

December 2016  
Kislev - Tevet 5776

# The Shofar's Voice



B'NAI ISRAEL  
SYNAGOGUE

B'nai Israel Synagogue  
Pensacola, Fl

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## President's Message

▪ **Benjamin Nettles, Synagogue President**

Well, that was an interesting congregational meeting. It is with pleasure that I try to fill our past presidents shoes. They will be a hard pair to fill. As Vikki has said so many times the Shul will go forward, if we have the help of all people involved. Vikki and I have spent 2 years attempting to stabilize the Shul. I believe we have done that. Now let's have fun. Fundraisers, events for all congregants to attend. I want to thank the past board for their help and want to welcome the new board. Rabbi Vana's contract was approved for another year, and I look forward to working with him in my new position. I welcome all advice and suggestions, but please bring an idea of how to accomplish your suggestion. I may be inexperienced but I know I have a lot of support from our Shul. With that support we will learn together and accomplish great things! I know I will make a lot of mistakes. When I do always remember I am the one to come to. So let's get going and make B'nai Israel synagogue great, we are stronger together.

- Benjamin Nettles

# Ritual Committee



## Why Do We Fall In Love?

By Simon Jacobson

What lies behind the attraction between the genders? Is the mystique and the romance, the music and the moonlight, just nature's way of hoodwinking men and women to reproduce? Where does our sexuality come from?

In this article, I would like to look at two approaches to that question. One is the prevalent, contemporary, scientific approach. And then we'll contrast it with the Torah approach - specifically, the Kabbalistic-Chassidic perspective on Torah.

There are, of course, numerous secular-scientific theories of sexuality. Let us examine what is probably the most dominant one: the biological or evolutionary theory, which is based on the idea that "the survival of the fittest" is the primary force in nature. From this perspective, our attraction derives from the fact that the perpetuation of the species is achieved through a physical relationship between a male and a female. The male will therefore search for the female who is most fertile and will bear the healthiest offspring; the female will search for a male who provides the healthiest seed, is the most virile, and will protect the young.

This theory explains why men and women seek out and mate with each other. It also explains that certain features are extremely enticing to the opposite gender because they indicate signs of fertility or health that are important for the perpetuation of the species.

What this theory essentially says is that behind the beauty and the sensuality of love, there is a primal force: the need to exist and to perpetuate that existence. Since the human being is an animal with a certain degree of sophistication, human sexuality has evolved to address that sophistication. People are not prepared to think of themselves merely as production machines to bear children, so evolution and biology have conspired to imbue the physical union not only with pleasure, but also with a mystique that compels them along the romantic journey.

Gazing into a loved one's eyes across a candlelit table-for-two, one may think that he or she has risen above a survival-of-the-fittest mode of existence, but, in truth, this "rising higher" is just nature's way of packaging that drive. Two human beings courting each other are essentially the same as two bees courting each other. One bee will buzz a certain way or give off a certain scent, but what it comes down to is that these are tactics to attract a mate and bear offspring. By the same token, the accouterments of human courtship--the romance, the flowers, the music, the moonlight--are really just nature's way of getting two people together.

Nature is ruthless. Nature must prevail. So nature finds the means to get a male and a female to mate. This, basically, is the scientific approach to physical attraction. Let us now contrast this with the Torah's approach.

# Ritual Committee

The Torah's conception of human sexuality is completely different: We are driven to search for our divine image, for our quintessential self.

In the opening chapters of Genesis, the Torah describes man as originally having been created as a "two-sided" being: "Male and female He created them, and He called their name 'man.'" G-d then split this two-sided creature into two, and ever since, the divided halves of the divine image seek and yearn for each other.

They're not half individuals; man is a full-fledged personality and woman is a full-fledged personality. But there are elements in their transcendental persona that remain incomplete if they don't find each other. There's something missing in each of them; they were once part of a greater whole.

To put it in more mystical terms, they're really searching to become one with G-d.

The human race is, in essence, one entity, a male-female singularity. When man and woman come together and unite in a marital union, they recreate the divine image in which they were both formed as one.

The teachings of Kabbalah take this a step further, seeing the male-female dynamic not just as two genders within a species, but rather two forms of energy: an internal energy and a projective energy. Feminine energy and masculine energy coexist in every person and in every part of nature.

Even G-dliness is sometimes described in the feminine and sometimes in the masculine. Contrary to the common perception of the "patriarchal" G-d of the Bible, many of the divine attributes are feminine, such as the Shechinah.

So what we have here is a split of two energies and a yearning to become one whole. This attraction, which manifests itself in many physical sensations, is essentially the desire to become a complete, divine whole, connecting to our source in G-d. Not that we've ever been completely disconnected, but consciously or unconsciously, we can go off on our own individual, narcissistic, even selfish, path. And here, there's a voice inside us saying, I yearn for something greater. When a man is attracted to a woman, or a woman to a man, it may seem to be a very biological urge, but from a Jewish, Torah perspective, it's just a physical manifestation of a very deep, spiritual attraction.

This is not to say that the Torah's concept of sexuality is not intrinsically tied in to the objective of creating new life. It certainly is. But perpetuation of the species is not the sole end of our attraction. Rather, it's the other way around: The divine nature of our sexuality - the fact that the union of male and female completes the divine image in which they were created - is what gives us the power to bring life into the world.

So there is something divine about the union itself. Halacha (Torah law) sanctifies marriage even without the possibility of offspring, such as in the case of a couple who are beyond childbearing age, or who are physically unable to bear children. If the physical union was simply the mechanism for childbearing, one might argue, "Hey, no perpetuation of the species, what's the point of marriage and intimacy? Just a selfish pleasure? Where's the holiness?"

The answer: In and of itself, the unity of male and female is a divine act, a divine experience.

# This Years Religious School Calendar!!

Note: ( ) denotes Holiday discussed

## September

11  
18  
25 (Rosh Hashana)

## October

9 (Yom Kippur)  
16 (Sukkah decorating) 23 (Simcha Torah)  
30

## November

6  
13  
20 (Global Day of Jewish Learning)

## December

4  
11  
18 (Chanukah)

## January 2017

8 (ISJL Fellow all school program and Yael (Shlica starts))  
15  
22  
29

## February

19  
26

## March 5

12 (Purim) 26

## April

2 (Passover)  
23 (Holocaust Remembrance) 30 (Israel Independence Day)

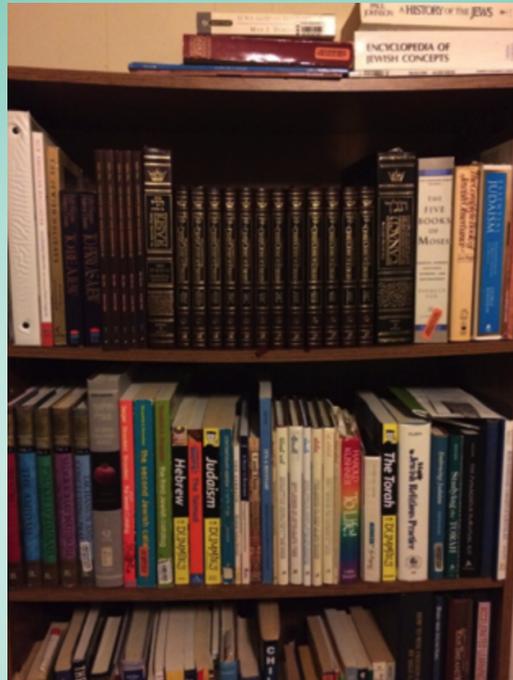
## May

7  
14 (Lag B'omer) 21 Last day



## Are you a "Person of the Book?"

I hope I'm not the only one that has books about Judaism located from one side of the house to the other. Eventually, temporarily, they end up here, centrally located in my ever expanding library. What about you?



Aside from a Tanakh and a Siddur it's important to maintain a connection to Judaism through study, whether you are a venerable tamid chacham or a newly minted member of the tribe. And other than the important, earnest study of our Torah, there is a plethora of Jewish subjects to choose from to expand your knowledge about Judaism. If you're not sure where to start, ask a fellow Jew. "Rabbi "Google" is also replete with lists to choose from. For example, I found the following links:

<http://www.jewishbookcouncil.org/books/reading-lists>

<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/top-100-jewish-books/>

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/10/24/best-jewish-books\\_n\\_1025735.html?](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/10/24/best-jewish-books_n_1025735.html?)

<http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-arts-and-culture/books/145840/101-great-jewish-books>

Let 5777 be your year to be a "Person of the Book" **HAPPY READING**

From the Shofar's Voice Editor Samantha Goldstein,

I have never received anything other than praise for the Shofar's Voice and how well it is coming along, and I thank you for that. But there will now be some old rules newly, and strictly followed. On the back page of each newsletter, there is a section that says: "Have a story for the newsletter? Please send submissions to the Shofar's Voice Editor Samantha Goldstein via [Jussduckie@aol.com](mailto:Jussduckie@aol.com), by the 15th of each month."

Many of you are not doing that.

I admit to the last Shofar's Voice being late, due to many submissions not being emailed in on time, and some personal things I had going on. Regardless of this fact, the Shofar's Voice is for the people, basically written by the people. If your submissions are not in by the Fifteenth of each month, your submission will **NOT** be included in that month's newsletter and you have to wait to be added to the next month's. I am making **no** exceptions to this rule. Thank you, and I look forward to seeing your articles sent in on time.

# Donations!!

## General Fund:

- Keith Stimmell
- State of Israel, Minister of Finance

## Rabbi's Discretionary Fund:

- Delores Livingston

## High Holy Day Donations:

- Lawrence & Renee Nichols
- Barb & Herb Simon
- Phil & Linda Pink
- Anonymous
- Samuel Bearman

## Fundraising Fund

- Marty Libowsky
- Gene Rosenbaum

## MEMBERSHIP

I am delighted to announce the addition of two more Individuals who have become members of Bnai Israel Congregation this past month;

\* Karyn Imrich, is a transplant from Los Angeles, but originally from New York.

She has joined Sisterhood and accepted the job of managing the Gift Shop. She has done a tremendous amount of work and is to be commended for her commitment and enthusiasm. Welcome!

\* The other new member is our very own Rabbi Vana! He is not only our Rebbe, but also a dues-paying member! Even though he already fills several roles for our congregation, he has found yet another way to contribute! What a mensch! Thank You Rabbi!

Rebekah Kaufman

# Yahrzeits

## Kislev / December

|    |    |                         |
|----|----|-------------------------|
| 1  | 1  | Ellen Mary Hanreck      |
| 2  | 2  | Walter Gibian           |
| 6  | 6  | Harry Lefkowitz         |
| 9  | 9  | Isidore Feigenbaum      |
| 9  | 9  | Charles Kapner          |
| 11 | 11 | Freda Stone             |
| 12 | 12 | Betty Wise              |
| 13 | 13 | Max levin               |
| 15 | 15 | Harry Abrams            |
| 15 | 15 | Edward Chorney          |
| 19 | 19 | Clara Goldstein         |
| 21 | 21 | Sidney Kaiman           |
| 21 | 21 | Harry Rickoff           |
| 23 | 23 | Max Gelfand             |
| 24 | 24 | Sarah Pearlman Maybloom |
| 28 | 28 | Joyce Levin             |

## Tevet / December

|   |    |                       |
|---|----|-----------------------|
| 1 | 30 | Shirley Asch          |
|   | 30 | Jacqueline Cohen      |
| 2 | 31 | Anne Ethel<br>Goldman |

## December Birthdays

1st – Leah Annie Davies Cyprus  
2nd – Avi Baurberg  
3rd – Rebecca Elisha-Marie Davies  
4th – Joshua Davies  
8th – Joel Beck  
10th – Dee Shemaria  
14th – Doreen Swartz  
14th – Morris Davies  
15th – Betty Davies  
15th – Esther Allen  
16th – Shelly Davies  
19th – Gene Rosenbaum  
20th – Jami Alise Harris  
23rd – Philip Isaac Shemaria  
23rd – Robert Lefkowitz  
29th – Azean Robinette

## Anniversaries

5th – Frank & Joanie Kay  
6th – Nathan & Myra Kahn  
25th – Joel & Jacqueline  
Beck  
30th – Marci & Ross  
Goodman

# **Coming Soon!!**

(starting December 11th, 10AM)

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**Rabbi: Israel Vana**  
**President: Vikki Goldstein**  
**Vice President: Benjamin Nettles**  
**Secretary: Rosemary Lieberman**  
**Treasurer: Richard Haller**  
**Sisterhood: Kate Lollar**  
**Men's Club: Alan Shemaria**

**\*Have a story for the newsletter? Please send  
submissions to the Shofar's Voice Editor Samantha  
Goldstein via [Jussduckie@aol.com](mailto:Jussduckie@aol.com), by the 15th of each  
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