

Rabbi Mitchell Wohlberg

Question: How do you know that your Rabbi is staying hip to the times? Answer: When you can receive his sermons via e-mail! (Register at www.bethfiloh.com — we kid you not) Of course, Mitchell Wohlberg — now celebrating his 25th year as the spiritual leader of Beth Tfiloh Congregation — is no ordinary Rabbi. Considered to be one of the most gifted orators in the region, Wohlberg's High Holiday sermons have become standing-room-only affairs. Looks like we booked the Rabbi for an exclusive engagement at this month's Baltimore Grill.

Where did you go to school?

I attended all-male Jewish schools in New York from kindergarten through graduate school. The only time I ever sat in class next to a girl was when I took the SAT's. I didn't do very well on them . . . too distracted!

What book or film most changed your life?

The book? *Exodus*. It brought the State of Israel to my heart and it has never left. The movie? *Exodus*. It was the first time I saw Jews who looked like Paul Newman! When I came to Baltimore, *Exodus* took on added meaning. Its author Leon Uris, is a Baltimorean. *Exodus*, the ship, departed from Baltimore.

Who is your favorite Baltimorean, living or dead?

My granddaughter, Ella Chaya Wohlberg: the first Wohlberg born in Baltimore.

What is the best advice you ever got?

When I was confronted with having to do something unpopular, a wise man reminded me that President Truman fired General Mac Arthur and MacArthur had the whole U.S. Army on his side.

What is the biggest mistake you've ever made?

Not being more studious while in school. I have spent the rest of my life trying to catch up.

What is the bravest thing you've ever done?

The first time I delivered a one hour sermon on the High Holidays.

What are your thoughts on The Block?

Haven't "been there, done that."

How has Baltimore changed since you lived here?

When I came to Baltimore 25 years ago, Owings Mills, Reisterstown, and Glyndon were thought to be in a different state, or a different state-of-mind.

When were you most tempted to leave Baltimore?

Every time I walk down the streets of Jerusalem.

Who would play you in a movie of your life?

Buddy Hackett. If he's not available, Chris Rock.

What is your guilty pleasure?

Ties. If I see one I like, I'll buy it whether I need it or can afford it.

If you could write Baltimore's motto, what would it be?

Baltimore . . . a work in progress, hon!