

SCHWARTZ SCRIPT FOR HIR DINNER

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Good Shabbos, Shabbat Shalom.

Thank you so much for coming to the Bayit's 40th Annual Dinner. As I conclude my presidency of the Bayit, I'm reminded of a Midrash, which I share in the prayer that Gilad, Naftali and Eyal return safely to their homes.

Shimon ben Pazzai teaches that while Shma, which declares our faith in a unique G-d, and v'ahavta l'reacha kamocho, that you should love your neighbor as yourself, are meaningful and significant, the most important sentence in the Bible is the one commanding us to bring a sacrifice every morning and every evening.

The 15th century Portuguese scholar Abarbanel explains that the daily sacrifices, and our daily prayers that we say today in their place, express our appreciation to G-d in the morning when the day begins and in the evening when the day ends. Thus, ben Pazzai teaches us that gratitude, both to G-d and to our fellow human beings, is one of the most meaningful and fundamental lessons of the Bible.

The Maharal, who lived in Prague in the 16th century, provides a second explanation for this Midrash, pointing to the regularity of the temple sacrifices in ancient times and our prayers today. For the Maharal, Ben Pazzai's lesson highlights the importance of

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consistency, serving G-d and our fellow human beings day-in and day-out, year-in and year-out.

These parallel lessons of gratitude and consistency come to my mind as I step down as president of the Bayit. I am very grateful for the daily efforts of everyone involved in creating the spiritual home that so many of us have found at the Bayit. I have watched in awe as Rav Avi, Rav Steven, Rabba Sara and Rav Ari tend every day to the needs of our members, the broader Jewish community, and all of humanity. Whether at happy times, times of sorrow, or times of struggle, we each know that our Rabbinic Leaders will be there to support us, as does the broader community.

The youth, office and maintenance teams at the Bayit are second to none. Menachem keeps our youth excited and engaged; Yael, Shuli, and Phyllis run the office smoothly; and Jerome, Manny, Brian, Eric, Elmer, Geo, Eric and Alex keep the building beautifully. Together, they ensure that the Bayit can offer a diverse array of programming with something for everyone, from the very young who participate in our youth groups to those who participate in our golden age programs, from our advanced classes, including Daf Yomi led by Rabbi Linzer, to our frequent events for special friends. None of this is possible without the daily commitment of the Bayit staff, led by our professional and proficient executive director, Richard Langer.

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My feelings of appreciation for consistency also extend to the many members of the Bayit, and I can start with our fellow honorees this evening, Susan & Jonathan Dzik and Carmiya & Michael Weinraub. Without the Dziks, there would be no HIR Choir, and without the Weinraubs, there would be no Tot Shabbat. Thank you so much for all that you do for the Bayit and for sharing your special evening with us.

I similarly appreciate the many members who made tonight happen, especially our dinner and journal chairs, Atara Gorsetman, Melanie and Bob Santoriello, and David Braunstein. Thanks to you and the members of the Dinner Committee for making this event so enjoyable and successful.

There are many others at the Bayit who consistently come through for the community, including the Board, Executive Committee and many members who have chaired or volunteered to participate on committees and to staff programs. Working with you has been extremely gratifying. I similarly appreciate the many members who have actively participated in the Bayit's activities, especially our daily prayer services. Without you, we wouldn't be a synagogue.

Any accomplishments I have had as president would not have been possible without my parents and mother-in-law. Mom & Dad, from my earliest years, you taught me the importance of consistency and appreciation through your efforts day-in and day-out on behalf of the

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community and by always stopping to thank those who help us, even when it's their job. And Ema, thank you for teaching us how to overcome adversity and succeed with grace and modesty.

To our siblings and extended family, who came from near and far to join us this evening, we say thank you. We appreciate your friendship and support. Like our parents, you fulfill the lesson of the daily sacrifice through your constant presence in our lives.

Finally, my greatest appreciation is reserved for my greatest love, Shani. Shani, you have been the greatest teammate. Without your support, I'm sure that there would be no one at tonight's dinner. You kept my speeches short; you kept my spirits up when the Bayit faced challenges; and you took on even more work around the house so that I could go to literally hundreds of meetings and shiva calls. I love you and look forward to spending more time together in a few weeks when I step down as president.

I'm similarly looking forward to spending more time with Rebecca, Sam & Mike. Hopefully, they feel the same.

Shani, do you have anything to add?

SHANI: As we're the final honorees for the evening, ma'ariv and dessert are downstairs, right after Bernie Horowitz, our favorite Ba'al Kriah (Torah Reader), concludes our program with Hatikvah.