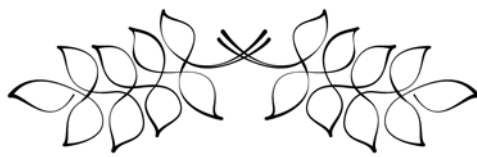


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CONGREGATION
SUKKAT SHALOM
Bulletin

Rabbi's Message

by Rabbi Sam Gordon

Twenty years ago the American Jewish world was in a panic over the report that more than 50 percent of all marriages involving a Jewish person was with a person of another faith. The Jewish-American establishment declared a crisis. The experts declared that intermarriage equated with assimilation and that the intermarried were leaving the Jewish world.

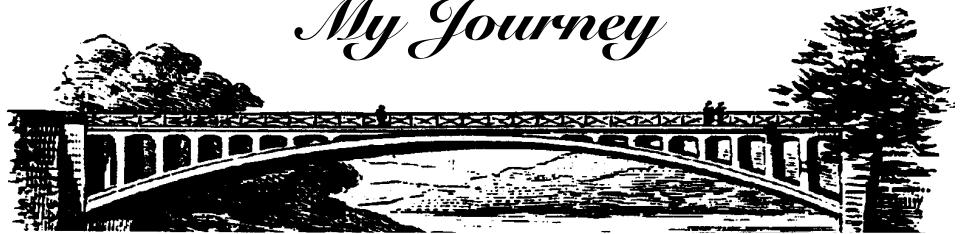
“I thought that intermarried families were actually seeking a home within the Jewish community.”

The great shibboleth of “continuity” gave rise to support groups for the intermarried and their parents. Rabbis who officiated at intermarriages were condemned as “enablers.” At least one major Jewish denomination ruled that an intermarried Jew could not be employed or be a lay leader of any of their synagogues, day schools or other institutions. The Jewish-American leadership predicted a precipitous decline in Jewish households in America.

The great sociologists of Jewish life had declared that they had the statistics to prove that the grandchildren of intermarriage ceased to remain Jewish in the second generation and, therefore, American Judaism would decline. They failed to recognize that they were not studying the grandchildren of intermarriages that took place in the 1980s or 1990s, since there were not yet any grandchildren born from those marriages. They were extrapolating conclusions from inter-

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My Journey



I received the phone call from my sister, Molly, on a Monday afternoon. “So I hear you’re taking Dad to Normandy for his 75th birthday,” she said. I replied, “That’s news to me!”

My sister and dad had just been to a close family friend’s 75th birthday party with 200 guests. Molly asked my father, “Hey Dad, your 75th is this November. Do you want a party like this?” He said without hesitation, “No way. Freddie is taking me to Normandy to see the war memorials from D-Day and we are going in September because it will be too cold in November!” Well, that was it. I started planning the trip of a lifetime for me and my pop.

I found a trip called “Beyond Band of Brothers,” which follows the Tom Hanks/Steven Spielberg 10-part series and travels the exact path the 101st Airborne (Screaming Eagles) endured from the D-Day invasion on into Germany. I don’t know what was more intense and exciting -- following the path of these amazing heroes, or traveling for 11 days with my dad.

We started in Aldbourne, England, where the 101st Airborne trained for six months prior to D-Day. We then traversed the English Channel to the five landing beaches along the “Atlantic Wall” that Hitler and Rommel had fortified with bunkers, armaments and cannons. We moved on to Holland to see the Market Garden battle sites, and after that to Bastogne, Belgium, where the Screaming Eagles held off the Germans for 30 days until Patton relieved them.

Then down through Luxemburg and into Munich and Dachau where the Third Reich was formed. Finally, to Austria to see Hitler’s Eagle’s Nest on the highest peak of the Austrian Alps, where Hitler must have looked out over the world thinking he controlled all he could see.

All during the trip, we watched the ten videos of the “Band of Brothers” and I read the book ahead of each visit. The characters in the book brought the trip alive. The most extraordinary part of the journey was the eyewitnesses that we met at each stop along the way. They were incredible people who lived through Hitler’s oppression and eventually experienced freedom.



The author and his dad on Utah Beach in Normandy

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From the Rabbi, cont'd

marriages from the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s -- a completely different world.

Twenty years ago I was a contrarian. I felt that Jews who intermarried were not abandoning or rejecting their Jewish faith or identity. I thought that intermarried families were actually seeking a home within the Jewish community. I had the radical notion that Jewish thought, faith and observance were potentially attractive to new entrants into the community. Even more radical was the notion that those not born as Jews could bring many new gifts to Jewish life.

Sukkat Shalom was founded partially as an alternative answer to the accepted wisdom of the experts. People were seeking a spiritual home that was welcoming and accepting. They wanted to learn with their children and have the opportunity to celebrate Jewish life with complete equality, whether passing a Torah to their child at a Bar or Bat Mitzvah or leading a family Seder or Shabbat dinner. In these twenty years much has changed in the liberal and progressive Jewish synagogue communities. Thankfully, there is much more acceptance of and outreach to the intermarried. I am pleased to see those changes.

But Sukkat Shalom remains different. The truth is I do not think I went far enough twenty years ago in understanding how the American Jewish world and the synagogue were changing. In these last two decades I have come to recognize that, for many, Sukkat Shalom is their spiritual home no matter what their religious background or even current faith.

Our congregation embraces a remarkably diverse group of members. There are Jews who were born and raised in every variety of Jewish tradition. There are many who have officially embraced Judaism as their primary faith identity and who have officially converted to Judaism. Others live a primarily Jewish life, though never having converted. Still other active members of our congregation have integrated Judaism into their other faith tradition.

No matter what the definition, all of our members seek authentic meaning and inspiration within our community. Those attending our services or our educational programs are not mere visitors or outside observers. All of those who are part of our congregational family are searching for an authentic house of prayer, study and observance.

Sukkat Shalom is the synagogue for all of us.

“All of those who are part of our congregational family are searching for an authentic house of prayer, study and observance.”

Cantor's Corner

by Cantor Jason Kaufman

There's a famous Chasidic saying that goes, "Singing is like praying twice." It should come as no surprise then that the Jewish worship service is so musically centered. I believe that there is a spiritual power in song that is unparalleled by other forms of human expression. Jewish tradition understands that, for prayer to be meaningful on an intellectual and spiritual level, there needs to be the perfect synergy between word and song. In fact, oftentimes we find that the musical setting of a text is as important, if not more important, than its words.

Every Jewish culture in the world has put its own unique stamp on what it believed to be an authentic Jewish sound. It is a sound deeply rooted in the secular cultures and communities that surrounded it.

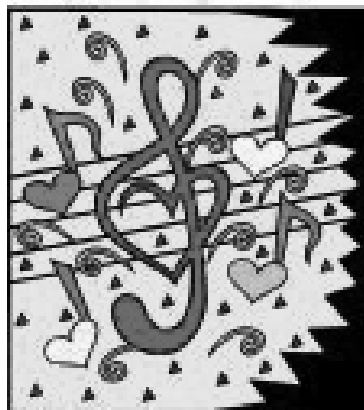
What we get then is a Jewish musical tradition rich with the sounds of Germany, Spain, Morocco, Iraq, Israel, Russia, Australia -- even New York, New Orleans and Chicago(!).

These are just a few of the world communities in which a Jewish musical culture has flourished.

“What makes Reform Judaism so exciting to me is that there is a place for all of the different styles of Jewish music in our tefilot (prayers).”

What makes Reform Judaism so exciting to me is that there is a place for all of the different styles of Jewish music in our tefilot (prayers). It is our job to figure out how to seamlessly, effortlessly and beautifully utilize all of the styles available to us in our prayers. One way to accomplish this is through a synagogue choir.

We are blessed at Sukkat Shalom to have a congregation filled with talented musicians, both singers and instrumentalists. The musical life of our congregation has taken many forms as it has adjusted to the needs and interests of our members. With that in mind, I am looking to build upon the amazing success of our choir program by opening it up to the synagogue community at large. You are welcome to participate if you have ever sung before, have any interest in singing or just sound great in the shower!



Starting in January I will announce two or three rehearsals for an upcoming Shabbat service. I hope that you might consider joining us in prayer on this occasion. There is no experience necessary -- just a love for sacred music and an open heart and mind.

If you are ready to lift Sukkat Shalom in prayer, please let me know.



Tikkun Olam

Repair the World

My Mitzvah Project

For my Mitzvah Project, I volunteered once a week at a program known as Buddy Basketball. I was fortunate to be paired with Ethan, an eight year-old boy who happens to be severely autistic. Each week I taught Ethan the fundamentals of basketball, such as shooting, dribbling, passing and, not-to-be forgotten, just running around and having fun.

From this experience, I learned that I really like helping people. Although the Buddy Basketball program ended last March, I want to continue being Ethan's buddy. Until I went away to camp, Ethan and I hung out. Sometimes we went to the park and played. Other times, we took his dog for a walk. Each time it was fun, interesting and meaningful for me, and I hope that Ethan feels the same. Now, as school is starting again, I would like to continue to hang out with him.



Second, I learned that that I can be friends with disabled people and others who are different from me, and how important it is to get to know people before you judge them.

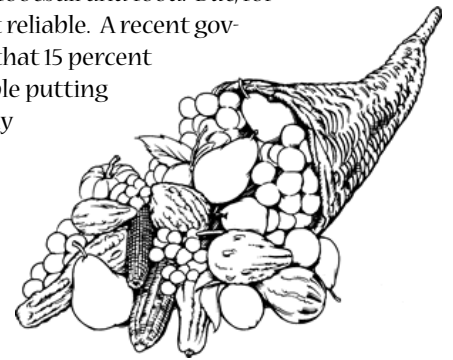
Before Buddy Basketball, I did not know a lot about autism or what to expect from Ethan. At first I thought: "Wow - Ethan is really different from me." But once I got to know Ethan I realized that, even though he has special needs, Ethan still is a person. Many people prejudge and are uncomfortable with disabled people. I have to admit that I felt a little awkward when I first met Ethan. But, as I got to know Ethan, I became more comfortable with him -- and he with me -- and it became easier to communicate and interact.

Third, I learned from working with Ethan the importance of patience, being empathetic and showing compassion -- and of taking the time to communicate with people who are different from me. I also learned how important it is to help people who are not as fortunate as I am.

I hope that Ethan learned something from me. I know that I learned a lot about myself from having the opportunity to buddy with him.

Sukkat Shalom Families Can "Share the Harvest" This Thanksgiving

Fall is a time for family, football and food. But, for some families, food isn't reliable. A recent government report found that 15 percent of Americans had trouble putting food on the table. Nearly one in five children go to bed hungry. Many struggle with hunger right here in our own backyard, which means WE have an opportunity to help.



Over the years, the generosity of Sukkat Shalom's families has fed more than 1,200 of our neighbors in need. This year, we ask you to once again open your hearts and extend a helping hand. There are so many ways your family can get involved. You can pick up a grocery gift card in any denomination or shop for another family. Your children could help make a booklet of their favorite Thanksgiving recipes, decorate a card or use their allowance to buy a special gift. You can join forces with another congregant or neighbor to help out a larger family in need.

Collection will be held at Family School on Sunday, November 20, 2011, from 10 to 10:30 AM. If you cannot make it to collection day you can still get involved. To volunteer or for more information, contact the Sukkat Shalom office.

Family Promise Program Helps Local Homeless

Congregation Sukkat Shalom continues to participate in the Family Promise program, through which local houses of worship host homeless families.

We were thrilled when a participating family "graduated" to their own apartment in August. We said good luck to Victoria, Bruce and Brandon, who are now living in Evanston.

A new family joined the program on October 13th. They are Christopher and Kierra and their four children -- Kayla (age 6), Calen (age 5) and twins Alan and Nala (age 1). We are now hosting three families and a total of 13 people.

Get involved in Family Promise and you will be rewarded by knowing that you made a difference. To volunteer, contact the Sukkat Shalom office.

Running Club to Tackle Lincolnwood Turkey Trot

The Sukkat Shalom Running Club invites you to participate in the 35th Annual Lincolnwood Turkey Trot on Sunday, November 20th. The event includes 5K and 10K runs and a 5K fitness walk. There is also a Drumstick Dash for kids 10 years and under.

The races start at 8:45 am at Proesel Park (corner of Kostner and Morse Avenues) in Lincolnwood. Sukkat Shalom runners will meet before the race at the Starbucks across the road from the starting line.



Each participant is asked to bring a non-perishable food item in order to be entered in the post-race raffle for fabulous prizes. The food items and a portion of the proceeds from this event will benefit the Niles Township Food Pantry.



If you're interested in participating, or want more information about the Running Club, please contact the Sukkat Shalom office.

Hineinu Committee Starts New Program to Share Shabbat Meals

The Hineinu (We Are Here) Committee is always looking for a few more good men and women to bring that Sukkat Shalom spirit to our families celebrating lifecycle events. We are on the lookout for volunteers to prepare meals, assemble Shabbat baskets once a month, provide rides when needed, and reach out to families who might need some support in difficult times.

There is one organizational meeting a year and the time commitment is not intensive. But the payback is great for enhancing the community of our congregation. Volunteer forms can be found on the Sukkat Shalom Website under "Getting Involved." Forms can also be obtained by calling Amy Israel at the congregational office.

New this year is a program we're calling On Your Own -- a concept dedicated to making connections for congregants who might want to share meals before or after a Shabbat service. If you are alone for any reason and would like to join a group to meet for Friday night services and a meal, On Your Own is the solution!

To participate in On Your Own, or if you have any questions, please contact the congregational office at (847) 251-2675 or www.sukkatshalom.org.



Sukkat Shalom By the Numbers

High Holy Day Participants – 2011:	
Erev Rosh Hashanah:	318
Rosh Hashanah Morning:	963
430 (family service)	
533 (adult service)	
Kol Nidre:	535
Yom Kippur Morning:	876
391 (family service)	
485 (adult service)	
Havdalah:	186

Journey, cont'd

One witness at Bastogne had seen his father killed right before his nine year-old eyes. I asked him if he was resentful or carried any hatred, and he retorted: "No. Your American soldiers freed me and I then had my entire life in front of me. You have to live life with optimism!"

"The most extraordinary part of the journey was the eyewitnesses that we met at each stop along the way."

The trip changed along the way. In England, the 101st were young soldiers who had never been in battle. We moved

along their path through Europe and towards the sinister reality of the Dachau camps and felt the memories of all the murdered innocent people. We were hit with the inspiration that propelled the allied soldiers toward their goal: "Life is precious, and freedom must be treasured."

I also realized the trip was not just to experience this chapter of history; it was for my dad and his celebration of 75 years of life. I set my body clock to his clock. We moved at his pace and took breaks when needed, which was often. I slept to his rhythmic breathing.

The time with my dad brought me back to the days when we sailed together every summer weekend and when I would go to his office in winter and sweep the factory floors. I liked just being with my pop and thought how lucky my sister is to work with him every day in their printing business.

[The following email was sent to our congregational Website in response to the Journey article.]

I'm a random 52 year-old Black woman in Maryland. Our ministry has been preparing a selection that has the term Shehekienu in it. Of course, I can't sing or dance to something that I don't understand. So I did what I always do when I need to understand something -- I went to Google. I came upon the Spring 2011 issue of your newsletter. The "My Journey" entry made all of my other research make sense.

Isn't it ironic that it took a Southern Episcopalian, married to a Jewish man, living way up in Illinois, to help a Southern Baptist in Maryland understand the essence of a song sung by a West Coast Pentecostal -- all through your Jewish Congregational Bulletin.

I just wanted to thank you for what you do. As you already know, even the little things that seem small can mean something really significant to someone else. Unfortunately a lot of times we don't find out just how significant they are.

Thanks again,

Kim

It came to me that we do need to cherish each day together, especially with family. My dad has taught me about hard work, following your dreams, and that we should be grateful to live with such freedoms as we have. At Yom Kipper services, we read the silent confession about working on "the art of living." I traveled with my dad as we experienced the art of living and now we have a special memory that will be shared forever.

Traveling the path of the heroic allied soldiers, I realized I was with my own hero. Thanks, Dad.

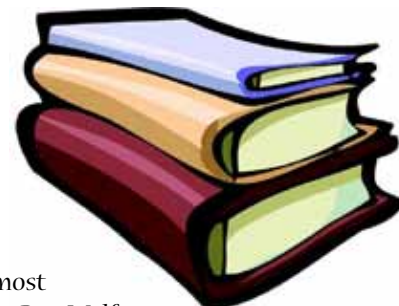
Sharing A Love of Judaism Through Learning

by Alissa C. Zuchman, Director of Family Education

This past September, I was blessed to start my new school year with Congregation Sukkat Shalom. It is a dream come true. Sukkat Shalom mixes my passion for teaching about Judaism with my personal philosophy of the importance of diversity. It is a spiritual home that nurtures families and makes everyone feel welcome and comfortable.

I knew that I wanted to be a Jewish educator since I went to Solomon Schechter for high school and had the good fortune to attend the Jewish Theological Seminary in Los Angeles. I

studied with some of the most exciting minds in Judaism -- Ron Wolfson, Elliott Dorff and many other professors who inspired me. They showed me that teaching was not just about facts and figures, but about emotion and FUN.



My dream is that families come to realize what I know: The Torah and Judaism is relevant today and that if you "turn it and turn it again, you will find everything in it." That is a quote from Pirke Avot, which means the Ethics of our Fathers. I have found that quote to be amazingly true, because the lessons of the Bible still apply to the very modern issues in our world.

My goal as the new Director of Family Education is to share my love for Judaism and never forget before whom I stand. At each Family School session, I stand before God and a room filled with students -- parents and children who share a passion for learning.

I would like to thank everyone who has welcomed me with open arms and warm hearts. Rabbi Gordon and Judy Buckman are not only mentors, but friends. Cantor Kaufman and I can grow together in our new positions. Amy Israel is the glue that keeps us working with you.

I look forward to spending many autumns together.



Signs of Progress in Building Renovations

by Lynn Denton

If you have driven past the corner of 10th and Central in Wilmette recently, you may have noticed an attractive new sign that announces 'Congregation Sukkat Shalom.' It's also a sign that progress in renovating our new home is moving along on schedule.

Our Building Committee, under the direction of Fred Wilson and Kerry Leonard, worked diligently and successfully with the Village of Wilmette to obtain a permit to start construction. The Village of Wilmette Building Department has been very supportive of our project and complimentary of our plans. Construction is scheduled to begin in mid-November, with projected completion in August 2012.

Several important elements of the architectural plans have been approved and we are moving forward with the upgraded kitchen, offices for Rabbi Gordon and Judy Buckman off of the entry foyer, and renovations on the north side of the sanctuary -- including windows on the north wall looking onto a garden.

The Furniture and Fixtures Committee, chaired by Ken Kraus, is arranging for a company to remove the organ that occupies the entire north wall. It is possible that the organ might be preserved for use by another church or organization.

Our Operations and Budget Committee, led by Debra Shore, is creating an operating budget for when we occupy the building. Among other things, the committee is trying to refine utility costs once we are using our new home on a daily basis for programming, study and worship.

The Development Committee, under the direction of Joel Fliegel, has continued talking to congregants and raising funds to complete the renovations. We have raised approximately \$3.62 million of the total cost of \$3.9 million, and continue to accept pledges and gifts toward achieving our goal.

Questions about any aspect of the project can be directed to the committee chairs or to Congregation President Jesse Peterson Hall. And don't forget to drive past 10th and Central to keep an eye on the progress.



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