



“People of the Book” Summer Reading, Recordings & Films 2010

Adult learning never goes on vacation, so here are some books and media that our clergy have on their summer reading lists that we thought you might enjoy.

Rabbi Zimmerman:

The Spirituality Of Welcoming:

How to Transform Your Congregation into a Sacred Community by Ron Wolfson

Publisher: Jewish Lights Publishing (July 30, 2006)

ISBN-13: 978-1580232449

Synopsis

So often we want our congregations to be more--more compelling, more member-focused, more spiritual and yet more useful for our daily lives. Through reflection, examples, tips and exercises--and incorporating the fruits of Synagogue 2000 (now Synagogue 3000), a groundbreaking decade-long program investigating the challenges facing modern synagogues--this inspiring handbook both establishes a sound foundation for why a deep hospitality is crucial for the survival of today's spiritual communities, and dives into the practical hands-on how of turning your congregation into a place of invitation and openness that includes:



- *Prayer that is engaging, uplifting and spiritually moving
- * Institutional deepening that is possible because of an openness to change
- * Study that engages adults and families, as well as children
- * Good deeds--the work of social justice--as a commitment of each and every member
- * An ambience of welcome that creates a culture of warmth and outreach
- * Healing that offers comfort and support at times of illness and loss
- * ... and much more.

Freakonomics:

A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything by Stephen J. Dubner

Publisher: Harper Perennial (August 25, 2009)

ISBN-13: 978-0060731335

Synopsis

Which is more dangerous, a gun or a swimming pool? What do schoolteachers and sumo wrestlers have in common? How much do parents really matter? These may not sound like typical questions for an economist to ask. But Steven D. Levitt is not a typical economist. He studies the riddles of everyday life—from cheating and crime to parenting and sports—and reaches conclusions that turn conventional wisdom on its head. *Freakonomics* is a groundbreaking collaboration between Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner, an award-winning author and journalist. They set out to explore the inner workings of a crack gang, the truth about real estate agents, the secrets of the Ku Klux Klan, and much more. Through forceful storytelling and wry insight, they show that economics is, at root, the study of incentives—how people get what they want or need, especially when other people want or need the same thing.

Rabbi Glaser:

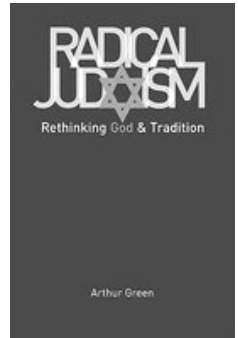
Radical Judaism: Rethinking God and Tradition by Arthur Green

Publisher: Yale University Press (March 23, 2010)

ISBN-13: 978-0300152326

Synopsis

How do we articulate a religious vision that embraces evolution and human authorship of Scripture? Drawing on the Jewish mystical traditions of Kabbalah and Hasidism, path-breaking Jewish scholar Arthur Green argues that a neomystical perspective can help us to reframe these realities, so they may yet be viewed as dwelling places of the sacred. In doing so, he rethinks such concepts as God, the origins and meaning of existence, human nature, and revelation to construct a new Judaism for the twenty-first century.



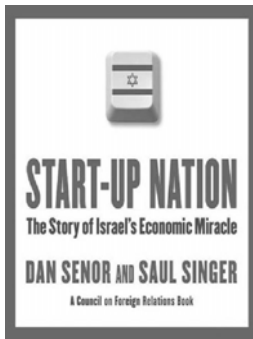
Start-up Nation: The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle by Dan Senor & Saul Singer

Publisher: Twelve (November 4, 2009)

ISBN-13: 978-0446541466

Synopsis

Start-Up Nation addresses the trillion dollar question: How is it that Israel-- a country of 7.1 million, only 60 years old, surrounded by enemies, in a constant state of war since its founding, with no natural resources-- produces more start-up companies than large, peaceful, and stable nations like Japan, China, India, Korea, Canada and the UK? With the savvy of foreign policy insiders, Senor and Singer examine the lessons of the country's adversity-driven culture, which flattens hierarchy and elevates informality-- all backed up by government policies focused on innovation. In a world where economies as diverse as Ireland, Singapore and Dubai have tried to re-create the "Israel effect", there are entrepreneurial lessons well worth noting. As America reboots its own economy and can-do spirit, there's never been a better time to look at this remarkable and resilient nation for some impressive, surprising clues.



Rabbi Saks:

Film: **Waiting for “Superman”**

The latest documentary from Academy Award winner Davis Guggenheim (*An Inconvenient Truth*) <http://www.waitingforsuperman.com/>

Synopsis

Waiting for Superman examines the crisis of public education in the United States through multiple interlocking stories—from a handful of students and their families whose futures hang in the balance, to the educators and reformers trying to find real and lasting solutions within a dysfunctional system.



Never Mind the Goldbergs by Matthue Roth

Publisher: Push (April 1, 2006)

ISBN-13: 978-0439691895

Synopsis

Don't think for a second that you know Hava or her place in the world. Yes, she's an Orthodox Jew. But that doesn't mean she can't rock out. And yes, she has opinions about everything around her. But her opinions about herself can be twice as harsh. Now Hava's just been asked to be the token Jew on a TV show about a Jewish family, trading one insular community for another. There is soon a collision of both cultures and desires -- with one headstrong heroine caught in the middle.

Going Public: An Organizer's Guide to Citizen Action by Michael Gecan

Publisher: Anchor (May 18, 2004)

ISBN-13: 978-1400076499

Synopsis

Urban decay can sap the determination—not to mention the soul—of anyone who experiences it. But there are forces that can and do reverse it. They are not spectators, or critics, or occasional demonstrators. They are groups of citizens, encouraged and trained to take power with dignity and creativity and unrelenting determination, and to make it work for them, day by day, month by month, and year to year. Having grown up witnessing at close range the destructive effects of political patronage on powerless, disenfranchised Chicago communities, Michael Gecan knows from experience that strong relationships in the public sphere and sustained and disciplined organizing can spark the public and private alchemy necessary to achieve sidewalks, parks, schools, housing--and the collective renewal that results.

Why Marriage Matters: America, Equality, and Gay People's Right to Marry by Evan Wolfson

Publisher: Simon & Schuster (May 24, 2005)

ISBN-13: 978-0743264594

Synopsis

"At its core, the freedom-to-marry movement is about the same thing every civil rights struggle has been about: taking seriously our country's promise to be a nation its citizens can make better, its promise to be a place where people don't have to give up their differences or hide them in order to be treated equally." *Why Marriage Matters* offers a compelling, intelligently reasoned discussion of a question at the forefront of our national consciousness. It is a clear, straightforward book that brings into sharp focus the very human significance of the right to marry in America -- not just for some couples, but for all. In this quietly powerful volume, the most authoritative and fairly articulated book on the subject, Wolfson demonstrates why the right to marry is important -- indeed necessary -- for all couples and for America's promise of equality.

Cantor Abelson:

A Fine Romance: Jewish Songwriters, American Songs by David Lehman

Publisher: Schocken; (October 6, 2009)

ISBN-13: 978-0805242508

Synopsis

In *A Fine Romance*, David Lehman looks at the formation of the American songbook--the timeless numbers that became jazz standards, iconic love songs, and sound tracks to famous movies--and explores the extraordinary fact that this songbook was written almost exclusively by Jews. An acclaimed poet, editor, and cultural critic, David Lehman hears America singing--with a Yiddish accent. He guides us through America in the golden age of song, when "Embraceable You," "White Christmas," "Easter Parade," "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered," "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man," "My Romance," "Cheek to Cheek," "Stormy Weather," and countless others became nothing less than the American sound track. The stories behind these songs, the shows from which many of them came, and the composers and lyricists who wrote them give voice to a specifically American saga of love, longing, assimilation, and transformation. Lehman helps us understand how natural it should be that *Wizard of Oz* composer Harold Arlen was the son of a cantor who incorporated "Over the Rainbow" into his Sabbath liturgy, and why Cole Porter--the rare non-Jew in this pantheon of musicians who wrote these classic songs shaped America even as America was shaping them.

Recording: **The Eternal Road** by Kurt Weill

Millken Archive of American Jewish Music

Audio CD (September 30, 2003)

Orchestra: Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra

Conductor: Gerard Schwarz

Composer: Kurt Weill

Synopsis

This world-premiere recording of scenes from Kurt Weill's rediscovered masterpiece *The Eternal Road* brings to life a major 20th-century work that was a sensation of the 1937 New York theatre season. Originally conceived as a biblical pageant, a profound music-drama, and a theatrical extravaganza, *The Eternal Road* combines the legends of timeless Jewish heroes and heroines with the all-too-familiar story of persecution in Europe. Set against a richly colored backdrop, Weill's masterful score embodies the passions and aspirations of many dramatic characters in search of their Jewish Destiny.

