



KOL EZRAS ISRAEL



Rabbi's Message

On Friday night of Shabbos Chanukah, many members of our shul participated in a Friday night Shabbos meal. This beautiful meal was brought about by the combined efforts of many individuals, with Sheldon Needle at the forefront. I mentioned a thought at the meal that bears repeating at this time.

The Bach, in the beginning of hilchos Chanukah writes that one of the reasons for the evil decrees of the Greeks that were directed at preventing the Jews from observing the Torah and mitzvos was due to the malaise that set in amongst Klal Yisroel regarding their observance of the mitzvos. They did not display a passion for the mitzvos, rather their performance of the Mitzvos was done by rote. Over time, this conduct brought about a weakened commitment to Judaism, hence providing a fertile environment for Hellenism to take root amongst many of the Jews.

The reversal of this trend was brought about by the Hasmoneans fervor and passion for the Torah and Mitzvos. Their willingness to sacrifice their lives to keep the Torah was the antidote to the malaise that had been allowed to set in. Their intense search for the oil was evidence of the deep desire that they felt to perform the Mitzvah of lighting the Menorah. This was the reason that they merited the miracle of the oil lasting eight



President's Message

Woody Allen once famously said showing up is half of life.

This is doubly true of a synagogue where we count on people coming whether it's to daven, to hear a lecture or share a dinner.

Without people showing up, we cannot make a minyan, offer new programming or community events and will eventually cease to exist.

In the past few months we have taken some initiatives to try to encourage more participation by soliciting comments from members and non members on what they would like the shul to offer through a survey.

We got some very good feedback regarding what people like and are less happy with. Most of our membership is happy with what we do. However we did see some pertinent comments about wanting more adult education classes, more community get-togethers, and

days. On the Festival of Chanukah, we are not just celebrating a miracle of oil lasting eight days, but as the word "Chanukah" implies, we are celebrating the rededication of the Jews not only of the Beis Hamikdash, but a rededication of the Jews to the observance of the Mitzvos. Let us take to heart the lesson of Chanukah on many different levels. Our approach to our observance of the Torah and Mitzvos must be with a fervor and passion.

This thought comes to mind when thinking about our Ezras Israel community. The Friday night meal, and the fun filled children's program that Nechama Fellner ran on Sunday only came about because of the passion that manifested itself in their personal involvement of time and energy that was put forth for the benefit of our Shul and community. Sheldon Needle, Nechama and Michael Fellner, Uri Fastovsky, Judy Lowitz, Gene Tarkovsky, Jason Yahoodain and others, including all of those who attended these events, with their efforts created a warm and festive environment this Chanukah.

There are others who contribute by their participation in classes that are offered through the shul. But perhaps most importantly, a shul must have a show of dedication by those who benefit from it to ensure that the minyanim thrive. Friday nights and Shabbos Mincha during the winter months can pose a challenge for many to attend. However, this is a time where dedication and commitment can and will make a big difference. Looking forward to a renewed commitment and dedication to the Shabbos Minyanim.

more programming for children. We have tried to be responsive to that feedback. (See announcement below.)

If there is anything you would like to see done differently, or any new initiatives, please contact me at Sheldon@ctsguides.com. We want you to be here and be vocal about what Ezras Israel can do for you.

With member energy and interest there is much we can do to grow our community.

Sincerely

Sheldon Needle

Nechama Fellner named to
new Ezras Israel post as
Director of Children's Programming.
(See her article on the next page.)



Ezras Kids Corner

By Nechama Fellner, Ezras Israel Children's Programming Director

The future is bright for the children at Ezras Israel. Our Kids kickoff Chanukah party was a huge success as fourteen kids spun dreidels, made great crafts, played games, listened to music and enjoyed delicious refreshments. Our youth can continue to look forward to some exciting new programming. As the Children's Programming Director, I am excited to report that we have a lot of great things in store at Ezras Israel! We are looking toward some fabulous renovations of the children's room as well as high quality programming. Programs will include our exciting Shabbat Morning **Tefilah Club** and kids parties and activities to celebrate our *chagim*. We are excited that our youth of all ages are eager to participate. Volunteering opportunities are available as well. Spread the word that the youth program at Ezras Israel will be one to beat! More information and flyers will follow and an Ezras Kids Corner Bulletin Board will proudly hang in our *shul*.

Feel free to contact me with any questions. nechamafellner@hotmail.com

Halachic Introduction as to How to make fruits and vegetables Kosher- Part one

By Uri Fastovsky

If you think that you never ate a bug in your life, you could well be mistaken. A host of insects make their home in many of the vegetables we eat each day. A simple washing of the vegetables will not solve the problem. Even at this day and age when you would think the problem is not so big, because of government inspection, and factory processing, significant infestations are still being found in many vegetables sold on supermarket shelves, organic being the worse.

It is difficult to make absolute statements about vegetable infestation. The incidence of infestation varies throughout the year, due to seasonal influences and insect life cycles. Seasonal foods are now available throughout the year. Moreover it is hard to find out the origin of a particular vegetable, and supermarkets bring in produce from many different areas of the world.

The Torah delineates the various forbidden vermin called *Shratzim*. It is known that a consumption of even a single *Sheretz* can be a violation of as many as six mitzvot. Hence their, even inadvertent, consumption can have a detrimental effect on a person's ability to attain a higher level of spirituality.

A terrestrial *Sheretz* is defined as any living creature that is visible to the naked eye yet so small that its legs cannot be seen moving when it runs. Though mammalian *Shratzim* do not pose a threat to the salad eating public, worms and insects do often cling to the vegetables we eat. (To be continued)

Are you a 'freemium' or premium shul user?

Adapted from a 4/14/2010 article in the **Washington Jewish Week** written by **Glenn S. Easton**, Executive Director at Adas Israel.

"I recently learned a new computer term at a national conference of synagogue administrators that seems perfect to describe many of those who attend my congregation. "Freemium" is a term used to describe those software or internet programs that are free to use, up to a certain point, until one pays a fee for access to the "premium" version of the program....

...Synagogues seem to have the same system. A member of the community can attend and participate in synagogue life for free, attend services, listen to lectures, study with the rabbi, enjoy kiddush lunches, say Kaddish for loved ones and celebrate Shabbat and holidays. Hundreds of these "freemium" users attend my congregation on a regular basis. No one can distinguish who they are, no one restricts their participation and their status does not make them any less welcomed in our congregational community.

Fortunately, we also have many "premium" users of our synagogue, our generous members, [with their money and their time] who ensure that the synagogue, our Rabbi, and our programs are excellent, available, creative, responsive and accessible. Unlike software companies, [however,] synagogues have few, if any, outside sources of revenue besides their premium members. This phenomenon puts tremendous financial pressure on congregations, lay leaders and their members, who at any one time represent only 30 percent of the Jewish households in a community that is asked to support the 70 percent of freemium synagogue users. Synagogues need to develop a new business model, need to retain more premium members, need to convert more freemium users to premium members and need to find new sources of outside revenue to support the congregation....

...Freemium synagogue users need to appreciate that it requires support to keep the synagogue doors wide open and available to all. Some synagogues and communal institutions have adopted a "fee-for-service" model and some engage in aggressive and constant fund raising. However, synagogues are not software companies, but sacred communities, where G-d dwells, where members work to perfect the world, where rabbis teach and inspire, where children learn to ensure the future of our people. Synagogues are the bedrock of our Jewish community without which Judaism, today, would not exist.

It will take a far-sighted major donor, charitable foundation or communal structure to transform the synagogue business model, fully engage all synagogue users, remove real and perceived financial barriers to participation, and to elevate our synagogues from a religious business to a meaningful congregational community. Until then, synagogues gladly and enthusiastically welcome all attendees < freemium

or premium < through the many gates of participation and engagement found in congregations throughout North America.

Adapted from a 2/19/2009 article in WJW: "First, two interesting facts: The average cost of maintaining a synagogue is \$2,400 per household regardless of number of members (the largest congregations average \$2,700 per year).

Approximately 80 percent of all Jews belong to a synagogue at some point in their lives, and 90 percent of households with children belong to a synagogue at some point.

Therefore, the financial problem with synagogues is not recruitment, but retention." And the need for a new way to finance shul operations. "....Two things must happen for this transformation to occur. First, one or more "mega-donors" must underwrite any shortfall during a synagogue's experimental transition. For synagogues to be able to test the new model, it has to be revenue neutral. Second, synagogues must build up their endowment funds to supplement the rising costs and make synagogue affiliation more affordable.

We are told in Pirke Avot, "Do not separate yourself from the community." Let's stop giving people a reason and excuse to separate from our wonderful, sacred Jewish community."

Shul News

Ezras Israel Membership & Dues

by Rachmil Jacobovits, Financial Secretary

There is no better way to show your appreciation for Rabbi Kreiser or the presence of our shul in this community, than by enrolling or renewing as a member. While some may have trouble paying a year's worth of membership dues (\$600 for a Family or \$300 for Single) the shul's ByLaws and practice has been to permit dues to be paid in affordable installments. Those same bylaws and shul practices have guided our approach to making individual allowances for instances of hardship circumstance (loss of job, extended illness or something similar.) The important point is that the shul does not wish to have its dues, low as they are, be the cause of a disruption between the shul and those who want and need its services, perhaps at a most important time in a person's life. So if you wish to avail yourself of individual consideration, you may discuss your situation with the Rabbi, the President, Sheldon Needle or the Financial Secretary, Rachmil Jacobovits. Be assured that your privacy is strictly protected and only relevant financial information will be shared and only among these three named individuals, strictly on a need to know basis.

Dues for 2011 can be paid up until Purim. The 2012 dues letter along with ballots for the Pesach time election will come out in the first week of April.

We encourage everyone to show your support for the Rabbi's work here and give him and especially yourself the gift of an Ezras Israel Membership.

Learning Schedule

- Shabbat mornings, Rabbi's shiur on the weekly **Parsha**, 8:15am at the shul. Open to all.
- Sunday mornings following Shacharis, Rabbi's **Talmud Class** at the Ring House (men only) **Wednesday Learning Nights** on Wednesdays at 7:30 pm at the shul (men only) (contact Rabbi Kreiser to confirm dates)

Baruchim Habaim

New Members: Jonathan Schlaifer,
Dorris Shnider

Are you receiving the weekly Ezras Israel e-mail update?

Davening times, upcoming events, and more! To subscribe, visit
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ezrasisrael>



Mazel Tov !

Mazel Tov to Meredith Kroehl and Jonathan Schlaifer, on their engagement
Robert Gamzeh on becoming engaged
Jeremy Jacobson and family, on the engagement of Jeremy's sister
Sheldon and Roz Needle & family on the engagement of their daughter Rina
Rose Glasner, on the marriage of her grandson David Glasner to Elana Hoenig
Ilene Van Houter on the birth of a grandson Akiva to Andy and Samantha
Amos and Osnat Cohen & family on the birth of their twin boys
Mark and Tami Lautman on becoming grandparents
Nate Druckman and family on his graduation from JDS

Yasher Koach!



For sponsoring a kiddush

To Nechama Fellner for organizing and running a fabulous Channukah Party for the shul's children.

Sheldon Needle, Uri Fastovsky, Judy Lowitz and Gene Tartakovsky for organizing and setting for the Shul's Chanukah Dinner

To Rabbi Kreiser and Mark Disler for organizing and setting up two lecture series:
- "The Deeper meaning of the Ashrei Prayer" by Rabbi Kreiser
- "The Deeper meaning of Chanukah" by Rabbi Sher of the Yeshiva of Greater Washington

Stuart and June Graff, in memory of Ruth Graff/Rivka bat Yerachmiel HaCohen Z"l to mark her first Yahrzeit

Doreen Blech on the Yahrzeit of her mother Rita Wacks/Rivka bat Zvi Hersh z"l & June Graff of the Yahrzeit of her mother Rachel Mannheimer/ Rachel bas Yaakov z"l

Amos & Osnat Cohen on the birth of twin boys

Jeremy Roschalb in memory of his mother Irene Roschwalb/Ita bat Tzvi Zev HaLevi z"l

Sheldon Needle in memory of his mother Rena Needle z"l

Dorris Shnider in honor of the shul and its welcoming members

Jerry Roschwalb in memory of his father Samuel Roschwalb/ Shmuel Zanvil ben Yaakov z"l

Farewell to

Robin Gamzeh & Family on making aliyah to Israel

Nate Druckman on his upcoming 2012 senior trip to Poland and Israel

Cemetery Spaces Available

Gan Zikaron (Garden of Remembrance) is a Jewish community owned and operated cemetery. Spaces are available in the section previously purchased by Ezras Israel Congregation of Rockville for \$1,900 each. You will have the benefit of a tax deduction. Please contact Morris Altschuler at (301) 770-5591 for further information and a tour of the site.

Sponsor a New Sefer to our growing Torah Library

There are opportunities to sponsor new sforim for the shul - from a \$50 donation to sponsor a regular Stone Edition Chumash, and \$36 for a new Art Scroll Siddur to a set of Mishnayot or a full Shas, for a small premium above costs. Interested in other sforim sponsorship? Ask Rabbi Kreiser or contact Rachmil.301-461-4984

Refuah Sheleima

Norman Pollack
Fannie Weintraub

Condolences

Ira Grossman on the passing of his father
Rabbi Arthur Rulnick on the passing of his mother



Memorialize a loved one with a Memorial Plaque or by Donating a Machzor, Siddur or Chumash
Call Rachmil at 301-770-4342 or 301-461-4984 or e-mail milujaco@gmail.com

Donate to the Ezras Israel Hachnosat Orchim Fund to support the hospitality the Rabbi extends to the community.

For the holidays and all your special occasions, send personalized **Chesed Cards** and Help Ezras Israel at the same time
Call June Graff 301.770.7129

Celebrate a special occasion!
Sponsor a Kiddush
Call Judith Lowitz- 240-328-7648 or by e-mail judithlowitz@hotmail.com or reserve online at www.ezrasisrael.org

Kol Ezras Israel

Congregation Ezras Israel
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Rockville, MD 20847

Minyan Times

Luach Hazmanim

Date	Day	Parsha - Chag - Event	Candle lighting	Friday / Erev Yom Tov Mincha	Shabbat / Yom Tov Mincha Ends
5-Jan	Thur	Fast of Tenth of Tevet: Fast Begin 6:02AM-Ends 5:33PM	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx
6-Jan	Fri-Sat	Vayechi	4:42	4:40	4:30
13-Jan	Fri-Sat	Shemot	4:50	4:50	4:35
20-Jan	Fri-Sat	Vaerah	4:57	4:55	4:40
25-Jan	Wed	Rosh Chodesh Shevat	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx
27-Jan	Fri-Sat	Bo	5:05	5:05	4:50
3-Feb	Fri-Sat	Beshalach	5:13	5:15	5:00
8-Feb	Wed	Tu B'Shvat	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx
10-Feb	Fri-Sat	Vitro	5:21	5:20	5:05
17-Feb	Fri-Sat	Mishpatim	5:29	5:30	5:15
23-Feb	Th-Fri	Rosh Chodesh Adar	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx
24-Feb	Fri-Sat	Terumah	5:37	5:35	5:20
2-Mar	Fri-Sat	Tezaveh	5:45	5:45	5:30
7-Mar	Wed	Fast of Esther: Fast Begin 5:12AM-Ends 6:37PM-shul-Mincha 5:30	Shul	5:30	Maariv-Megillah 6:10P
8-Mar	Thu-	Purim: Shacharit at Ring House 7AM	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx
9-Mar	Fri-Sat	Ki Tisa	5:52	5:50	5:35
16-Mar	Fri-Sat	Vaykheil-Pikudei	6:59	7:00	6:45
23-Mar	Fri-Sat	Rosh Chodesh Nisan - Vayikra	7:06	7:05	6:50
30-Mar	Fri-Sat	Tzav - Shabbat Hagadol	7:12	7:10	6:55

Shabbat at Ezras Israel: Call 240-627-1661 for Eruv status.

Shacharit 9:00 a.m. Mincha/Maariv

See above. Followed by Seudah Shlishit and Maariv

Sunday - Friday Shacharit at Ring House, Activity Room 3:

8:30 a.m. Followed by Rabbi's shur (men only)

Mincha minyan - same location - 4:00 p.m. Sunday through Thursday

Monday, Thursday

8:05 a.m. (Also the time on Rosh Chodes & other weekdays with Torah readings)