

**2010-2011**

Baltimore Board of Rabbis  
**Speakers' Bureau**

**Expert** speakers.  
**Challenging** and  
**Inspiring** topics.

BALTIMORE  
**BOARD OF RABBIS**



# Table of contents

- Program Overview and Details  
page 2
- Meet the Speakers  
page 4
- Speaker Reservation Form  
page 21

**The Baltimore Board of Rabbis wishes to thank Mr. LeRoy E. Hoffberger for his special support of this project.**

Dear Jewish Community Leader,



For a long time, many of us at the Baltimore Board of Rabbis (BBR) have sensed that local Jewish organizations thirst for substantive Jewish programs to bring to their constituencies. Groups often invite diverse speakers to discuss provocative ideas or teach lessons from our Jewish tradition. However, most have never considered inviting a rabbi.

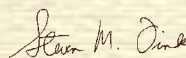
Beginning in fall 2010, many of my BBR colleagues are proudly participating in an exciting new program available exclusively to Baltimore-area Jewish groups, synagogues, and ASSOCIATED agencies. The launch of our community-wide Baltimore Board of Rabbis Speakers' Bureau will make the task of filling your program calendar easier. BBR will field requests for speakers and should be able to confirm speakers' availability within 10 days or less.

In today's economic environment, it is cost-prohibitive to bring in name speakers who command substantial fees. As a public service, BBR now offers your group a smart alternative. Each of our speakers only requests a modest honorarium. Your constituency will delight in the breadth and depth of Jewish learning our speakers bring to each engagement.

Page through our robust listing and you'll be excited by the diverse menu of speakers and topics we offer. My colleagues are both knowledgeable in their given fields and seasoned speakers and teachers. Select the speaker(s) you want for your group for 2010-2011 now, while the best dates, speakers, and topics are still available.

Thank you in advance for making the BBR Speakers' Bureau a part of your program.

Sincerely,



**Rabbi Steven Fink**  
*President, Baltimore Board of Rabbis*

# New Innovative Collaborative Revolutionary

Program Overview and Details

## What Jewish organization can afford to pay high-profile speakers the five and six-figure fees they frequently command?

Now, the Baltimore Board of Rabbis offers local Jewish groups a new alternative:

### The Baltimore Board of Rabbis Speakers' Bureau

Your group, together with other area Jewish groups, will now have one central address for your speaker needs, thus making it easier to fill program calendar vacancies. Launched in time to plan your organization's 2010-2011 calendars, speaking engagements beginning next November can be scheduled now.

## How The BBR Speakers' Bureau Works

1. Select the speaker(s)/topic(s) of interest to your group and submit your request(s) to the Baltimore Board of Rabbis' office on the special form at the back of this catalogue with your preferred dates. **Please submit one form per speaker request.**
2. Enclose a modest \$100 fee made payable to the Baltimore Board of Rabbis, half of which will be given as an honorarium to the speaker and the balance to help defray BBR's administrative expenses.
3. Once your group receives its speaker confirmation notice, you are free to contact the speaker and make final logistical arrangements about time, place, presentation length, format, audience demographics, context, and organization's objectives.

## Where to Utilize our Speakers

- Board or Annual Meetings
- Breakfast Meetings
- Lunch and Learns
- Men's Club or Sisterhood meetings or events
- Rallies
- Retreats
- Senior Centers
- Shabbatons, Shabbat Luncheons or Oneg Shabbats
- Young Professionals' Groups
- Youth Group Gatherings or High School Classes
- Young Parents' Groups
- Zionist Events

# Meet the Speakers



## **Rabbi Don Berlin**

Emeritus, Temple Oheb Shalom  
BA, University of Cincinnati  
BHL, MAHL, Rabbinic Ordination  
DD (honoris causa), Hebrew Union College  
Jewish Institute of Religion

### **“G-d’s Change of Address”**

Judaism has experienced many dynamic changes throughout its history. Our views about G-d have undergone demanding scrutiny. Yet, so many people have not changed the way they refer to G-d or even think about G-d. Is G-d a personal G-d? Does G-d influence or change the world? Does our belief impact how we live? This presentation will sort out the ways Jews address and think about their relationship with G-d. Are 21<sup>st</sup>-century progressive Jews up to this challenge?

### **“Does The Holocaust Need a Paradigm Change?”**

The most devastating event in contemporary Jewish history is the *Shoah*, the Nazis’ destruction of six million Jews. We have analyzed it from every perspective, through histories, novels, poems, art objects, musical compositions, films, videos, commemorative presentations, theologies, philosophies, legal and medical practices, architectural memorials, as well as through Zionism. As one who grew up in the shadow of the *Shoah*, and has studied and examined many of these perspectives, I believe it is time for a paradigm change. The questions: What should it be and is it possible to get there?

### **“Transforming 21<sup>st</sup> Century Synagogues”**

“Synagogue” is a Greek word meaning “a place of coming together or a gathering place.” It has been the place where Jews have gathered to study, to worship and to socialize. Still, some Jews have difficulty living with it, just as we have difficulty living without it. We are much better aware of the synagogue we do not attend and to which we do not belong than the ones we do frequent and with which we identify. Everyone agrees that the synagogue needs to change in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The question: What should the change be and how do we get there? After a career as a pulpit rabbi and during a retirement working with synagogue transformation and rabbinical placement, I confess to no awareness of solutions or revolutions. Still, I find the questions intriguing. Let’s talk about it!

### **“Is the State of Israel Destroying Zionism?”**

I was introduced to Zionism as a child. I have remained a fervent follower ever since. I am so proud of Israel’s achievements in building a functional society and redeeming Jews from all parts of the world, as well as Israel’s contributions to science, technology and the arts. That said, Israel is experiencing serious problems in managing her foreign affairs, in a divisive and frequently scandalous government, in declining education, in economic disparity, in religion gone wild, even in a prestigious military that seems to have lost its edge. While Jews throughout the world remain firmly supportive of Israel, the question arises as to whether Israel is losing its Zionist vision and whether Israel can be the Jewish State of the Jewish People. What’s at stake for Israelis and what’s at stake for Jews in the Diaspora?



## **Rabbi Elizabeth Bolton**

Beit Tikvah Congregation  
BFA, Concordia University  
MHL, Rabbinic Ordination  
Reconstructionist Rabbinical College

### **“Services In The Key Of Awe: Making Music Work”**

Integrating theory and practice, this interactive lecture/workshop will offer both leaders and members of your congregation insight into the structure and theory of music in Jewish prayer services. What makes the music of a service work, generally and for a particular community?

How can folks who are not necessarily formally trained, either in Jewish liturgy or in music, take the reins and create a warm and consistent service environment? Participants will take away practical support for their *shul* or temple’s worship services and congregational ensembles.

### **“Spirituality And The Beard-less G-d: A Reconstructionist-Rabbinic View Of Prayer”**

Is there any purpose to praying when one doesn’t believe in a G-d who literally “hears”? Why would someone pray to a G-d in which he might not literally “believe”? Through a lively, interactive presentation, along with some opportunities for writing and reflecting, this lecture explores the views of Reconstructionist rabbinic authors and teachers, as well as some traditional rabbinic and *Hasidic* sources.

### **“Seeing Ourselves And Each Other”**

The recent movie “Avatar” has an intriguing catch-phrase, “I see you.” Do we really see each other, and ourselves? Sometimes diversity within our Jewish communities is characterized by the struggles between seeing and not-seeing, and the conflicting characteristics of upbringing, identity and beliefs. This talk will open up that dialogue within and amongst ourselves as we consider what is important to us about being Jewish, practicing Judaism, and envisioning a Jewish future. Our conversation will challenge you to examine your own biases, inclusions/exclusions, identities and affiliations.

### **“Examining The Intersections Of Gay/Lesbian And Jewish Life”**

As more states validate same-sex marriage, mainstream America is slowly undoing the notion that homosexuality should be hidden, condemned, or remain a source of shame. We will explore a range of nuanced Jewish perspectives on queer sexuality and same-sex marriage by studying and analyzing relevant Jewish sources, bringing to bear foundational Jewish ethics and values, as well as probing the sources of our received knowledge of and information about the Jewish gay and lesbian experience.



### **Rabbi Gus Buchdahl**

Emeritus, Temple Emanuel  
BA, Hunter College, New York  
MLA, Johns Hopkins University  
Rabbinic Ordination, Hebrew Union College D.  
Min., Hebrew Union College

### **“Jews, Cops And Private Eyes”**

For centuries, Jews were depicted as criminals and degenerates. Finally, toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a Jewish detective on the right side of the law made its way into literature and into Western consciousness. We will discover what made Jewish cops and private eyes different.

### **“Judaeo-German Isn’t Yiddish”**

Some Jews spoke Yiddish. Others spoke Ladino. Westphalian cattle and produce dealers incorporated Hebrew into their daily conversations. I grew up hearing those words without realizing their roots, and I will share them with you.

### **“Demystifying The Shoah”**

The *Shoah* was no accident. Many perfectly understandable ingredients made it inevitable. Some elements may surprise you. This talk will challenge some of your conventional notions about the Holocaust.

### **“The Jewish Romance With Food”**

Ever since Eve ate the forbidden fruit and Abraham hosted a meal fit for angels, food has been central to the Jewish experience. It isn’t only when we eat that is important. It is also when we refrain from eating.



### **Rabbi Steven Fink**

Temple Oheb Shalom  
BA, Franklin and Marshall College  
MAHL, Rabbinic Ordination, Hebrew Union  
College-Jewish Institute of Religion  
Ph.D., McCormick Theological Seminary

### **“Was Jesus A Nice Jewish Boy?”**

Who was Jesus within the context of first-century Jewish life? Was he a gentle teacher or a fervent revolutionary? Was he a rabbi or a prophet? All these possibilities will be considered as we explore Jesus’ identity.

### “Is A Finite G-d Still G-d?”

How do we explain natural disasters and the nature of evil? The theology of the finite G-d is a way that makes sense for all thinking people. The question is, “Is a finite G-d still G-d?”

### “What Can The Black Church Teach The Jews?”

After a decade of close relationships with Baltimore’s African-American churches, my congregation and I have learned to respect and appreciate the particular culture of the Black church. What can we learn from them? Can Jews profit from this relationship?

### “Are We G-d’s Favorite Child?”

Anti-Semitism has been around at least two millennia. As its victims, we have constantly sought out explanations, none of which seem adequate. Economic, psychological, and sociological reasons are all relevant. Have we explored perhaps the most cogent reason of all: sibling rivalry?



#### **Rabbi David Greenspoon**

Beth El Congregation  
BA, Albert A. List College  
MA/Rabbinic Ordination  
Jewish Theological Seminary of America

### “Interfaith Dialogue: The History, The Present, And Emerging Trends”

The American Jewish community has had a unique historical experience with interfaith dialogue in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The American religious and civic landscapes have profoundly felt the impact of these endeavors. The dramatic changes in the American religious and political landscape over the last 20 years promise a major shift in the nature of interfaith dialogue. Where have we been historically? Where are we currently? Where are we headed in the future of our formal interfaith conversations?

### “Separation Of Church And State: Is It Time For A Jewish Reappraisal Of The Issues?”

It used to be a matter of faith that individual Jews and the organized American Jewish community were politically progressive and voted Democratic. Similarly it was a matter of faith that American Jews could only feel safe as a community and as individuals

with the strictest possible interpretation of the First Amendment. The American landscape has changed, and the American Jewish landscape has changed along with it. This presentation will outline some of the issues that have risen because of these changes, and consider the implications of either maintaining or changing the formal position of much of the organized American Jewish community.

### “Should Judaism Proactively Seek Converts?”

Two thousand years ago, Jewish communities in Israel, Egypt, Byzantium, and Rome were veritable hotbeds of conversionary efforts. This conversionary activity came to a halt when the Roman Empire embraced Christianity, and made these efforts illegal. In a post-Holocaust world, Jewish leaders have begun to wonder if Judaism should again reinvigorate similar outreach efforts. This presentation will weigh the pros and cons of this approach and the counter-approach of “in-reach” instead of “outreach” as a means of buttressing Jewish numbers and ensuring Jewish survival in an open society.



#### **Rabbi Floyd Herman**

Emeritus, Har Sinai Congregation  
BA, University of Cincinnati; Rabbinic Ordination  
Hebrew Union College Jewish Institute of Religion

### “Do Jews Believe In Angels?”

Most depictions of angels are found in churches. But there are Jewish angels in the Bible and especially in post-biblical literature. Who are they? What do they do? How do we feel about them?

### “Job And The Problem Of Suffering”

“The Book of Job” raises the question of why good people suffer. This is a question people through the ages have tried to answer. Job gives us insight into and some solutions to the problem.

### “Growing Up Jewish In The American South”

Growing up in a Jewish community in Mississippi before and during the Civil Rights Era was the experience of my youth. What was it like to grow up in this climate? What about anti-Semitism? What is the status of the Jewish community in Mississippi today?

### “Bible Stories You Never Learned In Sunday School”

The Hebrew Bible contains many stories that are not appropriate for children. At the very least, they are difficult to explain due to “mature content” (i.e. sexual content and violence). What are some of these? What do they mean? How do we interpret them?



#### **Rabbi Michael Meyerstein**

Baltimore Board of Rabbis  
*The Aleph Group Fundraising, Inc.*  
*BS, Columbia University*  
*MA, New York University*  
*BHL, MHL, Rabbinic Ordination*  
*Jewish Theological Seminary*

### “What’s Jewish About Fundraising?”

Read the Torah and you’ll discover that Moses was a fundraiser par excellence and that the popular practice of tithing among Christians in America today can be traced back to the Five Books of Moses. Indeed, Jewish institutions engaged in fundraising can derive much “Sage advice” from these ancient texts about how to ask for gifts and how to create a solid welfare system.

### “Becoming Campaign-Ready: An Art And A Science”

Most fundraising campaigns fail due to inadequate planning. To become campaign-ready, institutional leaders must ask tough questions. How do you set realistic goals? How much do campaigns cost? Who are the best prospects? Do you have adequate human resources? Are your policies and procedures updated? Can your existing technology support a campaign? Who will make the “asks”? Does it pay to use professional outside counsel?

### “Is Your Group Tapping Into The Multi-Billion Dollar Windfall?”

The next generation will probably become the wealthiest generation in history. Does your organization know how to motivate some of these prospective beneficiaries to donate some of their assets to your organization? Can your organizational representatives explain the basics of planned giving to your donors? Does your organization understand the importance of targeting your own donor base?

### “Securing Major Gifts So Your Group Can Thrive”

Since 90% of a major campaign’s gifts typically come from 10% of donors, organizations increasingly must rely on major gifts to sustain annual operations, fund special projects, and achieve capital/endowment funding goals. Can your group’s infrastructure support a strong program? In the context of contemporary fundraising trends, what motivates major gifts? Why is donor recognition important? How can your organization construct an eight-step action plan?



#### **Rabbi Jeffrey Orkin**

Levendale Hebrew Geriatric Center & Hospital  
*BA, Brandeis University*  
*MSW, University Wisconsin*  
*Rabbinic Ordination, Yeshiva University*

### “Jewish Views Of The Afterlife”

What can Jews believe about an afterlife? What are some of the basic end-of-day concepts in Judaism? Which are the traditional textual sources that affirm a belief in the world to come? Do deceased parents/loved ones continue to have a connection to their family?

### “Ethical Issues In End Of Life Care”

In recent decades, common ethical guidelines for treatment of the elderly at the end of their lives have evolved in the general and Jewish societies. Case studies will offer insights into such issues as artificial nutrition, hospice care, and medical futility. What of an elderly person who refuses treatment? What are the coping mechanisms that can help patients/families handle the inevitable pain and suffering that often accompany the final stages of life?

### “Major Themes In The Book Of Genesis”

The first book of the Torah, “Genesis,” sets the stage for the emergence of the Jewish people. Within that book, four themes stand out: The emergence of Abraham who was the world’s ambassador, G-ds’ selection of Jacob and rejection of Esau, Joseph’s sale and the fragmentation of the Jewish people, and finally, Jacob’s blessings and the inherent unity of the Jewish people.

### “Yizkor Themes”

Traditionally, the *Yizkor* memorial prayers are recited four times a year, on *Yom Kippur*, *Pesach*, *Shavuot* and *Sukkot*. Each *Yizkor* is different because the themes of the various holidays emphasize different aspects of Judaism. We will explore how to prepare for reciting *Yizkor* with the help of stories and reflection. Personal sharing and feedback will be encouraged.



#### **Rabbi Jonathan Panitz**

Bolton Street Synagogue  
BS, New York University  
BHL, Hebrew Union College Jewish Institute of Religion  
MA, Providence College  
MA, Catholic University  
MBA, University of Phoenix  
Rabbinic Ordination, Jewish Theological Seminary

### “The Golem Of Prague”

The famed Golem is clearly one of the most illustrious personalities who ever walked the streets of Prague and graced the pages of Jewish history texts. His fame, however, is just about the only thing that is clear about him. In many circles, his existence is disputed. What are the legends that have led to the Golem’s survival in contemporary times? Why do they still persist?

### “The Jewish Take On Magic And Superstition”

Jews embraced medieval Jewish magic from the 10<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. They also observed curious customs such as breaking a glass at a wedding and expressing the innocent-sounding words of *mazel tov*, which happen to be related to a belief in astrology. Did you know that talismans, amulets, charms, and other curious magical objects made their way into Jewish life, as did dream interpretation and other forms of divination?

### “The Kabbalah”

There is a lot of misinformation about the *Kabbalah*. Certainly, Madonna’s wearing of a red string on her wrist does not cast the proper light on this whole body of Jewish mystical activity. While codes of Jewish law focus on what it is G-d wants from man, *Kabbalah* tries to penetrate deeper, to G-d’s essence

itself. Many contemporary Jews might think of some notions found in the *Kabbalah* as un-Jewish, most notably, the belief in reincarnation (*gilgul neshamot*).

### “The Audience Of Jesus — Who Were They? Why Did They Listen To Him?”

Jewish society of the time was diverse, lively, literate and reasonably well recorded by ancient standards. There were also many itinerant preachers and healers like Jesus of Nazareth. But who were the people in his audience? What did they find so compelling about his message that won them over? Why did he fail to win over the rest?



#### **Rabbi Gila Ruskin**

Harford Jewish Center  
BA, University of Maryland-Baltimore City  
MAHL, Rabbinic Ordination  
Hebrew Union College

### “Sister Rabbi: Teaching Jewish Studies In An Inner City Catholic School”

During the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years, I taught full time at the St. Frances Academy in Baltimore. The religion class for 11<sup>th</sup> graders is “Jewish Studies,” which includes Bible, Holocaust, and Jewish culture. That is what my students learned. My story is what I humbly learned about theology, race, snitching, bystander behavior, and rap, and about our appearance on the “Today Show.”

### “The Healing Power Of Psalms”

For centuries, the Biblical Book of Psalms has been a touchstone of those who seek peace and solace. The full range of human emotions is encountered in King David’s outpourings of the soul. Words, images, and cadence connect us to the source of healing. Psalms may be a few thousand years old, but they continue to unleash untold healing power even in the age of modern medicine and science.

### “The Blossoming Of Esther”

The remarkable transformation of the character of Esther reveals her to be the truly feminist heroine of her own book. As she emerges from an apparently superficial adolescent to a true stateswoman, Esther not only ends up parenting the parent, manipulating the manipulator, and ruling the ruler, she also authors the first oral law in the Diaspora.

### “Withdrawing From The Kotel”

From the first exhilarating time I visited the *Kotel* at age 13 in 1967, through the educational visits in the 1990s with Baltimore teens to the hostile reception of *Rosh Chodesh* gatherings with Women of the Wall, each encounter with the *Kotel* has left its mark on me as a Jew. What are those stories that reveal my on-going grappling with my relationship to the Western Wall in Jerusalem? What are the stories of others?



#### **Rabbi Amy Scheinerman**

Beth Shalom Congregation, Carroll County  
AB, Brown University  
MAHL, Rabbinic Ordination  
Hebrew Union College Jewish Institute of Religion

### “Dreaming Our Lives Away: What Our Tradition Says About Dreams”

Are dreams a function of our lived lives (experiences, fears, aspirations), our subconscious (hidden deep down in the recesses of our psyches), or messages from Heaven? The biblical model of dreams (Jacob and the ladder, Joseph and the stars and sheaves of wheat, and Pharaoh and the corn and cows), appears to stand in stark contrast to the Talmud’s mode of interpreting dreams. What can each one teach us?

### “I’ll Just Sit In The Dark And Suffer: Is Suffering Good For The Soul?”

We Jews talk about and think about suffering. Who doesn’t? But we think we have a special Jewish spin on how to interpret suffering in our lives and in our history. Some are uncomfortable with what they believe is traditional theology. Perhaps that theology has been misunderstood?

### “Jews and Power: A Conflicted Relationship”

Throughout history, Jews have had an ambivalent relationship with power. Our religious narratives tell us that we began as slaves, yet through G-d’s enormous power, we were redeemed. Since that time, we have exerted our own power in the world and struggled with what it means to have and exert power over others. What resources within the Jewish tradition can suggest nuanced approaches to finding an appropriate moral balance?

### “Revelation: Just What Came Down Mt. Sinai Anyway?”

Was it the 10 Commandments? Deuteronomy? All five books of Torah? More? Less? The “correct answer” eludes most people because our tradition speaks in many voices about revelation at Sinai and there are many answers. Each is a window into the meaning of our relationship with G-d and the meaning of Torah. Those voices — both traditional and modern — have much to teach us.



#### **Rabbi Tsvi Schur**

Jewish Community Chaplaincy of  
Jewish Community Services  
BA, Hebrew Theological College  
BS, St. Joseph University  
Rabbinic Ordination, Ner Israel Rabbinical College  
Doctor of Pastoral Counseling, Hebrew Theological College/  
Jewish University of America/Chicago Medical School

### “Jewish Survival Through Humor”

The reason Jews joke so much about adversity is due to their instinct for self-preservation. By laughing at the absurdities and cruelties of life they draw much of the sting from them. Having navigated all seven seas of misery since the Exodus, Jews have a unique capacity to laugh in ways that others can’t. A closer examination of such humor will offer insights many have never before appreciated.

### “End Of Life Issues”

Sometimes, in spite of treatment, a condition or illness will cause death. In those cases, patients can decide what they do and do not want done. Do they want aggressive treatment that might prolong life or do they prefer to stop treatment, which could mean dying sooner but more comfortably? Do they want to plan their own funeral? There are countless facets to this discussion. Most assuredly, today’s answers won’t be the same as tomorrow’s.

### “Dealing With Grief Through Loss”

The psychic trauma of losing a loved one is an inevitable part of the human experience. Many are the tools we can use to offer emotional support and understanding to others who are grieving and to understand grief’s impact on ourselves. What are the comforting rituals and liturgy available to us as Jews? How can the spiritual component of our faith provide us with coping mechanisms?

### “Sandwich Generation”

The term “sandwich generation,” first coined in 1981, has come to refer to a segment of the middle-aged generation that is sandwiched between aging parents who need care and/or help and their own children. As more baby boomers become both sandwich generationers and seniors themselves, the need to understand aging dynamics and family relationships increases dramatically.



#### **Rabbi Ron Shulman**

Chizuk Amuno Congregation  
BA, Brandeis University  
MA, University of Judaism  
Rabbinic Ordination, Jewish Theological Seminary

### “Spiritual Seasons: The Jewish Calendar and Our Lives”

This will be a study of the spiritual concepts and personal values that emerge from the Jewish calendar of festivals and holy days. The ebb and flow of the seasons, the peaks and valleys of religious experience, create a rich mosaic of Jewish life, especially when seen from a “big picture” perspective.

### “Jewish Wisdom For A Bad Economy”

As we strive to be economically secure, we are linked by the challenges we face and the emotions we feel. All of us want to make sense out of the challenges we face and the Jewish identity we cherish. In personal finance, net worth refers to an individual’s net financial position. In Jewish tradition, net worth represents an individual’s dignity and purpose. We are more than what we own, more than what we acquire, and more than what we lose. Our worth, to quote Proverbs, is “far beyond rubies.”

### “The Promise Of Personal Prayer”

Public prayer and celebration are central to Jewish life, yet all too often our worship experiences don’t match our sincere desires for heart-felt prayer or personal significance. We’ll explore why this is so and how to achieve our individual religious goals when we do attend and participate in prayer services.

### “Jewish Theology For Today”

Judaism exists in its ideas and its ideals. We seek to be Jews who find meaning and identity in the explanation and application of Judaism’s ideas for our lives. Rooted in Jewish tradition, can we define compelling and relevant Jewish beliefs for the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

### “The Synagogue’s Mission: Mediating Meaning”

The origins of the synagogue are a mystery. When did it begin? Why? What was the original purpose of a synagogue in people’s lives and for society? What purpose might we attach to our own synagogue today? Come discover how a synagogue community can be a place that values individuals and their lives above all else and mediates personal meaning.

### “What Endures When Everything Changes: Judaism’s Core Values”

We feel enveloped by the constant commotion of social evolution. We feel strain between generations and world views at home and in society. What values can we learn from Judaism for living in these days of change and challenge?



#### **Rabbi Sonya Starr**

Columbia Jewish Center  
BA, Brandeis University  
MA, Brandeis University  
Rabbinic Ordination  
Reconstructionist Rabbinical College

### “Midrash Lives On”

In the contemporary world, *shirim*/poetry and song have allowed the biblical text to come alive. Our *shirim* are the keys that unlock the ancient words allowing them to shape and transform our contemporary lives. This poetry reading/talk will be an attempt to show how *shirim* function in a similar way to more traditional forms of *midrash*.

### “Will The Real American Jewish Woman Stand Up?”

*Shirim*/contemporary poetry and song give us a portal into our own understanding of our “herstory” as American Jewish women. This poetry reading/talk will illustrate the complexity of our 200 years in this country through the lenses of our poets.

### “Is Leadership A Contemporary Construct?”

There is much to be gleaned from ancient wisdom about who our leaders should be, how they should lead, what mistakes they made and what we can learn from them. In particular, this lecture will include a look at select biblical leaders, aided by select biblical and rabbinic texts in translation, and will yield insights into how their roles are inter-connected with our lives today.

### “The Ongoing Exodus From Our Very Narrow Places”

The Passover story can be seen as a powerful paradigm for our own redemption stories. In particular, this lecture will look at personal as well as political paradigm shifts that can lead to the fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of *tikkun olam*, repairing a broken world.



#### **Rabbi Alan Yuter**

B'nai Israel Congregation  
BBA, Temple University  
BFL, Gratz College; MA, Hunter College  
MFL, Rabbinic Ordination Jewish Theological Seminary  
Rabbinic Ordination, Yeshiva University  
Chief Rabbi of Israel  
PhD, New York University

### “Why *Halakhic* Judaism Really Is Pro Choice”

The Semitic and Torah writings define legally protected life beginning at birth, with life beginning earlier finding its roots in Platonic thought, which entered the early Church and Ashkenazi Judaism, under the spiritual orbit of the Church. The current debate uses the rhetoric of religion and moral standards but is really about religious authority and standard bearers.

### “What Judaism Really Says About Conversion”

When seeing what Judaism in its literary version says about conversion, and comparing the Talmud and Maimonidean standards to the standards advocated by contemporary Orthodox standards, we see two different Judaisms in conflict. The canon projects a big-tent religion, and parochial culture wants contemporary gate keepers to keep Judaism a small-tent religion. Judaism for the canon is a faith. For parochials, it's a franchise.

### “Maimonides As A Model For Jewish Moderns”

Maimonides was a medieval man who used ancient texts to create what for him was a contemporary modern religion that is both traditional and responsive. We explore the contours of his thought by reviewing rulings in his essays, code, and letters. When the ultra-Orthodox rule, “we do not rule according to Maimonides,” they correctly proclaim that Maimonides' religion is radically subversive to all fundamentalisms.

### “What Is Modern And What Is Orthodox About Modern Orthodoxy”

“Orthodox” means, “correct doctrine.” “Modernity” is both a “state of mind” and a “station in history.” Modern Orthodoxy in its current version seeks to define and refine the tensions of tradition and change, group loyalty and personal autonomy, and how Jewish law can be applied in a way that is workable, reasonable, and convincing.

**Baltimore Board of Rabbis**

5750 Park Heights Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21215

Reserving The Best Speaker For Your Group  
**Is As Easy As 1-2-3**

- 1** Select the speaker of your choice from the catalogue.
- 2** Complete form below.  
Speakers available from late November 2010 through early June 2011.
- 3** Return form with your organization's check in the amount of \$100 per speaker, payable to the Baltimore Board of Rabbis.

**RESERVE NOW** while the best speakers and hottest topics are still available!

*One Speaker per form.*

**Speakers' Bureau Reservation Form** (please print)

We would like to invite Rabbi:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Speaker's topic:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Organization name:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Time:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date: 1<sup>st</sup> choice:

\_\_\_\_\_  
2<sup>nd</sup> choice:

\_\_\_\_\_  
3<sup>rd</sup> choice:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Your name:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Office Phone:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Alternative phone:

\_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail address:

*Kindly return to the above address with a \$100 check payable to the Baltimore Board of Rabbis.*

**2010-2011**

**Baltimore Board of Rabbis  
Speakers' Bureau**

Cut along the dotted line and return registration form and check made payable to Baltimore Board of Rabbis to 5750 Park Heights Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21215.



5750 Park Heights Avenue  
Baltimore, Maryland 21215

**2010-2011**  
Baltimore Board of Rabbis  
Speakers' Bureau Catalogue



*A program supported by*  
**THE ASSOCIATED**