of others, 2) describe what mental illness looks like, and 3) discuss the resources available for individuals and their families.

SUNDAY, MAY 13, 10:00 AM Hillel Goldschein started *Kol HaBirah* in February 2017 with the hopes of connecting the diverse local Jewish community by focusing on local content and programming. *Kol HaBirah* is a Jewish newspaper and media company that serves the greater Washington and Baltimore Jewish communities. Hillel will discuss *Kol Habirah* and his experiences since its birth.

SUNDAY, MAY 20 First day of Shavuot; no breakfast or program

SUNDAY, MAY 27, 10:00 AM Open mic

Blue Yarmulke Man-of-the-Year Award

Sunday, May 6, 5:00 pm

B'nai Israel Congregation, 6301 Montrose Road, Rockville

The Men's Club congratulates Howie Stein on being selected as Beth El's 2018/5778 Blue Yarmulke Man-of-the-Year. Join us at the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs Seaboard Region Blue Yarmulke Man-of-the-Year dinner to celebrate. Go to wizadjournal.com/fjmcseaboard2018 for further information, to register online, and/or purchase a tribute page honoring Howie. Limited seating - reserve your seats now. Only \$90 per person.

Family Volunteering at Manna Food Center

Monday, May 14, 7:00-9:00 pm



Join volunteers from Beth El to help sort food at the Manna Food Center in Gaithersburg. Manna provides food to about 40,000

people each year, distributing food to soup kitchens and emergency shelters in Montgomery County. Manna also sends home 2,800 "smart packs" of food with children each week during the school year. Children age 10 and older are welcome, and SSL credit is available.

To sign up or for more information please contact Jonathan Epstein.

Sisterhood

UPCOMING SISTERHOOD/ZHAVA EVENTS

TUESDAYS, MAY 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, 6:30 PM Mah Jongg
MONDAY, MAY 7, 7:30 PM Rosh Chodesh: It's a Woman's Thing
THURSDAY, MAY 31, 7:30 PM Keshet Nashim
SUNDAY, JUNE 10, 9:30 AM Sisterhood General Meeting and Program. Michael Freilich will present "Looking Down on the Earth: Satellites, Science, and Societal Benefit."

Catering Scheduler Needed

Sisterhood Catering Committee is looking for someone to be our twice-yearly scheduler. Our long-time scheduler, Amanda Ford, is stepping down. This job entails receiving the list of upcoming b'nai mitzvah students around August and December and making a spreadsheet. The content for each week will be which volunteer is responsible, which families are responsible, the name of the student, and any information we might need. Please contact Shoshannah Freilich or Amanda Ford for more information.

Attention B'nai Mitzvah Parents and Engaged Couples



Why not order your b'nai mitzvah and wedding invitations online and give back to Beth El? Sisterhood and Beth El receive 100% of the proceeds. We price match. Please contact Marilyn Hammerman.

Sponsor a Kiddush

Celebrate a special day or remember a loved one by sponsoring a kiddush on a Shabbat or festival when there is no bar/bat mitzvah. Hospitality kiddush sponsorships run \$350, \$450, or \$525, depending on menu, and include up to 15 of your own guests plus the congregation. Available dates through September 30 are: May 20 and 21 (first and second days of Shavuot); June 23 and 30; July 7, 14, 21, and 28; August 4, 11, 18, and 25; September 8, 22, 24 (Sukkot), and 30. To sponsor a kiddush or to obtain more information and menus, contact Shoshannah Freilich at least two weeks prior to the kiddush you wish to sponsor.



Men's Club Fishing Trip Sunday, June 3, Kent Island

Back by popular demand... who wants to go fishing on the Bay with the Men's Club? Last trip we needed two boats, each with a Beth El rabbi. There was a friendly competition to determine which of them had the better connections. Rabbi H's boat caught its limit first, but Rabbi R's boat brought in more pounds of delicious rockfish. Join the fun again out of Kent Island with Capt. Joey. To sign up, and for information, contact Cary Feldman.



Saw You at Sinai

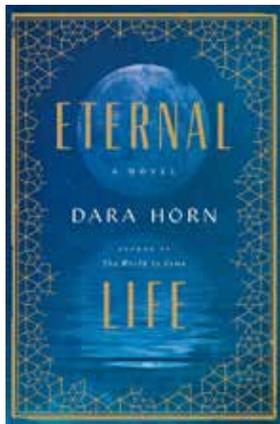
BY ROBIN JACOBSON

Every year at Shavuot, when we celebrate the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, we encounter one of the most fascinating, mind-bending, hard-to-wrap-your-head-around concepts in Judaism. At the transcendent moment at Mount Sinai – when God’s voice thundered the words of the covenant – all Jews were present, according to Jewish teaching. The awestruck crowd at the foot of the fiery, blazing mountain encompassed not merely the Hebrew slaves who had escaped Egypt but all Jews who would exist in future times. Rather wonderfully, this age-old belief is succinctly captured in the name of a 21st-century Jewish dating site: SawYouAtSinai.

Author Dara Horn says this Jewish notion of the elasticity of time, of the merging of the past with the present, was part of the inspiration for her latest novel. *Eternal Life* is about a woman who lived in ancient Jerusalem, took a mystical vow at the Temple, and, as a result, never died. While *Eternal Life* explores the ramifications of being immortal, *The Immortalists*, a novel by Chloe Benjamin, delves into the inverse situation: Benjamin’s characters know (or think they know) the dates they will die.

Despite these immensely imaginative premises, both novels, disappointingly, reach rather commonplace conclusions [e.g., death is what gives life meaning (*Eternal Life*) or a life spent worrying about death is a life wasted (*The Immortalists*)]. Nonetheless, both novels are rewarding reads. Horn marvelously evokes Jerusalem in the time of the Second Temple, while Benjamin creates interesting, unusual characters grappling with loss and uncertainty.

Eternal Life by Dara Horn



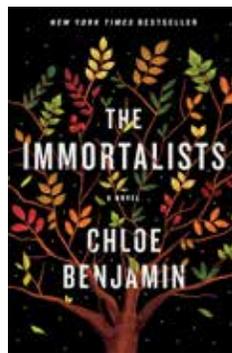
Eternal Life alternates between first-century Jerusalem and present-day New York. In Jerusalem, Rachel, the daughter of a scribe, spends her days as her father’s messenger, delivering scrolls and messages to the Temple and around the city. She and a young Temple priest, Elazar, embark on a love affair that leads them to take a desperate vow before Elazar’s father, the High Priest.

The vow renders them both immortal. While thousands perish during the brutal Roman sacking of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., they survive, teaming up to

sneak the sage Yochanan Ben Zakkai out of Jerusalem in a coffin. With the Temple in ruins, Ben Zakkai, an actual historical figure, forges a new path for Judaism.

In Rachel’s contemporary story, she is a 2,000-year-old woman who regards her immortality as a curse. Over the centuries, she has cared for numerous husbands and children and seen them all die while she continued to live (unknownst to her families, each time she “dies” she regenerates elsewhere, once again a young woman ready to start her next life). Periodically Elazar reappears; Rachel loves him but also hates him for an old betrayal.

The Immortalists by Chloe Benjamin



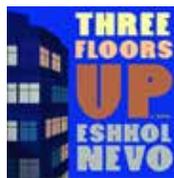
Benjamin’s novel begins with four young Jewish siblings on an adventure in New York’s Lower East Side in 1969. They visit a fortuneteller who privately reveals to each child his or her death date. Benjamin then traces each sibling’s life, as each reacts to the prophecy – Simon runs away to San Francisco, embracing an exuberant gay lifestyle before falling victim to AIDS; Klara

becomes a professional magician-illusionist famous for her death-defying stunts; Daniel, a military doctor, is determined to find and confront the fortuneteller; and Varya becomes a scientist researching (of course) longevity.

Reviewers have praised the novel for its “elegant ambiguity” – the reader is never sure whether the fortuneteller was truly clairvoyant or whether the death-date predictions simply influenced the siblings’ life choices and became self-fulfilling. How different would the siblings’ lives have been if they had never met the fortuneteller? ■

Israeli Novel Book Chat Celebrating Israel’s 70th Birthday

Tuesday, June 12, 7:00 pm



Join the discussion of *Three Floors Up* by best-selling Israeli novelist, Eshkol Nevo. All welcome! Questions? Please contact Margery London at or Robin Jacobson.

Shir Yachad: A Communal Shabbat in Song

Friday, May 4

Friday night is a time for community, song, and joyful noise. Join us every month for this exciting service filled with music past and present that stirs the soul and welcomes Shabbat with joy and warmth.

6:00 pm – Nitzanim Musical Service. Families with young children are invited for a fun musical Shabbat service.

6:30 pm – Happy Hour! Everyone is invited to schmooze with us while enjoying drinks (both adult and kid friendly) and appetizers. Free babysitting will be available.

7:30 pm – Main musical service. Oneg Shabbat to follow.

Next Shir Yachad will be on June 1.

Make a Difference for Someone Facing the End of Life

JSSA Hospice and Transitions Volunteer Training
May 6 and 7, 9:00 am-3:00 pm
Rockville

Jewish Social Service Agency (JSSA), a non-sectarian community agency, is seeking volunteers over the age of 18 to help enhance the quality of life of individuals and families facing life-threatening or terminal illness. JSSA offers specialized training for prospective volunteers for its Hospice and Transitions programs. Following the training, volunteers are asked to commit to a minimum of two hours a week visiting patients in the Hospice or Transitions programs. If you're interested please apply online at <https://www.jssa.org/get-involved/volunteer-application/> or contact Carrie Myatt, Volunteer Coordinator, at 301-816-2611 or cmyatt@jssa.org.

Keshet Nashim (Women's Connection)

Thursday, May 31, 7:15 pm (Note new date)
Dinner at a nearby restaurant

Keshet Nashim supports female cancer survivors and those with a cancer diagnosis. Join Beth El women for discussion, support, friendship, and a pleasant dinner.

If you would like to attend or receive more information, please RSVP to Sherri Stahl.

Conversational Hebrew Tuesdays, May 1 and 15, 1:30 pm



By popular demand, the Beth El Conversational Hebrew Group has extended its season to include meetings in May. Meetings take place at Beth El. Please come join us for a friendly conversation. Questions? Contact Art Salwin.

Visit the Beth El Member Portal!



View your account, pay your invoices, update your contact information, view your loved ones' yahrzeit dates, make a donation, search our online membership directory, and more with Beth El's member portal. **Coming soon: request your High Holiday tickets and register for events with easy pre-filled forms.** If you've already signed up, you can access the member portal at members.bethelmc.org. If you're not yet enrolled, email Tiarra Joslyn at tjoslyn@bethelmc.org to get started.

Restaurant in the Library Thursday, May 17, 6:00-9:30 pm



Beth El and Federation's Jewish Food Experience are bringing the Hebrew Book Week from Israel to our community.

Taking place every year in Israel between May and June, the Book Week is a celebration of reading and creation. There are book fairs and author lectures in every kibbutz and city. Many Israelis are interested in purchasing the books to read during the summer.

On Thursday, May 17, a pop-up restaurant will open in Beth El's library for one evening that will be fully serviced with waiters and hosts. Dinner includes an appetizer, entrée, and dessert inspired by Hebrew literature. Wine will be served throughout the evening. RSVPs are required. Space is limited.

\$10 per person. See the full menu and RSVP online at <https://www.bethelmc.org/restaurantlib>.

Questions? Contact Itsik Sayag at itsiksayag@bethelmc.org.

This event is supported by a grant from The Jewish Food Experience, a program of The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington.

ToBE - Tikkun Olam at Beth El: Volunteer with Bethesda Help

Bethesda Help has a need for five "Officer of the Day" volunteers who work from their homes one day a month in a valuable and fulfilling way. Officers of the Day check for and respond to client messages during Bethesda Help's operating hours (9:00 am-4:00 pm). All you need is a telephone and a computer with an internet connection to perform simple duties of determining the location of callers and referring their needs to food deliverers and financial consultants. Volunteer phone numbers remain private. Bethesda Help provides all the training you need.



For more information on this volunteer opportunity, visit www.bethelmc.org/tobe-upcoming. If you are able and willing to join in serving the Bethesda community, please contact Tobie Bernstein or Richard Lieberman.

Beth El Annual Meeting Thursday, May 10, 8:15 pm

Agenda:

D'var Torah

Minutes of Previous Annual Meeting

President's Report

Proposed Budget FY'19

Election of At-Large Directors*

Adjournment

Reception

Information pertaining to the agenda will be mailed prior to the meeting

**Nominees are: Sam Boxerman, Adam Ducker, Rochelle Chodock Fink, Jonathan Gross, Andy Koblenz, and Cinthia Rozanski. Beth El bylaws state that additional nominations additional nominations must have been submitted no later than May 1.*

For more details, contact Sheila Bellack at sbellack@bethelmc.org or 301-652-2606.

Contributions

Donations made from March 6 to March 21

Beth El Forest

IN MEMORY OF:

Barry Weisberg by Stuart and Elizabeth Weisberg
Esther Weisberg by Stuart and Elizabeth Weisberg

Dorothy Beverly Kitchen Fund

IN MEMORY OF:

Lillian Seigel, my mother, by Ann Goodman

Cantor's Fund

IN MEMORY OF:

Faye Amster by Jayson Amster
Hershel Kanovsky, my father, by Helen Kanovsky
Jerome Horowitz, beloved brother, by Rita Liebowitz

Chevra Kadisha Fund

IN MEMORY OF:

Virginia Clement by Paul and Carolyn Weinberg

Crowell Scholarship

IN MEMORY OF:

Tova Rosenblum, mother of Edith Sievers, by the Teplinsky family

Fine Arts Fund

IN MEMORY OF:

Rose B. Koenig, my mother, by Bob Koenig

General Fund

IN HONOR OF:

Rabbi Harris, Rabbi Werbin, Rabbi Rudolph, Hazzan Fradkin, and Sheila Bellack for their guidance and support throughout Ben Kessel's journey to his bar mitzvah by David Kessel and Rona Schwartz

Alex Isaac on her bat mitzvah by David Kessel and Rona Schwartz

Being able to attend the Early Shabbat Service when we were visiting by Joseph and Evalyn Basloe

Jerry Herman for receiving the Kavod Award for his service to the community by Samuel Boxerman and Debra Vodenos and the Baros Barr family

IN MEMORY OF:

Albert Boxerman, beloved father of Sam Boxerman, by Ellen Tillman

Amalia van Dam-Vromen by Josephine Sanders-Levie

Barbara Davison by Douglas and Lisa Davison

Benson Adams by Natalie Adams

Cecilia Eizyk by Walter Schimmerling and children

David Weber by Sheryl Freishtat

Deborah Shandell, beloved sister, by Andrea Shandell and Russell Fox

Dorothy Shandell, beloved grandmother, by Andrea Shandell and Russell Fox

Murray Jarvik by Laurence A. Jarvik

Evelyn Grunley by Alan Golden and Nancy Grunley

Evgeny Estrin by Luba Estrina

Frances Bebchick by Leonard Bebchick

Frieda Troffkin by Howard Troffkin

Gloria Orin by Harry and Rhonda Eisenstein

Harold Salwin by Arthur Salwin

Harry Birnkrant, father of Henry and Alan Birnkrant, by Evelyn Karson and Don Kaplan, Linda and Jerry Herman, and Michael Cutler and Dale Rosenthal

Please remember that contributions can be made easily, quickly, and securely via our webpage – www.bethelmc.org

Herbert Shedlin by Leslie Shedlin

Irwin Hausman by Douglas and Lisa Davison

Jacob Burman, my brother, by Bea Berger

Kurt Weisz and Robert Weisz by Bernard and Janyse Weisz and Helene Weisz and Richard Lieberman

Leo Schimel, father of Ron Schimel, by Ron and Gail Schimel

Marianna de Vries by Josephine Sanders-Levie

Martin Feinstein by Michael Feinstein

Nehama Lerner by Reina Lerner

Tova Rosenblum, mother of Edith Sievers, by Howard Hoffman

Elaine Silverman Gessow College Connection Fund

IN MEMORY OF:

Jack David Silverman, beloved grandfather, by Marc and Lisa Michelson

Green Tikkun Fund

IN HONOR OF:

Sylvia Jacobson and Avi Friedman on their engagement by Shelly and Margery London

Groner Camp Ramah Scholarship Fund

IN MEMORY OF:

Alvin Barkin by Erwin and Leena Groner

Fanny Levitsky by Ellan Orkin

Israel Experience Teen Fund

IN HONOR OF:

Molly Chud's bat mitzvah by Judy Bisman

IN MEMORY OF:

Harvey Shapiro by Melvyn Shapiro

Kimball Nursery School Fund

IN MEMORY OF:

Leonard Neumann by Stuart and Beverly Berman

Sidney Berman by Stuart and Beverly Berman

Bernardo Kotelanski, M.D. Marriage Education Fund

IN MEMORY OF:

William Ginsberg by Phillip and Vivian Gorden

Library Fund

IN MEMORY OF:

Lillian Schultz, beloved mother, by David Schultz

Paula Shor, mother of Brenda Pieprz, by Beth El Religious School Faculty

Raye Pollack by Linda and Alan Orenstein

Richard Sodikow, my uncle, by Sarah Birnbach

Tova Rosenblum, mother of Edith Sievers, by Beth El Religious School Faculty

Litman Holocaust (Shoah) Education Fund

IN MEMORY OF:

Leopold Zweig by Alan and Michele Greenberg

Max Kahn by Fred and Rita Kahn

Masorti

IN MEMORY OF:

Morris Heckman by Bernard and RuthAnn Heckman

Mazon

IN MEMORY OF:

Elliot Morris by Jim and Leslie Dellon

Sol Gabry by Mona and Jerry Gabry

Contributions Continued

Men's Club Fund

IN HONOR OF:

Mitchell Solkowitz by Howie and Holly Stein

IN MEMORY OF:

Christian C. Yokum, twin brother, by Craig Yokum

Ruben Kaplovsky by Jay and Lillian Miller

Sam Frishman by Eleanor Frishman

Mintz Landscaping Fund

IN MEMORY OF:

Amalia van Dam-Vromen by Davida, Andrew, Eli, and Naomi Kales

Morning Minyan Fund

IN MEMORY OF:

A. Abba Koblenz, my father, by Andy Koblenz

Albert Berger, beloved husband, father, and grandfather, by Audrey Berger

Fannye Levin, our beloved mother, by Julian Levin and Sandra Brody

Jack Brown, dear father, by Irvin and Rita Weiss

Louis M. Ellenbogen, my beloved father, by Audrey Berger

Mike Abrams, father of Katey Koblenz, by Katey and Andy Koblenz

Robert Nussenblatt, beloved husband, father, and grandfather, by Rosine Nussenblatt

Sally Goldberg by Jack Minker

Prayer Book Fund Contribution

IN MEMORY OF:

Elana Patrice Stein by Donald Stein and Linda Katz and Alyssa Stein

Rabbi's Fund

IN HONOR OF:

Rabbi Harris for his support during our recent bereavement by Saul Golubcow and Hedy Teglasi

Rabbi Werbin for chanting El Malei Rachamim on the yahrzeit of Sandy's father, Solomon Cohen, by Daniel Geselowitz and Sandra Cohen

Rabbi Bill Rudolph and Gail Fribush for their friendship and support during our recent bereavement by Saul Golubcow and Hedy Teglasi

Rabbi Bill Rudolph, in gratitude for officiating at the bris of Jacob Wolgamot, by Linda Goldsmith and Howard Berger

Rabbi Bill Rudolph, in gratitude for officiating at the bris of Jacob Wolgamot, by Lynn and Pat Wolgamot

Mark Grove for our friendship by Eric Schlesinger

IN MEMORY OF:

Ann Eisenberg, mother of Allen Eisenberg, by Daniel Geselowitz and Sandra Cohen

Arthur Cohen by Carl Cohen

Dora Prag by Herb and Dianne Lerner

Helen Wilder by Max and Mitzi Goldman

Joseph Prepsler, beloved father, by Sabina Shalom

Leo Schimel by Barry and Elinor Schimel

Lewis Prag by Herb and Dianne Lerner

Martha Kantor by Vivien Marion

Morris Lerner by Herbert and Dianne Lerner

Nettie Sanders, dearest sister, by Sabina Shalom

Seymour Rubinstein by Wendy Rubinstein

Thelma Paul by Cheryl and Herbert Baraf

Refugee Fund

IN HONOR OF:

Lilah Katz by Harry and Rhonda Eisenstein

Samuel Scolnic Adult Institute Fund

IN MEMORY OF:

Elias Bezner by Ellen and Steve Bezner

Jose Ventura by Jack and Stephanie Ventura

Senior Program Fund

IN MEMORY OF:

Rose Teicher by Bert Spector

Dr. Elaine L. Shalowitz Education Fund

IN MEMORY OF:

Barney Barr by Solomon and Rita Barr

Elaine Shalowitz by Sam Langerman

Simos Music Fund

IN MEMORY OF:

Albert Glick, my father, by Scott Glick

Edythe L. Cohen by Stephen and Andrea Cohen

Sisterhood Keshet Nashim Fund

IN MEMORY OF:

Adrienne M. Friede Krausz, my darling mother, by Mariette Klein

Sisterhood Shiva Meal Fund

IN MEMORY OF:

Helen Farrar, mother of Rachelle Bernstecker, by Bob Abramson and Rachelle Bernstecker

Hyman Abramson, father of Robert Abramson, by Bob Abramson and Rachelle Bernstecker

Mildred Berinsein by Herbert and Nancy Rosenthal

Tova Rosenblum, mother of Edith Sievers and grandmother of Miriam and David Sievers, by Marvin Yudkovitz

Social Action Fund

IN HONOR OF:

Vivienne Prada, granddaughter of Larry Sidman and Jana Singer, by Howard and Tricia Sachs

IN MEMORY OF:

Sam Bayliss by Susan Stromberg

Sorkin Confirmation Israel Trip Fund

IN MEMORY OF:

Jerry Sorkin by Seth Berlin and Susan Mayer

Elaine Tanenbaum Religious School Enrichment Fund

IN MEMORY OF:

David Shell, son of Helen and Ely Shell, by Beth El Religious School Faculty

Elaine Tanenbaum, beloved wife, by Herbert Tanenbaum

Transportation Fund

IN HONOR OF:

Burt Epstein's birthday by Evelyn Bitterbaum

IN MEMORY OF:

Harry Asen by Henrietta Asen

Werner Liturgical Music Fund

IN MEMORY OF:

Cyma Heffter, my wife, by Jerome Heffter

Young Equality Fund

IN MEMORY OF:

Harry Young by Joe and Ina Young

Leila Rosen Young by Joe and Ina Young

While we know you'll want to read every word in this issue of the *Scroll*, when you're finished, please recycle it.

Bulletin Board

Send submissions to the *Scroll* to scroll@bethelmc.org

Mazal Tov to

Sam Liss for receiving the Etz Chaim Award, the highest Jewish Scouting honor

Michael and Jennifer Patterson on the birth of their son, **Benjamin Daniel**. Proud big sister and brother are **Sophie** and **Jacob**.

Ellen Silver and Jerrold Keilson on the birth of their granddaughter, **Hazel Stellah Keilson**, daughter of **Jessie** and **Marissa Keilson**

Condolences to

Karl Smart, longtime Beth El employee, on the death of his father, **Seymour Smart**

Edith Seivers, longtime Beth El Religious School teacher, on the death of her mother, **Tova Rosenblum**, grandmother of **Miriam** and **David Sievers**

The family of former longtime congregant **Milton Gussow**, husband of Libbie Gussow, *z"l*

Elaine Perlman on the death of her husband, **George Perlman**

Noteworthy

Roundtable with the Rabbi, Wednesday, May 2, 2:00 pm.

Join us to celebrate May birthdays (yours and those of others) with desserts, coffee, and a discussion led by Rabbi Harris. Birthday celebrants receive a special invitation, but all are welcome each month. This program is made possible in part through the generosity of Annette Moshman.

Dor L'Dor, Thursday, May 10 (last program until classes resume in the fall), noon. The Beth El Preschool (BEPS) 4s class and a group of Beth El seniors blend together naturally to form Dor L'Dor. To participate and share pizza with the pre-

schoolers, RSVP to Ricardo Munster at 301-652-8569, ext. 316, or rmunster@bethelmc.org. This program is made possible in part through the generosity of Annette Moshman.

Senior Caucus Brown Bag lunch, Thursdays, May 3, 24, and 31, noon. Come and socialize with your friends and enjoy refreshments and dessert.

Senior Caucus Luncheon Program, Thursday, May 17. Lunch starts at noon. Following lunch, our guest speaker, Sheilah Kaufman, award-winning author of 26 cookbooks, cooking teacher, food editor, and culinary lecturer, will share the story of the "History of the Jews and Chocolate." Who knew there was a Jewish history here? Cost of lunch is \$10. To RSVP for lunch, contact Ricardo Munster at 301-652-2606, ext. 316, or rmunster@bethelmc.org by Tuesday, May 15. The program itself is free and begins after lunch, at 1:00 pm. This program is made possible in part through the generosity of Annette Moshman.

Bridge – the greatest game ever! Join us every Monday (except May 21 and 28) and also on Thursdays (except May 17) from noon to 3:00 pm. Drop in and join a game; no partner necessary. For information or transportation, contact Ricardo Munster at 301-652-2606, ext. 316, or rmunster@bethelmc.org.

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