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Magazine

Passover/Spring 2017

EDITION 30



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Passover is a time when we think about family and tradition. Jewish people all over the world will be gathering their family members. Some will be joining friends for the Seder, and some, with no place to attend, may only be reminded about their family tradition.

When there is so much talk about the future of the Jewish people, and so much anti-Semitism and division among ourselves, I think it is important to reflect on the basics of Judaism.

Passover celebrates the history of the Jewish people, and remind us that we were once "strangers in a foreign land." We left Egypt as slaves, and became one people, with one Torah and one land. It is that unity and those common values that made *Am Israel*, the people of Israel. Certainly not everyone agreed with the leader, certainly there were arguments and complaints during the journey, but we were constantly reminded both of where we were coming from, and of our goals of reaching the Promised Land.

Since April 2009, when I began to publish *Shalom Magazine*, my purpose has been the same: to unite the Jewish communities of all backgrounds and denominations that are spread all over the state of Massachusetts, and share our tradition, our stories, our activities, and our ideas.

I am always grateful to my contributors who volunteer their time to help make this publication as diverse as our community, with so many different views on our religion. I am also thankful for our advertisers, who see the importance of a Jewish print publication in an era where so many companies believe that they can gain more exposure online to an audience chosen by algorithms.

By printing thousands of copies and distributing them for free in supermarkets, I know that *Shalom* is fulfilling the mission of bringing Jews who are not affiliated with any synagogue closer to their tradition. We never know what article, event listing, or picture will spark Judaism in a person who is emotionally distant from their family or the Jewish community.

May you and your family be blessed with a happy Passover,

Shirley Farber - Publisher

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Temple Beth David of the South Shore Adult Education and Tikkun Olam Committees invite the community to a Buffet Breakfast with Guest Speakers Sabeeha and Khalid Rehman. Sunday, April 23 at 10 a.m. at 1060 Randolph St., Canton.

Sabeeha Rehman is an acclaimed author and activist, speaking on Muslim/Jewish relations all over the U.S. For this program, Sabeeha and her husband, Dr. Khalid Rehman, will take sides and debate the Shia-Sunni divide, to help us understand the differences. A Q&A session will follow. Following the debate, Sabeeha will give a book reading and discuss her story of coming to America as a new bride. A Q&A and book signing will follow. Registration is encouraged, but not required. To register, please email registration@templebethdavid.com or visit our website, www.templebethdavid.com. Donations towards breakfast will be accepted.



*Yehuda Matzot Factory Jerusalem
by Steve Schuster*

Come for a Passover seder in an interfaith setting. Open Spirit in Framingham will once again host the meal and rituals of Passover at an interactive second night seder on Tuesday, April 11, from 6:30-9 p.m. in Edwards Hall, 39 Edwards St. Rabbi Katy Allen, a member of the Open Spirit Steering Committee and Rabbi of Ma'yan Tikvah - A Wellspring of Hope will lead the evening, assisted by Gabi Mezger, who will lead the singing. The meal will be partially catered and partially a directed potluck, and you can indicate your preferences when you register. The registration form can be found at www.openspiritcenter.org, or call 508-877-8162 or 508-358-5996 or email rabbikaty@mayantikvah.org. Donations of \$10-40 per person are suggested. Early RSVPs are appreciated. This program is co-sponsored by Ma'yan Tikvah and Open Spirit and is generously funded by a Combined Jewish Philanthropies Metrowest Community Grant.

March at Pride with ADL

June 10 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Copley Place

March under the New England Anti-Defamation League banner at the Pride Parade this June. All are welcome to join us as we celebrate inclusion and fight to secure justice and fair treatment for all. This event is free of charge. Please register in order to receive final event details. For more information or to register for any of the ADL events, please visit <http://newengland.adl.org/>

Wellesley-Weston Seder

Community Passover Seders at Wellesley-Weston Chabad. Monday April 10 at 7:20 p.m. and Tuesday April 11 at 8:15 p.m. For more information or to reserve a spot, please visit: www.wwjewish.org.

Memorial for Fallen Israeli Soldiers

**Temple Israel of Boston, 477 Longwood Ave, Boston
Sunday, April 30 at 8 p.m. Doors will open at 7:15 p.m.**

The Consulate General of Israel to New England invites you to our annual Memorial Ceremony for Fallen Israeli Soldiers and Victims of Terror. After the ceremony there will be music in the spirit of Memorial Day. Flat rate of \$7 at nearby parking lot.



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AJC New England Diplomats Seder

On Sunday, March 19, more than 400 people joined the New England office of the American Jewish Committee (AJC) and diplomats representing 27 countries from around the world to celebrate the universal values of freedom, democracy, and human rights at the AJC New England 18th Annual Diplomats Seder at the JFK Library.

Each year, AJC New England celebrates the Passover Seder ritual meal with Boston-area religious and ethnic community leaders, academics, diplomats, and human rights activists.

Participants engaged in a thoughtful, intimate discussion about freedom with diplomats representing Albania, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Taiwan, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

The highlight of the evening was the "contemporary exodus" testimonials given by Americans from Iraq, Vietnam and Mexico, who journeyed to the U.S. to seek a better life and, in some cases, to escape violence and persecution.

AJC New England is the local gateway to AJC's global advocacy network that works to safeguard Israel and Jews around the world, and promote democratic values for all.

For more information, contact AJC New England director Robert Leikind at 617-457-8706; leikindr@ajc.org



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AJC New England Diplomats Seder



Diplomats asking the Four Questions (Rabbi Bill Hamilton, Consul General of Portugal Jose Velez Caroco, Deputy CG of Mexico Graciela Gomez, CG of Japan Rokuichiro Michii, and CG of Germany Ralf Horlemann)



The ShenaniGanns



Mary Truong, Exec. Dir. Office for Refugees and Immigrants, gave an emotional testimonial of her escape from Vietnam. Photographed with her husband Nam Pham



AJC New England President Jonathan Dorfman, Co-Chairs Scott Sperling, Laurene Sperring, Jonathan Golden and Kim Golden, and AJC New England Director Robert Leikind.



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Purim in Newton



300 people celebrated Purim at the African Jungle-themed party at Beth Menachem Chabad in Newton. The event began with the reading of the book of Esther. Afterwards, everyone entered the large room decorated as a jungle and accompanied by jungle sounds. Adults and children enjoyed a magic and stunt show performance, and an authentic African menu. The kids were busy, running between a banana split bar with varied toppings, a balloon artist, beading, crafting an African noise maker, and taking pictures with stuffed tigers and giraffes. Everyone got some good laughs from the variety of original costumes.



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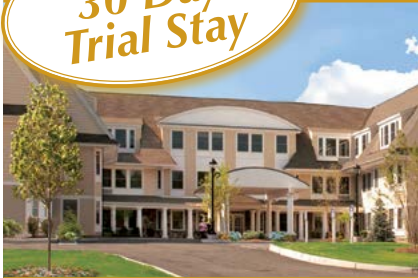
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Brookline

YJP Purim Di Venezia

On March 11, the Brookline Chai Center and Young Jewish Professionals had their Purim Di Venezia Purim Ball at Club Venu in Boston. Guests in original costumes enjoyed the megillah reading, followed by Italian cuisine and DJ music.



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Wellesley/Weston



A whirlwind of five Purim-related events serving the Wellesley-Weston Chabad community, Babson College and Wellesley College, saw 300 plus take part in our Purim programs during a little over a 24-hour period. Among the events were a Purim breakfast in pajamas, a Shabbat dinner at Babson College, and a Megillah reading at Wellesley College.



Canton/Randolph



Canton Chai Center Purim in the Firestation took place on March 12 at the Canton High School



Canton Chai Center Megillah reading with live music at the Simon C. Fireman Senior Community in Randolph

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CommUNITY Israel Dialogue

On March 1, Greater Boston's Jewish community joined together at Temple Israel Boston to launch the CommUNITY Israel Dialogue with a tribute to the life and legacy of former Israeli president and prime minister, Shimon Peres (z"l). A member of Israel's founding generation and an eloquent spokesperson for his country and for the Jewish people, Shimon Peres was a champion of peace, tolerance, and respect. His strong sense of humanity is an enduring lesson and a fitting platform to launch the CommUNITY Israel Dialogue.

This year-long initiative is engaging Boston's Jewish community in a thoughtful and respectful dialogue across diverse perspectives, while expressing support for a secure and democratic Jewish State of Israel. The event featured a keynote address by Nadav Tamir, former Consul General of Israel to New England and an interactive presentation by Gil Preuss, CJP's executive vice president.

To find out more and to attend an upcoming event, visit cjp.org/community.



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ADL “Nation of Immigrants” Seder



The Anti-Defamation League (“ADL”) held its 10th annual “Nation of Immigrants” Community Seder on March 5 at the UMass Boston Campus Center. Many immigrants told their stories of survival at the service, which was led by Rabbi Matt Soffer of Temple Israel in Boston.

Boston City Councilor Andrea Campbell and Mayor Martin J. Walsh spoke as well.

At a time of rising concern, with so many feeling vulnerable and anxious, this year’s Seder focused on the importance of unity and healing. The event served as an opportunity to inspire people to advocate for laws and policies that promote human rights and fulfill the lessons of the Passover story, including the *Massachusetts Safe Communities Act*.



Mayor Walsh with City Councilor Andrea Campbell



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Adult Learning That is Meaningful



By Sandra Lienthal

For many years, I have been a Jewish educator focused on teaching adults. I have been in classrooms interacting with students, and have also conducted research in my area (Broward County, Fla.), which has allowed me to understand a little more about what adult Jewish learners look for when they join learning programs. In general, these learners are sophisticated, intellectually advanced adults who are curious about Judaism and its philosophy and traditions, but most importantly, they are interested in its meaning and relevancy to their personal lives. They are less interested in learning abstract, hypothetical subjects. They want to learn that which can be applied to real life.

A few months ago, I had yet another opportunity to see this at work. I was leading a class discussion on a very famous *Mishnah* in *Pirkei Avot* (*Ethics of the Fathers* 1:14) where Hillel says, “If I am not for myself, who will be for me. But if I am only for myself, who am I? If not now, when?”

Before bringing to the table how our Sages interpreted this *Mishnah*, I asked my students how they understood it. Some of the interpretations coincided with the classic reading of the *Mishnah*. However, one person said, “I think this speaks to the Jews collectively, not individually; I think this may be talking about Israel.”

Yes - we all know that this is not the traditional interpretation, and that the Hebrew text is clear in its singular, not plural, form. However, this was a textbook case of how our adult learners get excited when they make connections between what they are learning, and what they are living. This particular student is heavily involved in pro-Israel advocacy in our area, and to her, days after UN resolution 2334, the *Mishnah* was speaking to our community as a whole.

If I (i.e. Israel, Jews) am not for myself, who will be for me? Can Israel (or the Jews) rely on others? She continued, “We need to be

reminded that ultimately, if we do not take care of ourselves, no one else will.”

But if I am only for myself, who am I? If Israel or the Jews would think only of themselves, what would be the purpose of our existence?

Even if there are times when Israel feels alone, it still rushes to help others; it does not close itself in its own little world. It is not a coincidence that Israel is frequently the first country to arrive at a disaster site to help; that Israel operates eye clinics in countries such as Nepal and Micronesia; that Israel provides irrigation and training in water management and shares agricultural advances with over 100 countries.

And if not now, when? Now is the time to help. As I write, while there is genocide going on in the world, Israel is bringing in wounded Syrians to receive medical treatment, even if this could potentially put its own doctors at risk.

As I heard my student expose her point of view, I was once again reminded of how important it is to be a learner-centered educator. I was also reminded of the Talmudic saying: “Much have I learned from my masters, more from my colleagues than from my masters, and from my students, more than all.” (*Talmud, Ta’anit 7a*)

Intellectual pursuit (knowledge) is important to our adult learners to the extent that it leads to meaning. It is the integration of the two, knowledge and meaning, that will lead the adult learner to achieve a sense of wholeness. Yes, I need to teach the students what the Rabbis of the *Mishnah* said, and what they meant. But we must also allow our students to find personal meaning in the text.

I believe that the holiness of our texts is even more noticed by our learners when we encourage them to find their own meaning within them. After all, as Franz Rosenzweig said: “The path of Torah begins not with the text, but with life.”

Sandra Lienthal is an adult educator in South Florida. She is a 2015 recipient of the Covenant Award for Excellence in Jewish Education.



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Jewish Heritage Night

By Gordon Edes

In the award-winning documentary film “*Jews and Baseball: An American Love Story*,” former Red Sox star Kevin Youkilis, who was once famously dubbed “*The Greek God of Walks*,” but was actually of Romanian Jewish ancestry, reflected on what his roots mean to him.

“It’s something that I probably won’t realize until my career is over, how many people are really rooting for me and cheering for me.” said Youkilis, who starred on the 2007 Red Sox World Series winners. “And it’s not just because I went 3 for 4, or had a great game. It’s just the fact that I represent a lot of Jewish people and a lot of the Jewish heritage and the struggles that a lot of our people have had.”

On June 13 at Fenway Park, the Red Sox will stage their fourth annual *Jewish Heritage Night*, an opportunity for the Sox to not only pay tribute to the great support they receive from the Jewish community, but to acknowledge the impactful roles Jews have made in baseball on the

playing field, coaching lines, and in executive suites. This year marked a milestone of sorts, when for the first time, Jewish-American ballplayers played for Israel in the World Baseball Classic. Team Israel was the early Cinderella story of the tournament, knocking off international powerhouses South Korea, Taiwan, the Netherlands and Cuba, before being eliminated. Former Red Sox catcher Ryan Lavarnway, now with the Oakland Athletics, was named an MVP of the tournament, while infielder Cody Decker, who last season played for Boston’s Double-A affiliate, the Portland Sea Dogs, was also on the team.



Jewish players have found a place in Boston ever since Simon (Si) Rosenthal, a Boston native, was the first to join the Red

Sox as an outfielder in 1925. 81 years later, in 2006, the Red Sox became the first team to field four Jewish players in a single season, when Youkilis was joined by reliever Craig Breslow and outfielders Gabe Kapler and Adam Stern. The team’s general manager was Theo Epstein, a Jewish kid from Brookline who not only directed Boston to its first World Series title in 86 years, but last October, as president of the Chicago Cubs did the same, after a 108-year drought. Boston’s current first-base coach, Ruben Amaro, is Jewish.

Jewish Heritage Night will be a night of special celebration, featuring a unique keepsake: Fans purchasing their tickets through www.redsox.com/jewishheritage will receive a baseball cap in which “Red Sox” is spelled in Hebrew. Close to a thousand members of the Jewish community are expected to attend, and as part of pregame ceremonies, in which five members of the Jewish community will be honored for their community service, *Chai Notes*, a teen choir from Congregation Shirat Hayam in Swampscott, will be singing the National Anthem.

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Chai in the Hub

More than 500 attendees joined CJP's Young Adults on January 28 to celebrate 18 of Boston's most inspiring Jewish young adults, and to hear from culinary expert, food writer, and permanent judge on BRAVO's Top Chef, Gail Simmons.

Congratulations to all of the honorees - the educators, social activists, entrepreneurs and innovators who are transforming Boston's Jewish community.

For more information on this year's honorees, visit cjp.org/chaihub.

Chai in the Hub 2017 Winners

Ariel Berger, Shari Churwin, James Cohen, Jessica Achbar Coughlin, Polina Dorosinskaya, Lara Freishtat, Rickie Golden, Rabbi Suzie Jacobson, Rabbi Lila Kagedan, Leora Kimmel Greene, Matan Koch, Rosa Kramer Franck, Mike Ross, Shifra Schwartz, Jonathan Shapira, Talya Sokoll, Jonathan Soynt and Georgi Vogel Rosen.



Israeli Folkdance Festival

Members of the dance troupe Shiluv at the 41st Israeli Folkdance Festival, March 26 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge. Sharon resident Giselle Princz received an award for her years of dedication to the Israeli Folkdance Festival and Israeli dance community

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TLV Runway Featuring Israeli Fashions to Headline NYFW 2017

By Cindy Grosz

Gottex, Sabon, Ahava, Yigal Azrouel, Elie Tahari, the list is endless. When the world shops for the best in fashion, beauty and lifestyle items, Israel has proven its place in the market. Politics is nowhere in the equation when it concerns creativity and design. Around the globe, a savvy and chic consumer can find a product created by the vast talents nurtured in Israel.

The Tahor Group, a New York-based Fashion and Consumer Marketing Advisory firm led by Tobi Rubinstein, Nancy Torres Kaufman and Cindy's Corners, a full service media and consulting company headed by Cindy Grosz, will be collaborating for the second annual TLV RUNWAY NYC this coming September 2017 during New York Fashion Week. "We want to reveal Israel through the lens of fashion and beauty," stated both leaders of the Tahor group.

This event perpetuates the excitement of showcasing top Israeli Designers during the most visually important week in New York. The initiative is open to companies interested in sponsorship opportunities. The support of the Israeli government includes the Israeli Consul General of New York.

"Speaking at TLV Runway NYC during New York Fashion Week last fall was one of my first public engagements as Consul General of Israel in New York, and I was filled with pride to see so many beautiful creations by Israeli designers featured on such a prestigious international stage," said Ambassador Dani Dayan, Israel's Consul General in New York.

Already supporting the event is Ofir Fisher, Executive Vice President and Co-Founder of OR Movement, one of Israel's chic organizations representing fashion designers, art galleries and the Z Hotel chain. "OR Movement believes that art, fashion and design are crucial components of the regional development of the Negev and Galilee that can be seen in enormous,



continued growth in all areas of creativity," said Fisher. "That is why we are supporters, and we also plan to partner with TLV RUNWAY NYC in bringing up-and-coming designers from Israel's desert and beyond to the fashion capital of the world, New York City."

"A number of Israeli designers have become household names, and it's clear that the fashion industry in Israel is growing and has earned the respect and admiration of the fashion world," said Dayan.

It all began with a vision at the Gindi Fashion Week in Tel Aviv that was followed by an idea presented to the Mayor's office, and continued with the full endorsement from former Ambassador Ido Ahroni. "The goal is that Israel's talent will be showcased in NY; Israelis' second home," said Ahroni. "Through TLV RUNWAY NYC, the world has the opportunity to learn about the enormous amount of talent in the arts and design coming out of Israel."

"I have been involved in many fashion shows featuring many nationalities and countries, and have always felt that Israelis in the business should have equal access to both the international audience and the press," said Grosz, adding "This is not Jewish, a certain political party or even a religious issue, but rather, an appreciation of fine quality goods available for international buyers that range in costs and styles and are for women, men and youth."

Working with Israeli designers is nothing new to both companies. The Tahor Group works with celebrated couture bridal and evening wear designer Inbal Dror. Journalist Cindy Grosz has featured designer Rinat Brodash and artist Noa Attias on her radio show, and in print articles.

For more information, please contact Cindy at info@cindyscorners.com.



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Finding the Fifth Son

By Rivka Horowitz

When one thinks of Passover, images of the traditional Passover meal, the Seder, immediately enter the mind. A Seder is truly the time of togetherness for the Jewish family. Together, we recount the miraculous birth of the Jewish people. We revisit G-d's redeeming His people from the depths of despair and His transforming a nation of slaves into the beneficiaries of the Sinai experience and the recipients of His Torah.

The Seder is more than just another retelling of the early history of the Jews. It is a vibrant learning experience in which all of the senses are utilized. This enables us to literally "digest" the message of Judaism. Most of us are fortunate to have fond memories of past Seders.

In the course of the Seder we discuss the "Four Sons" and the questions they pose, from the "Wise Son" who wants to know all of the particulars of Passover observances, to the "Wicked Son" who challenges and mocks them. There is a "Simple Son" who simply asks "What's this?" There is even a son whose only form of participation is simply being there. With everything happening around him, not a single question occupies his mind.

Modern society has had an impact upon the Jewish people: today we have yet another son. The son who does not even attend a Seder.

Yes, it is true. There are many Jews out there who are not going to attend a Seder this Passover. They can be put into three basic categories:

- 1) They have no place to attend.
- 2) They do not care to attend.
- 3) They do not know of Passover or its Seder.

Just as there are answers for the Four Sons, there must be answers for this fifth son as well.

For those who have nowhere to attend, we must aggressively advertise the invitation found within the Haggadah, "All those who are hungry, let them come and eat! Whoever is in need, let him come and partake of the Passover!"

For those who do not care to attend, we must positively reinforce their Jewish identity and expose them to the beauty of Torah obser-

vance, in general, and of the Seder in particular. Most importantly, we must communicate with them in a language they can understand and identify with.

Those who do not know that it is Passover or that there is such a thing as a Seder are perhaps the most worrisome of the groups. Most likely, they do not have the fond memories of Passovers past. They are, in fact, in danger of losing their Jewish identity altogether, G-d forbid. As Jews, we are all responsible for the welfare of one another. We must therefore endeavor to introduce these people to their great inheritance, the Torah, the grandeur of their Judaism. If we should happen to see a person drowning, we would dive in to save him/her without thinking twice. We must, without delay, "pull out all of the stops" to rescue those who need us most!

Let us aggressively seek out the Fifth Son, wherever or whoever she or he might be. Every lost Jew we bring back into the family may be compared to the discovery of a lost treasure of incalculable value.

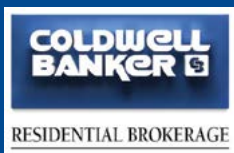
It is not enough to just set an extra place at the Seder table. Not any more. We must fill the extra place with a warm body. We can then fill that warm body with the warmth that is Judaism.

The Chai Jewish Center has held a community Seder, for every Jew, regardless of affiliation or background, for the past 15 years. The Seder is filled with plenty of English explanations, songs, and stories, and of course, a delicious four-course dinner. Consider a Jewish neighbor or friend, that might not remember, or have somewhere to go, and invite them along to this year's Seder. The Seder will take place on Monday, April 10, at 7 p.m.

The Chai Jewish Center is currently completing a magnificent, state of the art *mikvah* that will be the first handicap-accessible *mikvah* on the South Shore. The Mikvah will be available for use, G-d willing, in June.

For more information on the Community Passover Seder or any of the Chai Jewish Center's events, please call 781-821-2227 or email JewishCanton@Gmail.com.

Rivka Horowitz, together with her husband Rabbi Mendy, lead the Canton Chai Center.



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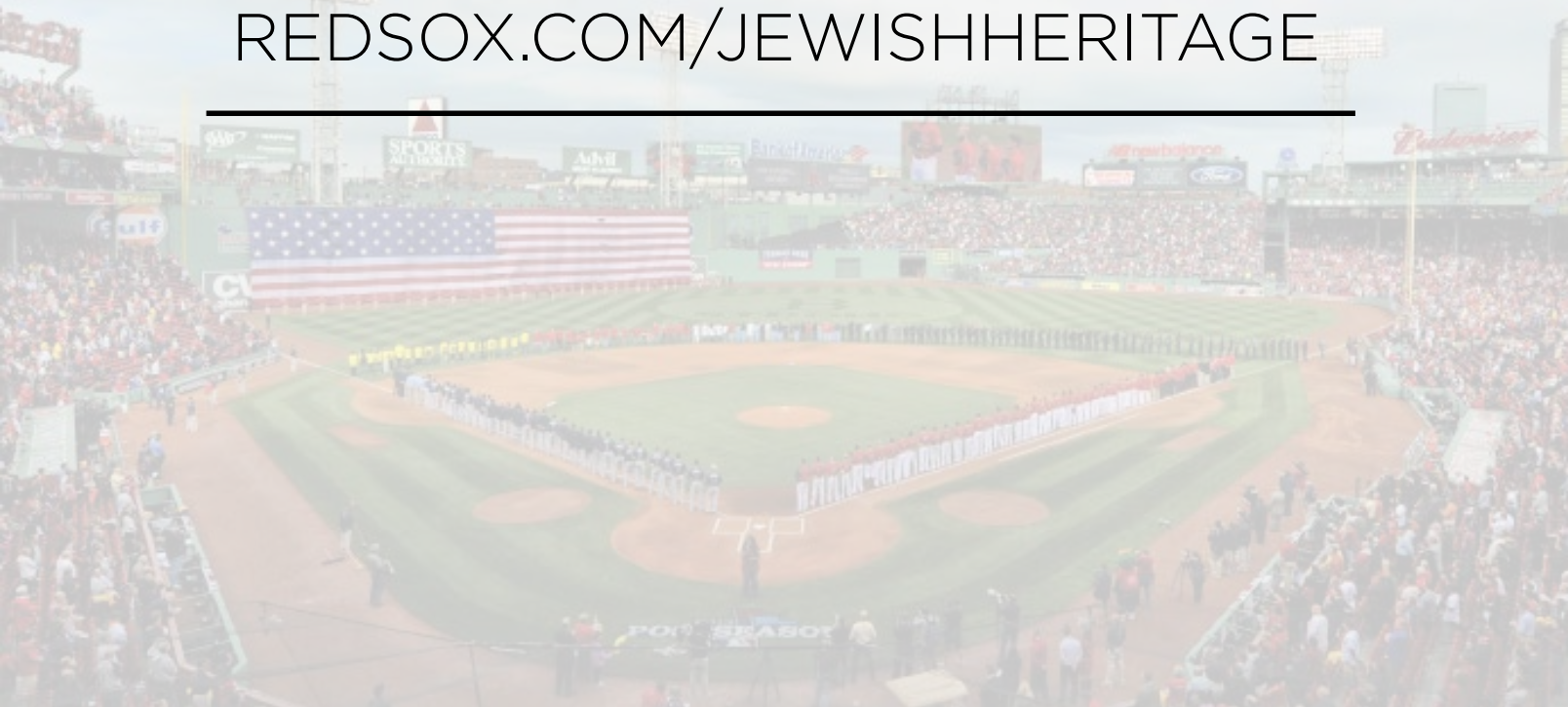


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Passover and Vegetarianism

By Richard H. Schwartz, Ph.D.

Passover and vegetarianism? Can the two be related? After all, what is a Seder without gefilte fish, chicken soup, chopped liver, chicken, and other meats? And what about the shank bone to commemorate the paschal sacrifice? And, doesn't Jewish law mandate that Jews eat meat to rejoice on Passover and other Jewish festivals?

An increasing number of Jews are turning to vegetarianism and are finding ways to celebrate vegetarian Passovers, while being consistent with

Jewish teachings.

Contrary to a common perception, Jews are not required to eat meat at the Passover Seder or at any other time. According to the Talmud (*Pesachim* 109a), since the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, Jews need not eat meat to celebrate Jewish festivals.

Scholarly articles by Rabbi Albert Cohen in the *Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society* and Rabbi J. David Bleich in *Tradition* magazine provide many additional sources that reinforce this point. Also, Israeli chief rabbis, including Rabbi Shlomo Goren, late Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi of Israel and Rabbi Shear Yashuv Cohen, late Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Haifa, were or are strict vegetarians.

The use of the shank bone on the Seder plate originated in the time of the Talmud as a means of commemorating the sacrifice of the paschal lamb. However, since the items on the Seder plate are only symbolic, many Jewish vegetarians replace the shank bone with a beet, its red color representing the blood of the sacrificed animals. The important thing is that no animal need be eaten or represented at the Seder table.

Jewish vegetarians see vegetarian values reinforced by several Passover themes:

1. At the Seder, Jews say, "Let all who are hungry come and eat". As on other occasions, at the conclusion of the meal, *birchat hamazon* is recited to thank G-d for providing food for the world's people. This seems inconsistent with the consumption of animal-centered diets, which involves the feeding of 70 percent of the grain grown in the

United States to animals destined for slaughter and the importing of beef from other countries, while 20 million of the world's people die of hunger and its effects annually, and nearly a billion of the world's people are chronically hungry.

Rabbi Jay Marcus, former Spiritual Leader of the Young Israel of Staten Island, saw a connection between simpler diets and helping hungry people. He commented on the fact that "*karpas*" (eating of greens) comes immediately before "*yahatz*" (the breaking of the middle matzah) for later use as the "*afikomen*" (dessert) in the Seder service. He concluded that those who live on simpler foods (greens, for example) will more readily divide their possessions and share with others.

2. Many Jewish vegetarians see connections between the oppression that their ancestors suffered and the current plight of the billions of people who presently lack sufficient food and other essential resources. Vegetarian diets require far less land, water, energy, pesticides,

fertilizer, and other resources, and thus enable the better sharing of G-d's abundant resources, which can help reduce global hunger and poverty.

3. The main Passover theme is freedom, and at the Passover Seder we retell the story of our ancestors' slavery in Egypt and their redemption through G-d's power and beneficence. While acknowledging that only people are created in G-d's image, many Jewish vegetarians also consider the "slavery" of animals on modern "factory farms." Contrary to Jewish teachings of *tsa'ar ba'alei chayim* (the Torah mandate not to cause "sorrow to a living creature"), animals are raised for food today under cruel conditions in crowded confined spaces, where they are denied fresh air, sunlight, a chance to exercise, and the fulfillment of their natural instincts. In this

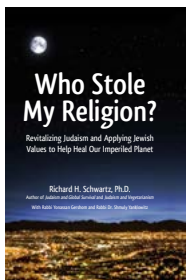
connection, it is significant to consider that according to the Jewish tradition, Moses, Judaism's greatest leader, teacher, and prophet, was chosen to lead the Israelites out of Egypt because as a shepherd he showed great compassion to a lamb (*Exodus Rabbah* 2:2).

4. Many Jewish vegetarians advocate that we commemorate the redemption of our ancestors from slavery by ending the current slavery to harmful eating habits through the adoption of vegetarian diets.

5. Passover is the holiday of springtime, a time of nature's renewal. It also commemorates G-d's supremacy over the forces of nature. In contrast, modern intensive livestock agriculture and animal-centered diets have many negative effects on the environment, including air and water pollution, soil erosion and depletion, the destruction of tropical rain forests and other habitats, and contributions to global warming.

Jewish vegetarians view their diet as a practical way to put Jewish values into practice. They believe that Jewish mandates to show compassion to animals, take care of our health, protect the environment, conserve resources, and share with hungry people, and the negative effects that animal-centered diets have in each of these areas, point to vegetarianism as the ideal diet for Jews (and others) today.

Richard H. Schwartz, Ph.D., is president emeritus of Jewish Vegetarians of North America and the author of Judaism and Vegetarianism, Judaism and Global Survival, and Who Stole My Religion?



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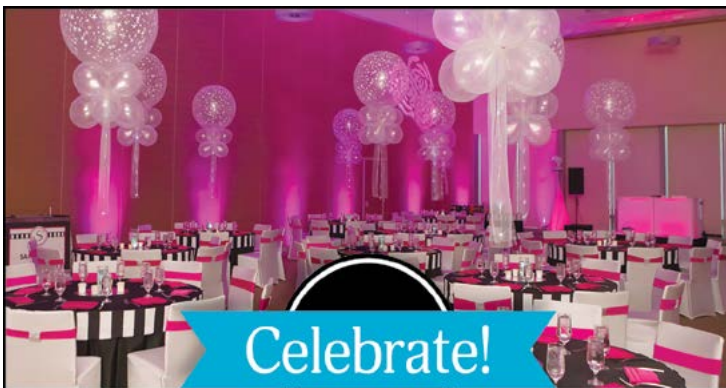
Temple Sinai of Sharon had their annual Event Extravaganza (bar and bat mitzvah expo) on March 19, which featured caterers, entertainers, party planners and photographers.



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Jewish Millennials



By Dr. Rebecca Housel

You may have missed the now infamous 2014 series in *Rolling Stone* about Millennials and sex by Alex Morris. You may have also missed countless books and articles on Millennials, referred to as “Gen Me,” by Dr. Jean Twenge. Even if you’re a parent of Millennials, teach Millennials, work with Millennials, or, date

Millennials, if you’re not a Millennial, you may not quite understand their point of view. And, that’s extremely important. Especially when considering the future of Judaism.

After World War II, Jews who made it to the States were understandable cautious about showing outward-signs of their culture. After all, part of how Jews were identified in Nazi Germany was through things like Temple memberships, as well as from within their own community. My grandparents, for example, never belonged to a temple. Our culture was practiced behind closed doors, and with family only. My grandmother was kosher. She also lit the candles every Friday on Shabbat. At Passover, she cleaned her house from top to bottom, selling her old dishes and other “*chometz*,” while restocking her pantry with foods for “Pessach” as she called it, including replacing both sets of her dishes - one set for dairy, one for meat - both sets of silverware, and, both sets of cookware. It literally took her a week to prepare for the Passover holiday. I’m not sure any Jewish generation still prepares for Pessach that way outside of the orthodoxy. Not even I do the same Passover prep my grandmother arduously completed every year. But I do keep Passover. My Millennial son, however, doesn’t.

My generation was called “Gen X” by Bill Clinton, and, it stuck. Gen X is anyone born from 1964 through the mid-70’s. Prior to 1964, you have the Baby Boomers, the largest population bubble in the States, until the Millennials that is. Boomers were born from 1946-1964. Despite the age gap between Baby Boomers and Millennials, the two generations have a lot in common. Boomers are hippies while Millennials are hipsters; no matter the label, both are more accepting,

confident, interested in legalizing drugs, and... both believe in the idea of having more than one intimate partner.

I know, I know...sex is a dirty word. Except, if you don’t understand how Millennials view intimacy, you will not understand how and why socio-cultural shifts via postmodern smart technology essentially guarantees the end of Judaism. If I had to guess, our people will be lucky to have even one-fifth of the current Jewish population on Planet Earth by the year 2517. That may sound ridiculous, given the longevity of Jews despite all kinds of horrendous persecution, including the persecution we overcame in Egypt during the time of Moses responsible for the celebration of Passover itself. But, the advent of smart technology is the game changer.

Apple is at the forefront of smart technology. In fact, the iPhone celebrates its 10th birthday in 2017. *Rolling Stone* celebrates its 50th. One cultural icon is Millennial; one is part of the Baby Boomer generation. In order to attract Millennials to the magazine, *Rolling Stone* began incorporating more stories on pop culture including film, television, comic books, and yes...sex. Sex in the 21st century is hard to separate from smart technology. Thanks to the iPhone, dating sites like *Tinder*, *Grindr*, *Hater*, and even *J-date*, are easier than ever to use. Within seconds, you can find a potential date/mate from any geographic radius you wish. That accounts for the statistics in Alex Morris’s *Rolling Stone* series on Millennials and sex, showing an unprecedented 84.5% of American Millennials having multiple intimate partners rather than one regular partner, despite 90% of that same group hoping for a stable marriage. Confused? Me, too.

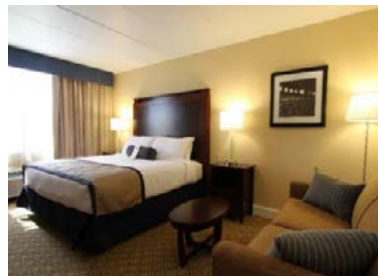
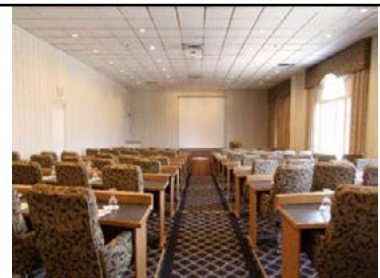
Morris called it “the new monogamy.” But Jean Twenge calls it narcissism in her 2006 book *Generation Me*. Jews may believe we are somehow special and different, but our Millennial kids are a part of 21st century American culture. And, if you believe your child is different from the 84.5% reported in *Rolling Stone*, you’re fooling yourself.

Every year during the Passover seder, Jews in America say, “Next year in Israel!” But 500 years from now, there may be almost no Jews left to say it. Technology has created what is referred to as



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Jewish Millennials

globalization. That doesn't just affect commerce, trade, immigration, and governments. It affects every day lives. Yours, mine and ours. In June 2015, Pew Research Center's Carlyle Murphy wrote a piece on the commonality of interfaith marriage in the States. You see, it's not just Jewish Millennials who no longer care, it's all Millennials.

According to Murphy, four-in-ten Americans married since 2010 have a spouse from a different religion based on results from Pew's Religious Landscape Study. That's 40%, as opposed to 19% married before 1960. And, that's not all. Nearly 49% of all couples who are living together have a partner from a different religion. Including Jews.

Technology creates a sense of artificial entitlement. But so does the postmodern shift in American public school curricula, starting in the mid-1970's. Postmodernism is great in theory. Every individual is valuable and valid simply because that individual exists. In practice, however, rewarding people who have not proven their value creates a cultural void. An emotional one, too, which is what Jean Twenge explores in her book. The irony is, it was the Holocaust that created postmodern ideology. The results of postmodernism are things like iPhones (i-for-individual), as well as the current Millennial culture.

When you combine what's happening with Millennial Jews to things like an increase in global anti-Semitism - both results of the advent of smart technology - the fate of the Jewish people quite literally hangs in the balance. The Holocaust did not kill every Jew directly; but it did kill every Jew. The radical decrease in the global Jewish population added to the increase in Jewish persecution - which often required assimilation for surviving Jews simply to continue to exist - created a vacuum. The generations that followed were increasingly removed from Jewish culture as a result.

The genesis of computer dating in the 1960's - the predecessor to things like *J-Date* - influenced the increase of intermarriage among Jews in the following decades. My parents were some of the first Boomers to use computer dating. My father was Jewish, with two Jewish parents. My mother was Catholic. Without the computer match-up, my parents

would have never met. My mother eventually converted to Judaism. Of her two Jewish children, both married spouses that were not Jewish, including me. My son is their only grandchild; he is a Millennial. I raised him to be a fierce Jew. The kind who runs an Israeli flag from his house and car. Yet, his partner is not Jewish.

Because of my parents' intermarriage via postmodern technology, within a single generation, only one grandchild was produced and that grandchild has 25% Jewish heritage. When my son has children, those babies will have just over 12%. My great-children will be the last of my family to have any meaningful Jewish heritage in their DNA. And, unless my great-great grandchildren marry Jews, the generation after that will essentially have no Jewish genetics left. Basically, in less than 100 years from now, my family line will not be Jewish. This is the fate of all assimilated American Jews.

You'll need those four glasses of wine at the Passover Seder to get that sobering thought out of your head. Yet sadly, it's no less true. Neither is the fact that Jewish Millennials mark the beginning of the end for assimilated Jews within the next 500 years, a generous estimate. Thanks to the perfect storm of post-Holocaust postmodernism, the resulting smart technology, and its effects on everything from dating, to sex, to marriage, to public school education, Jewish culture is in a historic decline. It's more important than ever to then appreciate what it means to be a Jew. To support Jewish causes. To support Jewish businesses. To support Israel. And, to support each other.

Pessach *someach* to all....

Dr. Rebecca Housel is an international speaker and best-selling author with books sold in nine languages and 89 countries. Her blog, RebeccaHousel.com, has over 1,000,000 readers from around the world. She has forthcoming publications being released in 2017 and 2018 on Millennial culture in the United States, as well as the inclusion of her acclaimed creative nonfiction essay, 750 Words About Cancer, in an anthology by New York Times best-selling author, Dinty W. Moore.



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The Exodus' Lessons

By Phyllis Chesler

Time is short and the Jews are, as usual, in trouble. What does the Exodus teach us about what to do?

Yes, the Jews are in trouble both today and long ago, when we were slaves in Egypt. Apparently, Jews can be in trouble both as slaves and as citizens of our own Jewish state and as citizens of the world in an era in which a Jewish state exists. It's like a bad Jewish joke.

In Egypt, we are literally enslaved and we cannot save ourselves. We need God to save us - and God chooses a redeemer for us. This is how we, the "Hebrews" are pulled out of "Mitzrayim."

We have many midwives who free us from the narrow place of affliction so that we can be born as God's people.

Moshe is not raised like all the other Hebrew slaves. In a memorable act of civil disobedience, Pharaoh's own daughter saves the infant who cried out. For this act of hesed, or merciful kindness, she is midrashically and rabbinically re-named *Bat'ya*, because by this act she becomes God's daughter too. Pharaoh's daughter adopts Moshe and raises him as if he is an Egyptian prince.

Moshe is a more evolved version of Yosef: someone who is both a Jew and an Egyptian. He is a Jew who knows his way around the larger, non-Jewish world - but he is also a Jew who breaks with that world with wrenching and utter finality. Ultimately, even though he has grown up away from his Jewish family, Moshe, rather paradoxically, remains close to, even dependent upon, his Jewish brother and sister, Aaraon and Miriam.

In a sense, Moshe is also the anti-Yosef. Yosef is born and reared as a Jew and remains a Jew - but he also becomes a powerful and assimilated Egyptian. Moshe is born as a Jew but is reared mainly as an Egyptian. Yosef helps Egypt store up food against a coming famine and Moshe is part of God's plan to "spoil" Egypt and to render her bare of food, food sources, first-borns, gold, silver, and clothing which are all given or lent to the Hebrews - or are really, all back pay for the 210 years of slavery.

Still, it is Moshe-the-Egyptian who becomes miraculously Jewish and who becomes God's greatest intimate.

How do we know that Moshe is Egyptian royalty? Moshe has un-

limited access to Pharaoh's palace. No one stops him when he enters. One wonders if his adoptive mother *Bat'ya* is still there; does she accompany him to his meetings with Pharaoh? If so, how poignant, even wrenching, because the break with Egypt, when it comes, will be dramatic and final. (Here, I am reminded of the children's film, "Prince of Egypt" in which Pharaoh is conceived of as Moshe's adoptive brother and who suffers the loss of Moshe's company and loyalty. The film constitutes an interesting midrash).

How else do we know that Moshe is an Egyptian? Moshe is recognized as an an "*eesh Mitzri*" in Midian where he meets and weds Yitro's daughter Zipporah. After so many years of first wandering around, (some say sixty years), can Moshe still possibly have Egyptian royal attire? Or is it how he wears his hair? Or speaks? Does he wear Egyptian jewelry?

Therefore, this much is clear: Moshe has not been enslaved. He has, in fact, been reared as a Prince. This is very important. He has not been broken by slavery. He is not afflicted with "*kotzer ruach*," a shortness of spirit, a lack of generosity, indeed an absence of humanity which slavery and oppression causes. He is fully entitled. (We find the phrase in *Vaera 6:9* and I will return to it shortly).

Perhaps Moshe was even more arrogant than Yosef - although his alleged speech impediment speaks to us of his having also been marked by trauma, loss, "differentness." In fact, Moshe never exactly fits in anywhere except in his relationship to God and in God's plan.

In *Shmot 2:11-2:12*, Moshe sees, he really sees, a fellow Egyptian (an "*eesh Mitzri*") beating a Hebrew slave to death. Moshe first looks around. He turns "*coh v'coh*," this way and that way. Some say that he is looking to see whether any other Egyptians are there watching him before he kills the Egyptian taskmaster and buries him in the sand. Others suggest that he is looking within himself as well. Who am I? Am I an Egyptian or a Hebrew? What must I do?

I do not think that Moshe is afraid of another Egyptian. He is a Prince and can possibly get away with murder. I think that Moshe does not yet understand what slavery is and can do. Moshe waits - but he sees that there is "no man" there among the Hebrews, no one who will come to his brother's aid.

On the question of Moshe's turning "*coh v'coh*," Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi of Mecklenburg, in his *Ha-ketav Veha-kabalah*, notes that "Moses thought that one of the other Hebrew slaves who were standing there would rise up against the Egyptian taskmaster and would save their brother whom he was beating to death." But he saw that there was "no man." (*Ain Eeesh*). Moses saw that there was no "real man," no *mensch* ("*gever b'govreen*") amongst them, and no one was paying attention to the distress of his brethren to try and save him.

Moshe returns the next day and in *Shmot 2:13* and *2:14* sees "*shnai anashim ivrim neetzem vayomer l'rashah lamah takeh raecha?*" He sees two Hebrew slaves fighting and asks the wrong-doer why do you hit your friend/neighbor/fellow Hebrew? The evil Hebrew famously responds: "*Mee samha l'eesh sar v'shofet alenu?*" (Who appointed you our overseer and judge?)

This is almost a reverberation or a variation of Cain's "*Hashomer ani anochi?*" (*Bereshit 4:9*). Am I my brother's keeper? Only this time, the question is more like "Are YOU your brother's keeper?" Or "Who appointed you as your brother's keeper?" "*Halharganee atah omayr ca'asher hagarta et ha-mitzri?*" ("Are you going to kill me the way you killed the Egyptian?")

Moshe has already decided. Yes, he IS his "brother's keeper," and with this single act, adopts the entire Jewish people as his own - just as his Egyptian adoptive mother once claimed him! Being raised Egyptian has somehow empowered him to embrace his Judaism.

Nothing here is simple. Moshe may also have learned his bravery

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The Exodus' Lessons

and his knowledge of civil disobedience from his adoptive, Egyptian mother when she defied her Pharaoh-father's ruling and, rather than killing Moshe - saves him instead.

The concept of "*kotzer ruach*," or shortness of spirit, (heavy breathing brought about by hard labor), explains why slaves can be divided against each other and why they are loyal to their oppressors. The phrase is contained in *Vaera* (6:9). There, it is given as the reason the slaves won't listen to or can't hear Moshe. This concept also explains the psychological phenomenon of internalized self-hatred or identification with the aggressor. Slaves cannot bear it when one of their own rises above the common fate. Who does he or she think they are?"

A slave is someone who will turn on his or her own liberator. It is a working definition of a slave. They do not see a way out. If someone tells them about one - maybe it's a trick? No slave can be this powerful. No Egyptian would really risk his life to save a slave.

Pharaoh might not try to kill Moshe if he had simply killed another lower-caste Egyptian in a fit of temper. But that Moshe killed an Egyptian in order to save a Hebrew slave - that was unforgivable, even dangerous to Pharaoh. It means that despite all his privileges, that Moshe has a Jewish heart and has sided with his people. Moshe is disloyal to Pharaoh.

Now, even Moshe, the royal Prince "*vayirah*," he becomes frightened because "*achayn nodar ha'davar*" (Ah, so the matter is known).

Indeed, when Pharaoh finds out, he tries to kill Moshe. So much for Moshe's royal privilege. Who has informed Pharaoh? It could be that an Egyptian has - but when one of the Hebrew slaves addresses Moshe in a bitter, threatening voice, when the Hebrew slave takes the Egyptian side against Moshe-the-Jew - this shakes Moshe to his core and he flees.

This is why Moshe must flee Egypt, not because Pharaoh is after him but because the Hebrew slaves have challenged, mocked, and turned on him; perhaps they have also turned him in.

Now, let me turn to a few important things that are specific to the end of the story. *Bo* is the *parasha* in which God unleashes the last three plagues: locusts, darkness, and the killing of the first-born and it is the *parasha* in which we gain our freedom.

However, as important, we also receive our first mitzvot, or holy deeds, (12:2) not as an individual, not as a family, not even as a tribe, but as a "nation." We are given *Rosh Chodesh* to observe. We begin to count, and therefore control our own time, something that slaves cannot do. We are also told to observe the first Pessach, to teach it to our children, and to remember it as a festival forever after.

Here is where we are told to do so even before we leave Egypt and certainly before we receive the Torah. In this sense, *Bo* is an early precursor to "*Na'aseh v' Nishma*" which we say in *Dvarim* and partly say while standing at Sinai. "We will do, and we will then listen or hear or learn."

Finally, most interestingly: When Moshe asks Pharaoh for permission to leave for three days to worship our God, Moshe says that everyone must come: the old people, the young people, both the sons and the daughters. Moshe understood that both daughters and sons, women and men, are crucial in God's worship.

As we continue to wrestle with Moshe's duality in terms of his being both a quintessential Egyptian and a quintessential Jew, let us ask: Did Moshe learn that women were crucial for worship from the fact that women were priestesses in Egypt and that many of Egypt's multiple Gods were also Goddesses - or was Moshe prescient, did he understand that one day, Judaism would have women Torah and Talmud scholars, women rabbinic pleaders and kashrut supervisors, women-only *davenning* groups and a Jewish society in which both women and men are viewed as important in a Shabbos service?

I will leave you with this question.

I want to thank Nechama Leibowitz, Rabbis Michael Shmidman and Avi Weiss, and my friend and teacher, Rivka Haut, for their ideas and support.

This learning is dedicated to the memory of my parents and grandparents. May their memories be for a blessing.

Phyllis Chesler is Emerita Professor of Psychology, the author of 16 books, including "The New Anti-Semitism" and "An American Bride in Kabul," which won a National Jewish Book Award. She lives in Manhattan and is a very proud mother and grandmother.

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Bernie Sanders Addresses J Street Conference

By Susie Davidson

On Feb. 27, Senator Bernie Sanders addressed the second day of J Street's national conference in D.C. It was a resounding speech that spoke to each of the 3500 people in the room, who included over 1200 college students.

"Despair is not an option," he said. "Now more than ever, we will continue the fight for justice at all levels." The applause was deafening.

"In the last several months since Donald Trump's victory, there has been a significant outbreak of anti-Semitism in our country," he said, lamenting recent desecrations of Jewish cemeteries, bomb threats against Jewish organizations, and increasing anti-Semitic incidents. "When we see, as a nation, violent and verbal racist attacks against minorities, these attacks must be condemned at the highest levels of government," he said.

"It was rather extraordinary," Sanders continued, "that in the White House's Holocaust Remembrance Day statement, the murder of six million Jews was not mentioned by the Trump administration."

Rather, he conveyed, they should be more circumspect. "I hope very much that Mr. Trump and his political adviser, Mr. Bannon, understand that the entire world is watching, that it is imperative that their voices be loud and clear in condemning anti-Semitism and violent attacks on immigrants in this country," he said.

Sanders cited the press conference when Trump was asked about this rise in anti-Semitism. "He chose to respond by bragging - incorrectly, by the way - about the size of his electoral college win."

Sanders recalled living on a kibbutz in Israel. "It was there that I saw and experienced for myself some of the progressive values upon which the State of Israel was founded," he said. "I think that it is important for everyone, particularly for progressives, to acknowledge the enormous achievement of establishing a democratic homeland for the Jewish people, after centuries of displacement and persecution, and particularly after the horrors of the Holocaust."

It was thrilling, momentous, and also, familiar and reassuring. During his campaign, Sanders established himself as a charismatic and eloquent, yet uncompromising figure. His popularity has soared, as has pride and *kvelling* among his Jewish fans.



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Creating a Vacation Destination in Your Mind's Eye

By **Rus Devorah Wallen, LCSW, ACSW**

I know what you may be thinking: “What?! Take a break from Passover cleaning, when every minute now counts? Is this woman completely crazy and irresponsible?”

It sounds counter-intuitive. But, believe it or not, taking short, meaningful breaks that are intended for relaxation and gaining composure can actually make the whole Passover prepping process more pleasant and less of an ordeal. Such brief breaks can even optimize your experience and help you arrive at the Seder table with more “freedom” than you imagined.

Each of us has untapped resources of imagination at our disposal. In the comfort of our own home, we can harness the benefits of a vacation with the power of thought to stimulate relaxation and healing, helping us stay calmer and in greater focus.

Once you know your “vacation destination” well, it can be a quick getaway for just a few moments even in the midst of a hectic day at work or home. This becomes a skill which requires practicing thinking in images, invoking all of one’s senses - hearing, seeing, tasting, smelling, and touching - as well as one’s emotions, awareness of the body’s position, sensations, location, and movements. Describing a place in your mind’s eye (s) (ears, nose, mouth, etc.) can actually stimulate the same areas of the brain that are stimulated with the real deal (i.e., actually going to such a place, or performing an imagined activity). This is called guided imagery, guided meditation, or imaginal rehearsal.

Guided imagery is often used as a relaxation exercise for short internal excursions, lasting from mere seconds to several minutes. Many athletes and other performers perform imaginal rehearsals (or mental simulations) as a “dry run” before their performances. Following these mental dress rehearsals, clinical brain scans have shown proof that there is a similar effect on the body and brain as in the actual performance of the imagined activity!

Here’s Jack Nicklaus’ take on aceing golf tournaments (1974):

“Before every shot, I go to the movies inside my head. First, I see the ball where I want it to finish, nice and white and sitting up high on the bright green grass. Then, I see the ball going there - its path and

trajectory, and even its behavior upon landing. The next scene shows me making the kind of swing that will turn the previous image into reality. These home movies are a key to my concentration, and to my positive approach to every shot.”

In my practice, I advise clients to use guided imagery to enjoy short vacations in their minds. Clients who try this tell me they felt as if they were “there.” Sometimes it feels like a few minutes. Sometimes it feels like days. With a little practice, it is possible to feel as though you are on your own getaway!

Easily recognizable places in nature are good departure (and arrival) points. These places may include a beach, a meadow, a farm, a forest, a boat ride, or other such pleasant destinations. Frequently, clients already have their own “safe place,” without even realizing it. Explore your imagination to find a great vacation destination that is optimal for you!

Here’s an example: Imagine you’re sitting on a warm stone in a meadow on a warm, sunny day. You see the beautiful colors of the grass, trees, sky, and flowers. You enjoy the fragrant surroundings of the field flowers and blossoms on the trees. You imagine the warm breeze against your neck and the sun on your cheeks, and the warmth of the stone supporting you. You might imagine hearing the wind through the trees, or the sound of birds chirping, or water trickling in a nearby stream. You may even picture yourself tasting a sweet wild strawberry you just picked. Try creating your own special, relaxing, safe place where you would like to go.

So, no, I have not gone meshuga in recommending a vacation from Passover preparations. By affording yourself this time “on a break,” your preparations should go more smoothly, and with greater ease. You will arrive at your seder feeling more “freedom” from your own inner-Egyptian bondage. With practice, you’ll have enhanced wellbeing, and harness a year-round tool for success!

Rus Devorah (Darcy) Wallen, ACSW, LCSW is a psychotherapist, educator, and motivational entertainer living in Amherst, New York. In addition to her private practice, she offers trainings to groups and individuals. For free downloads of mindfulness exercises, contact her at: RD@Toratherapeutics.com, or visit www.Toratherapeutics.com.

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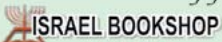
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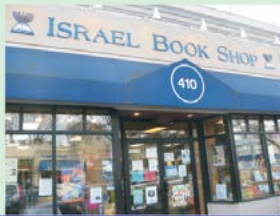
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**Notable Jewesses
in Jewish History**

By Stanley Helinski, Esq.

Though we live by the words, writings and actions of many sages and prophets of history who were men, there are countless women in Jewish history who have laid the foundation of Judaism and continued its timeless traditions. The following are but some of the marvelous women in Jewish history who have contributed so greatly to Judaism today.

Beginning with the Matriach - Sarah, wife of Abraham: Sarah was the first Jewish woman chosen by G-d as a Matriarch of Jewish people. She was the first to light candles on the Shabbat, the first to bless challah, and the first to establish a kosher kitchen. She is the first mother of Jewish people everywhere. Her son, Yitzchak, grew to become a forefather of the Jewish nation. She was known by her wonderful giving nature - a hallmark of Jewish people everywhere.

There was then the prophetess Miriam, sister to Moshe and Aaron *Rabeinu*. Being born in the bitter time of enslavement, her parents named her Miriam, meaning, "bitterness." The Torah tells us that Miriam was a prophetess - one such prophecy about the future of Moshe. The story is well known: while the King's officers were throwing Jewish babies into the Nile, she placed her brother, Moshe, into a basket and floated him down the Nile, where Pharaoh's daughter found him and adopted him as her own. Miriam then offered herself to the princess as a nursing mother. Later, she convinced her father of her brother's holy mission and, only through her faith, her brother was able to survive and prosper. Miriam was also brought into the spotlight by virtue of a negative commandment - *loshon hora*, literally, bad tongue, or bad mouthing. She criticized her brother for divorcing his wife, Tziporah; she was afflicted with leprosy for this.

Next came Ruth, born into the royal family of Moav. She was raised as a princess and settled in Moav in order to break out of the hunger and desperation that had evolved in the city of Beit Lechem in Eretz

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Notable Jewesses in Jewish History

Yisrael. Because of this lifestyle, G-d was angered and took all of the residents' wealth and prosperity. Ruth, rather than succumbing to the pressure of staying in Moav, entrusted her mother-in-law, Naomi, and returned to her homeland. She did this in se of overwhelming adversity because of the attachment she felt for her people, the Jewish nation. And for this, she was rewarded with a rich blessing from David, the King of Israel. From her, the royalty of the Jewish nation thus descended, and from her branch as well will eventually come the *Moshiach*.

Next is Shulamit, daughter to the great Talmudic sage Rabbi Akiva. On the day of Shulamit's long-awaited wedding, her father had a great feeling of despair within him, as though this daughter would die that same day. Separately, still on her wedding day, Shalomit, while occupied with an eventual and joyful wedding, stopped to give a poor man some food, as she saw that no one who would attend to him. Then that evening, she hung her wedding brooch on the clay wall beside her bed. The following morning, Shalomit pulled the pin from the wall and, with it, came the dead body of a poisonous snake, killed by the pin of the brooch. She believed all her life that her generosity had saved her.

Then came Queen Esther - torn away from her people to be forced to live with a tyrannical ruler. She secretly observed her Jewish faith while under the oppression she faced. Haman, the evil prime minister at this time, was convinced of a mission to eliminate the Jewish people. Queen Esther plead and plead for him to rethink his plans, but Haman was unpersuaded. She then turned to her people and asked the Jewish nation to pray for salvation. Through the grace of G-d, the Jewish people were ultimately saved. We read her scroll every Purim, and she is remembered as a great woman in Jewish history.

Dona Gracia was a young woman in the time of the Spanish Inquisition. She fled her birthplace of Portugal to find a place where she could observe Judaism without persecution. Though wealthy, she did not squander her wealth on mundane earthly pleasures but, instead, used it to create prosperity in Constantinople, the capital of the Turkish Empire. There, many Jewesses came to her for help and guidance, and there she was able to practice Torah and to perform mitzvot. She is remembered for her perseverance, her faith, and for the love of her Jewish people.

La La Suleika Chagvil was born in Tangiers, Morocco. When young, she was betrothed to a Jewish boy and patiently awaited her wedding day. She was blessed with great beauty, which deepened as she aged. One day, the Moroccan Sultan's son saw her in the marketplace and immediately insisted that she marry him and denounce her faith. She repeatedly refused, and was eventually locked into a dungeon, in an effort to force her to reconsider. She was asked time and time again, but she would not relent. Ultimately, because of her refusal, she was sentenced to death. Her only request was that the sentence be carried out in her wedding dress that her mother had worked so hard to make for her. And so, her request was carried out.

This is but a small fraction of the great Jewesses of Jewish history, and this account excludes the great Jewesses carrying out the Judaic mission in our modern day. Nonetheless, it can easily be seen that throughout our past and continuing history, women have definitively played an invaluable role in the foundation, broadening and sanctity of Judaism.

Stanley Helinski, Esq. is a Boston trial lawyer presently in Yeshiva at Machon L'Horah studying to be a rabbi. He lives in Wellesley.



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The Passover Seder: Exodus and Empathy

By David Bernat, PhD

In observing the Passover Seder, we are taught that “Anyone who expands upon the story of the Exodus from Egypt is all the more praiseworthy.” This instruction seems to assume that, as people of faith, we accept the narrative of Egyptian Servitude and the Exodus as indisputable facts. However, living in a modern science-driven era, and taking a historian’s perspective, this whole-cloth acceptance is not so easy. There is little, if any, evidence to support the notion of a Hebrew people enslaved in Egypt who then march through the desert as a nation with low a seven-figure population (the number offered in the Torah). To the contrary, the only hard data point from the era, a monument erected by the Pharaoh Merneptah in 1207 BCE, indicates quite clearly that the Israelites were a semi-nomadic people (*Shasu* in Egyptian) already living within the Land of Canaan. The core question then is: If the Exodus is a myth or legend rather than a historical event, are the Passover and Seder celebrations sustainable? I would answer this question with a resounding “Yes.” The Seder liturgy highlights the following: “In every generation (*bechol dor vador*) a person must see themselves as if (*keilu*) they themselves left Egypt.” The “*keilu*” dictate does not expect that we, as individuals or families have been, or become, actual liberated slaves. Rather, it calls for empathy and imagination. Try your best to put yourself “in the shoes” of someone who lived through servitude and the long trek to freedom in the Land of Promise. With empathy and imagination at the crux of the Seder experience, by definition, it does not matter if the Exodus occurred or not as long as we act “*keilu*.” One cannot overemphasize how the notion of “*keilu*” frames the Seder. On the one hand, the Seder entails a meal of luxury and privilege, going back to its Roman origins. However, we are commanded to eat Matsah, labelled “*lechem oni*,” “the bread of poverty.” Why? Because of the Seder’s moral imperative: “*kol dichfin yetei veyeichol*,” Anyone who is hungry must be welcome in our homes and fed at our table. Eating the bread of poverty pushes us to empathize with the disadvantaged, even while we are living lives of prosperity. Similarly, as Maimonides wrote, eating the maror, the bitter herb, forces us to empathize with those who are in bitter circumstances. Whether or not the Exodus from Egypt ever actually transpired, if it stirs us to empathy, it provides a potent ethical framework for our observance of Passover, and for our behavior year-round. *Chag Semeach.*

David Bernat is the Executive Director of the Synagogue Council of MA and a lecturer in Judaic Studies at UMass Amherst.



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The Budget Problem

Once upon a time, the village of Chelm suffered a terrible financial crisis. The mayor let it be known that there was not enough money in the village coffers to pay its police force.

“What are we to do?” the mayor asked the village elders.

“It is so simple,” they exclaimed. “We will outlaw crime! If we outlaw crime, then there will be no need to have a police force.”

“How brilliant!” thought the villagers.

And so it was that crime became illegal in Chelm, and the police force was done away with.

The following year, the mayor once again called a meeting of the village elders and announced that they were in worse condition than they had been the year before. Since they outlawed crime, and did away with the police department, the town treasurer had run off with the remaining funds.

“Indeed a predicament!” sighed the elders.

“But why do we need to have money in the town fund?” they asked.

“Well,” said the mayor. “We need money to pave the streets.”

The wise men of Chelm put their heads together and declared, “From now on we will not pave any more streets. We have enough paved streets!”

And so it was that the budget crisis was solved.

But the following year, the mayor met with the village elders and declared once more, “I have sad news to tell you. We are out of town money once more.”

“That is very sad,” they said. “Why did this happen?”

“Well,” said the mayor, “since we no longer pave the roads, salespeople have stopped visiting our village. They used to pay taxes in order to make sales here. They stopped coming because the broken roads destroyed their carts.”

“Indeed, this is a problem,” replied the elders. “Where else can we save?” They all thought and thought, and could find no solution.

Finally, the wisest of the elders, known as the Sage of Chelm, got up and spoke. “What do we need town money for? We have outlawed crime, so we do not need a police force. Since the tradesmen do not visit our community any more, we do not need to pave our streets. So what do we need money for?”

“Well, I must be paid!” said the mayor. “Since I became mayor I have not had a chance to work my farm. My only source of income comes from being mayor of our city.”

“Aha!” smiled the wisest man in Chelm. “The answer is simple. If we let you go back to your farm, you will not need a salary to manage our town, which runs by itself. Therefore, it is decreed that the village of Chelm, from this day on, will no longer require a mayor!”

Everyone agreed - indeed, this was a solution that would save the village from bankruptcy - but it did not! Soon, a group of scholars gathered at the door of the Sage of Chelm.

“Oh, dear Sage,” they said. “We are but humble teachers. True, we get satisfaction from teaching the children, but we still have to eat. It has been months since we have been paid, and now we have been told there isn’t enough money in the town treasury for even one week’s pay!”

The Sage of Chelm shook his head in disbelief. “I am so sorry. How could this have happened?”

“We don’t know,” said the teachers. “But please understand, if we cannot earn salaries as teachers, we must go back to the fields to plant

crops so that our families can eat.”

“But who will teach our children?” asked the Sage.

“If there is no money to pay us, then the children will have to teach each other. The older ones, who are almost teachers, will teach the younger ones. We will return to the fields to feed our families.”

The Sage of Chelm shook his head sadly, but what could he do? However, despite all the money saving ideas, the village remained in a bad financial state.

“There is no more money to have even the smallest service carried out,” the villagers complained to the Sage.

“Well,” the Sage wondered out loud. “What do we need money for now? We have done away with the police and the teachers, and have stopped paving roads. We no longer have our mayor, so what do we need money for?”

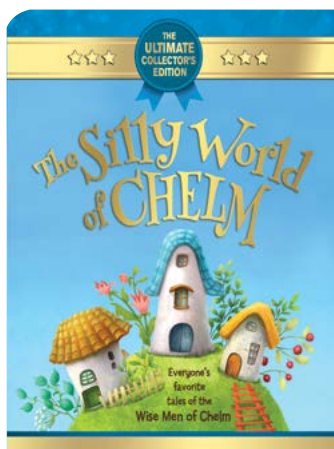
The villagers thought and thought. Then finally one man exclaimed, “You are right!”

“Indeed,” said the Sage. “So let it be known to all, that from this day forward, there will be no taxes collected in the village of Chelm!”

As soon as word reached the neighboring villages, everyone from miles around began to move to Chelm. “Why should we pay taxes where we live?” they said.

And so in just a few days the village of Chelm was bursting with prosperity. In no time at all, new homes were built, and these new homeowners were paving their streets. They wanted their children to be educated, so they hired their own teachers. And those who wanted to protect their homes, hired their own guards. And so, the budget problem was solved at last.

Excerpted from the newly released book, “The Silly World of Chelm.” Available at www.WorldOfChelm.com and at Amazon.com.



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A Gardener's Passover

Art Norton



Rabbi Katy Allen leading a Shabbat dinner at Open Spirit in Framingham

By Rabbi Katy Z. Allen

In the Torah, Passover is described as a time to bring sacrifices to the Temple, a celebration of the barley harvest, and a celebration of spring. Once the table is set for Passover, with candles, flowers, haggadot, wine, matzah and a seder plate with an egg, a lamb bone, charoset, parsley, and horseradish, it's easy to feel that springtime celebration.

When gearing up to celebrate spring at the seder, the first thing to consider is something not on the table - barley. Even though Passover originated in part as a celebration of the barley harvest, barley is one of the five grains that are considered *chametz* in the Torah; the other four are wheat, oats, spelt, and rye. Prior to the spring barley festival in ancient Israel, all the old grains were cleared out to make way for the freshly harvested barley. Thus, getting rid of the grains from the previous year, all now forbidden on Passover, was an important part of the preparation for celebrating the new growth of spring. Today, we may call it preparing for Passover, or perhaps just spring cleaning. Now to items that are on the seder table. Do you know someone who raises chickens? If so, you may have learned that during the cold winter months, hens raised in a natural setting in New England more or less stop laying. Come spring, eggs can once again be found in the hen house, and one of these signs of spring gets the honor of being on the seder plate.

Parsley is the next one. In New England, parsley plants left in the garden generally survive until spring. These plants are biennials, so their life cycle lasts two years. If the gardener doesn't dig out the parsley plants, they will send out new leaves in early spring, just in time to be plucked for the seder. As the weather grows warmer in late spring and summer, the parsley plants will flower and form seeds, and the rash of new, tasty leaves will be over.

Next in line is horseradish, an incredibly hardy plant whose roots, over a period of years, can penetrate 12 feet deep into the ground, making it easy for the plants to survive even the coldest of winters. Once the ground thaws in the spring, the gardener's task is straightforward: dig up some of last year's roots to make this year's *hazeret* for the Hillel sandwich. Plenty of roots will remain behind to feed the plant's spring growth.

To finish off the sense of spring at the seder, just add a bouquet of spritely daffodils, and the joys of spring will readily enter the hearts of everyone around the table.

Rabbi Katy Allen is the founder and rabbi of Ma'yan Tikvah - A Wellspring of Hope. She blogs at www.mayantikvah.blogspot.com.

Idan Raichel in Boston

Producer, keyboardist, and composer Idan Raichel became a global music icon with *The Idan Raichel Project*, a multiethnic tour de force that changed the face of Israeli popular music. As the leader of *The Idan Raichel Project*, Idan acts as a musical ambassador representing a hopeful world in which artistic collaboration breaks down barriers between people of different backgrounds and beliefs.

Over the past 13 years, Idan has collaborated with American pop stars India.Arie, Dave Matthews and Alicia Keys, not to mention a wide range of artists who are household names in their native countries: Portugal's Ana Moura, France's Patrick Bruel, Italy's Ornella Vanoni, Germany's Andreas Scholl, and Mali's Vieux Farka Touré, to name but a few. Performing a very special solo concert called *Piano Songs* to support his new album, *At the Edge of the Beginning*, Raichel says, "I hope this album will enable me to go on stage, me and a piano, and to tell the audience stories, inspirational thoughts, and just sing songs. I think that this is the ultimate way to be an artist, when you're forced to depend on yourself and on your soul."

Idan Raichel performs *Piano Songs* on April 29 at 8 p.m. at the Berklee Performance Center. Presented by World Music/CRASHarts. For tickets and information, visit www.worldmusic.org or call 617-876-4275.

Soul Witness

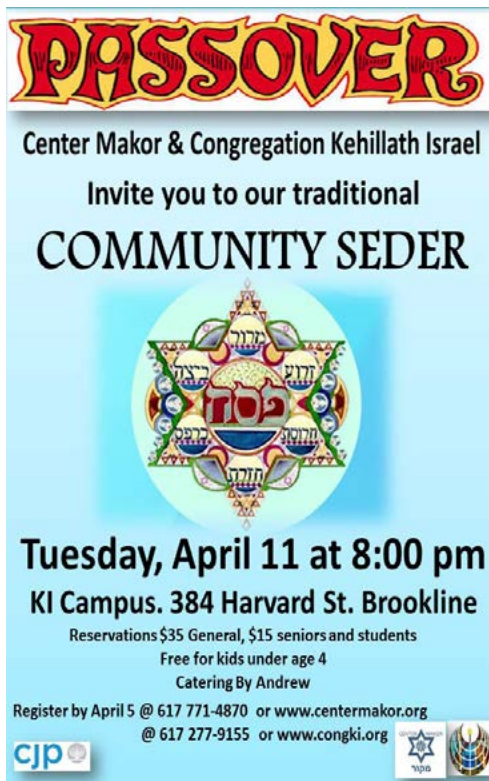
Soul Witness, The Brookline Holocaust Witness Project, will be screened at the Coolidge Corner Theatre on Wednesday, April 19 at 7 p.m. This event follows a sold-out screening of the film in January attended by over 400.

Written, directed and produced by R. Harvey Brauman, the documentary was created from approximately 80 hours of interviews of local Holocaust witnesses conducted by the town of Brookline in the early 1990s. The interviews, are moving and profound, and address racism, immigration and the refugee experience, issues that sadly remain relevant today. Tickets can be purchased at <http://www.coolidge.org/films/soul-witness-brookline-holocaust-witness-project?ct=t>. Follow the conversation at #SoulWitness on social media.

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Orthodox Women's Rabbinic Roles Accepted In Israel. Why Not Here?

By Sharon Weiss-Greenberg,

Ever since the first exile of the Jewish people in 586 BCE, there have been multiple centers of Jewry. While most elements of Jewish life were centralized during the first Temple era, everything changed when the leaders of the Jewish people were exiled to Babylonia.

As the map of the Jewish diaspora inched beyond the borders of Israel, rabbinic decision-making developed new traditions - those of the Israeli and of the Babylonian persuasion.

Our *mesorah* (tradition) transitioned from a centralized rabbinate to various centers of didaction - from Sura to Pumbeditha, to the Rhineland and beyond.

There is a rich tradition of dispute that is woven throughout this history. One might say that *machloket*, debate, is an essential characteristic of a *beit midrash*, a Jewish house of learning. "It is not in heaven" where decisions are made (*Deuteronomy* 30:12). And the Talmud suggests that what is "right" for Jews to practice is to be determined by rabbinic leaders here on earth, not in heaven. Further, debate in the spirit of Torah is applauded by the heavens above. The style of repartee of pre-medieval rabbis is fondly recorded throughout the texts of the Talmud, and it is still found in the *beit midrash* today. It is what we do, and we do it well.

However, many conversations surrounding texts require solutions. As observant Jews, we can debate to the 11th hour what the intentions were of our foremothers and forefathers, but when it comes to Jewish practice, a conclusion needs to emerge in order for individuals to live their lives according to Jewish law.

It is with this historic lens that I approach the current debate about women in leadership roles that has hit a chord in the American Orthodox community. As one might imagine, there are a variety of opinions about what roles women should and should not be allowed to fill, and what titles women leaders should or should not adopt. Many of these opinions were recently published in the Rabbinical Council of America's *Tradition Journal*. (Ironically, five of the six pieces published were authored by men.)

I focus here on the lone woman's voice, that of esteemed scholar and rabbinical court advocate Dr. Rachel Levmore.

I first thought that the title of her piece, "A View From The Other Side," referred to the other side of the *mechitza*, i.e., it was to be the view from a woman's perspective. But after reading the piece, I believe it might, instead, reflect Levmore's geographic location - Israel - from the other side of the ocean.

In her description of the history of women's leadership in Israel over the past decades, Levmore does not make an argument for rabbinate-granted certification. No argument is needed. Instead, example after example is presented of women's halachic leadership that is approved and accepted by the Israeli Chief Rabbinate, an institution that is quite stringent in its halachic interpretations.

Examples include *to'anut rabbaniyyot*, *yoatzot halacha* and heads of *midrashot* - women's advocates in religious courts, female experts in the rules of family purity, and directors of women's seminaries. In addition, the number of women who are being granted *semicha* (ordination) and being trained to be halachic judges by Orthodox yeshivot and rabbis increases every year.

Orthodox Women's Rabbinic Roles Accepted in Israel. Why Not Here?

Levmore recalls, "While controversy rages in religious circles on the American side of the ocean (circles which seem to parallel those in Israeli society), why in Israel does the issue of women functioning in various rabbinic roles not raise such fierce ongoing discussion? Many times, there is no discussion at all. In fact, the most that can be said is that at times when a 'new' development arises, there may be some voices raised against it. However, once it is 'up and running,' everyone just 'moves on.'"

She offers various reasons for the discrepancy between the two main centers of Jewry in today's world, concluding that "In a nutshell, women serving in religious or rabbinic roles of leadership in Israel is a natural, sensible manifestation of *kavod ha-beriyot*," respect for all of G-d's creations.

It might be time for those enraged by the notion of women serving as rabbinic leaders to take a step back and look at the full picture. Is the debate a conflict for the sake of heaven, or is it a turf war?

In Israel, people do not seem particularly bothered by the increasing presence of women in places of Torah leadership.

In fact, the observant community, and even the rabbinate, have accepted, endorsed, and strengthened the pipeline of women rabbinic leaders. So why the growing concern by selective religious authorities in the American Orthodox territory?

Is it *mesorah* (tradition)? Is it a limited pool of pulpits?

Many American Orthodox families send their children to study in Israel for a year or two after high school. And it is in Israel that a number of the most prestigious *yeshivot* are training women to be decisors, and even judges of Jewish law. At the same time, statements are issued here by the RCA denouncing such practice, in effect denouncing the facts on the ground in Israel.

The fact that Levmore's piece is included in the RCA's *Tradition Journal* is a spark of light and a great step in the right direction. One hopes that the RCA finally is willing to focus on meeting the needs of the community in its entirety, following the examples of their Israeli male and female colleagues.

Sharon Weiss-Greenberg, Ph.D. is the Executive Director of the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance.



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Fear and Exodus

Jessica Lowenthal

Wine, Seder plate, Dayenu, more wine. Each year, Jewish families around the world come together to celebrate and remember the incredible Exodus from Egypt, the moment that G-d heard our people's cries and redeemed us from bondage. In the Torah, it is this act, rather than the creation of the world, which

G-d consistently refers to when giving commandments: "For I am the L-rd, your G-d, who brought you out of Egypt." The children of Israel are commended to reenact this event each year, each person feeling as if he or she were being brought out of Egypt.

Families, especially with small children, often find ways to experience this commandment, singing fun songs, having representations of each plague on the table, imagining what each person would take with them if they had to leave Egypt. All of these activities focus on the redemption from Egypt. However, in order to fully experience the spirit of Exodus, we must look to the beginning, to the cause of our people's painful cry to G-d.

Exodus 1:9-10 explains the mentality of the new Pharaoh, the one who did not know Joseph. "He said to his people, 'Here, (this) people, the Children of Israel, is many-more and mightier (in number) than we! Come-now, let us use our wits against it, lest it become many-more, and then, if war should occur, it too be added to our enemies and make war upon us'". Everett Fox's careful translation shines light on the fact that this Pharaoh views Israel as a national threat, a group of outsiders that could, at any moment and as a unified group, betray Egypt and collude with Egypt's enemies.

Pharaoh uses this fear to turn his people against these 'outsiders,' with whom they have been living peacefully for years. The Egyptians enslaved the Israelites and eventually went so far as to murder each newborn son. Umberto Cassuto, an Italian Rabbi and Bible scholar from the early 20th Century, states: "on account of this fear, the Egyptians arose and set over them - [...] - captains of labor-gangs, in order to afflict them with their heavy burdens, that is, to undermine

their strength by means of the burden of toil, so that they should cease multiplying"^[1]. Shrewdly, the Pharaoh convinced his people that the Israelites were such a threat that they turned on their neighbors, their former friends, not only with a blind eye, but with an oppressive arm.

Our people's most devastating experience, therefore, was born out of baseless fear, the fear of the 'other' rising up and threatening the 'natural born citizens' of Egypt. The Egyptians, thinking they could control another group of people, communally agreed to view the Israelites as less than human, less deserving of freedom, because they succumbed to Pharaoh's manipulation.

However, as we know, the heavy burden did not succeed in limiting the numbers of Israelites - quite the opposite. *Exodus 1:12* states: "But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied." The Egyptians continued to fear the strength of the Israelites. Not even the state-sponsored murder of children could break these 'outsiders.' Indeed, if anything, Pharaoh's fear was a self-fulfilling prophecy. Had the Israelites been embraced, instead of enslaved, who knows what magnificent contributions the Israelites could have made to Egyptian society. We will never know. Pharaoh's fear, and the people's belief in that fear, led to their own devastation from G-d, and the Exodus of Israel.

When the Israelites passed through the Red Sea and began rejoicing at the destruction of the Egyptian army, the angels in heaven wanted to sing praises to G-d. G-d, however, admonished them, saying the Egyptians were His children as well^[2]. We must learn from the mistakes of the past, both ours and others. We cannot allow society to reject the humanity of any human being because of imagined, or even real, fear.

This Passover, while we celebrate the Jewish people's beginnings, we must not forget why G-d's salvation was needed in the first place.

[1] Cassuto, U. (1987). *A commentary on the book of Exodus*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, Page 10.

[2] Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sanhedrin, 39b

Jessica Lowenthal is a third year Rabbinical Student at Hebrew College. She has been teaching Hebrew school students and adults for over 10 years and loves to bring new questions to ancient stories.



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Why Am I Here?

By Rabbi Mark Hillel Kunis

Did you ever ask: Why am I here? Let's expand the question: Why did God create me with my talents and deficiencies, born to my parents in the time and place I was born? Why did He create some people with brilliant minds and others with developmental disabilities? Why are some musically talented and others artistically talented? Why are some people rich and others poor? The answer is very deep and profound, and knowing it can make a profound difference in how you live your life.

According to Kabbalah, when God created the world, He also created all the souls that will ever be. One by one He places a particular soul into a particular body. Why?

God put your soul into your body, with all its talents and deficiencies, born to your parents in the time and place you were born, because these were the optimum conditions necessary for the development or growth of your soul or as Kabbalah puts it, *tikun hanefesh* (repair of the soul). The purpose of life, therefore, is not to be happy - although this is what most parents want for their children. The purpose of life is to develop and perfect your soul! And perfecting your soul is virtually impossible in the world of the souls. You cannot be compassionate in the world of the souls, for no one there needs your help. You cannot resist temptation in the world of the souls, for there is no temptation. It is only here in this world, when our lives seem to be falling apart all around us, that we can demonstrate the growth and development of our souls by reaching out and helping someone else with their pain, with their suffering.

About 38 years ago, Dr. Raymond Moody Jr. published a groundbreaking work, *Life After Life*. There were similar works published around the same time, but his became an underground best seller introducing the world to what became known as the "near death experience." Since then we have been inundated with books, movies, television shows, magazine articles, etc. all describing this experience which has been documented some ten thousand times. In almost every case, a person who is clinically dead - without breath or heartbeat - separates from and hovers over his own body. He may see others trying to revive him. He goes through a long dark tunnel toward an amazing

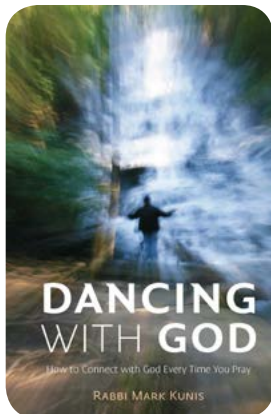
light. When he reaches the light he sees a group of familiar people, who have previously died, coming to greet him. He then sees a panorama of his life unfold before him like a movie. He is overwhelmed by intense feelings of joy, love and peace and wants to stay, but he is told that it is not his time and he must go back.

When Moody interviewed people who had these experiences, he asked if they had any regrets about how they had lived when they saw the panorama of their lives unfolding before them. All of them responded that they mostly regretted not loving enough and learning enough. In fact, many of them subsequently changed their lives to pursue more learning and acts of love towards their fellow human beings. Why are these pursuits so crucial? Because these are essential ingredients of soul growth and development, which is why we are here!

Kabbalah asks an even bigger question whose answer might surprise you: Why did God create the world? God created the world because He "willed" to have an opportunity to display His goodness. In order to display His goodness it was necessary to create a being as much like Him as possible to appreciate His goodness. The sages of the Talmud compare it to a calf and its mother: "More than the calf wants to suckle, the cow wants to provide it with milk." God wants, more than anything, to shower His love upon us. What it all adds up to is that God wants a relationship with us so that He can be good to us! Remarkable!

Wow! However, keeping the laws of the Torah and our traditions, isn't this what God expects of us? Yes, but only because God's laws are an expression of His love in that they are His guide for a better life. Likewise our traditions are an expression of our love for God as we embellish the Torah's holidays and mitzvot with them. The whole liturgy of Jewish prayer, as I describe in my new book, *Dancing With God: How to Connect With God Every Time You Pray*, is a loving dance we do with our Creator showing our desire, as Kabbalah puts it, to cleave to Him and feel His light and love.

Rabbi Mark Kunis is the author of the new book *Dancing with God* published by Menorah/ Koren.





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CJP President to step down



After almost 30 years leading the Jewish community in the Greater Boston, Combined Jewish Philanthropies President Barry Shrage is stepping down. In a March 22 email, he announced: "I expect this change will take place around the summer of 2018." He continued, "A search committee, chaired by Aron Ain, CEO of Kronos, and Shira Goodman, CEO of Staples, will begin its work in September to identify my successor....It has been a privilege and a pleasure to be part of Boston's Jewish community; a prayerful, charitable, teaching community,

which feels the breath of eternity."

Shrage, 69, said that at this point in his life he wants to spend more time with his family, and particularly with his grandchildren. He has said elsewhere that he expects to fulfill a continuing role at CJP, although not as its head. He would also like to complete a book that he has been writing for 15 years, on the future of the Jewish community.



Sean Altman's JEW MONGOUS performing Altman's original ode to Moshe Dayan live at Club Passim in Cambridge, March 7. From left: Michael Hunter, Cynthia Kaplan, David Dukach, Albert Altman, Sean Altman. (Photo courtesy of Sean Altman)



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The Kippah: Good For Your Head



By Rabbi Yosef P. Glassman, MD

"We will make a mark on our forehead and, when we look at one another, we will know that we are insane." Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, *The Tainted Grain*

Throw away your *kippah*. Burn it. Is it really so holy? It is just cloth. Even more so, modern physics now says that the cloth is a mere hologram projected from the depths of space - a colorless electron rearrangement, no different than a rock or a stick. How important could it be?

Certainly, there is no blessing before one puts on a *kippah*. Perhaps it is totally external, superficial, or even irrelevant. Did Jews wear a *kippah* in *Mitzrayim*? Forgive me for playing devil's advocate for a minute.

Surely, a Jew isn't biblically required to wear a *kippah* in order to believe in the Infinite Creator of the universe, perform a kind deed, or even do a mitzvah. Only later did it become a rabbinical requirement (*Taz* 2:5), and some feel it is still simply a *midat chassidut* (Rambam, *Deot* 5:6) for the regular Joe.

Sure, a head covering may increase Joe's consciousness while he does a *mitzvah*, yet these tasks can technically be accomplished with or without the *kippah*. A powerful tradition turned law, yes, but does the yarmulke have the power and true spiritual weight that the outside world ascribes to it, or that we ascribe to it? This is how the world recognizes Jews. Yet this externality is so easily dropped, blown away, or palmed during a touchdown blitz, never mind stuffed in the loneliness of random glove compartments everywhere.

And even if it is on all the time, today's custom *kippot* are not typically those of days past, as far as tangible reminders go. Nowadays, head coverings have evolved into a light, comfortable, aerated bowl, that perhaps leads to periodic higher awareness while scratching one's head, or walking in the rain. It is not the Middle Eastern head-squeezing turban of the past.

Easily, wearing the 4 cornered garment with *tzitzit* offers a more powerful reminder to "do the right thing." In that vein, the Talmud dramatically relates (*Menachot* 44a) that *tzitzit* have been known to literally slap the face of a disrobing Jew, saving him from the abyss of sexual debauchery. What could be more powerful than eye-whipping *tzitzit* in instantly correcting one's actions and re-connecting the Jew to the Creator's handbook?

Kabbalistic scholar Rabbi Zamir Cohen, *shlita*, is often asked by Jews who want to strengthen their Torah observance, "What should I start with...the *kippah* or the *tzitzit*?" His answer is invariably, "the *kippah*," despite its lack of blessing, intrinsic holiness, and total absence in the written Torah. Does it simply symbolize membership in the esteemed group called "the Jewish people?"

Surely, one can simply visit the JCC and eat a bagel and lox on Sunday to project that message. Perhaps it a reminder to ourselves of the belief in the Highest Power, as is traditionally taught? But do Jews need to prove themselves believers to the outside world?

The answer is yes. The *kippah* is indeed arguably the most indispensable of Jewish garb, in terms of maintaining strong Torah observance. And, this is not because it is a variably tangible self-reminder on one's head, per se. Rather, the yarmulke invariably forces others to perceive the wearer differently - in a higher light. The public *kippah* wearer displays his personal religious expectations of himself to himself, to the Infinite, and to other people. In turn, those others look at him differently, hold him accountable. The general public, both Jewish and not, expect more of the *kippah*-wearing Jew: to be ethical, to be kind, to eat

kosher, to stand for the elderly and scholars, to defend the orphan and widow, to keep Shabbat - whether or not he is up to the task. The layer of public expectation is a heavy layer, heavier than the *kippah* itself.

Surely, that public expectation of goodness is ultimately not the ultimate reason of the Jew to perform commandments and/or avoid sin in public, but it may often be the first cause. The harsh human reality is that, on a normal Tuesday, people fear peoples'opinion before the opinion of the Infinite Judge. What will the public think of a head-covered Jew who throws trash on the street, misspeaks on television, or cuts a grandmother off in line at the bank? The "*kippah* expectation" leads the Jew to think twice with any public action, by advertising his personal high expectations of himself.

On the flip side, everyone is extremely bothered by the *kippah*-wearing Jew who steals, murders, or rapes. These are heinous enough crimes without the religious garb, but wearing religious garb while committing a crime screams falsity and hypocrisy of highest order. And while the typical observant Jew vigorously avoids such heinous crimes, even the heist of a company envelope or a vulgar word could spark office controversy.

Wearing a *kippah* in public is a superficial, external, yet powerful projection of self-expectation, which flips society into a great mirror onto the individual Jew. The Jew, with the *kippah*, elevates his personal subservience to the rules of the Highest Power that boomerangs back to him by means of the public glare.

The *kippah* has no intrinsic holiness itself. It is the ultimate expression of mirrored reflection indeed.

Therefore, what appears to be, at face value, public superficiality, can truly internally transform the individual and motivate him to ultimate, continuous growth and change. The electromagnetic physical world, where the *kippah* resides, according to the Zohar, is considered the "World of Falsity." The yarmulke lives in the world of costume physicality. Yet, it can powerfully shield the wearer from the overwhelming forces of outside physical falsity.

Only truth can be emitted from inside the Torah-clinging Jew, and it is amplified by the *kippah*, when that truth is projected. Yet, when falsity is allowed into Jewish action, which is the opposite of his true nature, the *kippah* falls flatter than ever, and remains the false amplification of falsehood that it physically can't escape. Having no intrinsic holiness, the *kippah* cannot do anything other than project its input. But, when worn properly, the thin barrier is a magnificent and essential amplifier of the Jew's inner truth.

Dr. Yosef P. Glassman, IDF Reserve Lieutenant, mohel, and Harvard trained geriatrician, is the CEO of Hadarta.org, which integrates Torah concepts to applied geriatric medicine.

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Intel buys Israeli self-driving car firm

By Maurice Picow for www.greenprophet.com

Intel's massive buyout of Israel's driverless car innovator and electronic sensor company Mobileye may finally give the driverless car concept the attention it so well deserves. Intel, whose computer chips and semiconductor technology is found in nearly every personal computer, appears now to be very serious about being involved in the driverless car concept.

Prior to the March 13 press releases by both Mobileye and Intel Corp, experiments in driverless car technology have been carried out by companies such as Elon Musk's Tesla Motors, Uber's self-driving taxi tests, and by software search engine giant Google.

So far, experiments using driverless car technologies have had mixed results, with test cars "struggling" when approaching bridges and when dealing with complex road work and environmental challenges.

Mobileye, an advanced technologies company based in Israel, was founded in 1999 with the aim to develop what it refers to as 'vision-safety technology' to make cars and roads safer, reduce traffic congestion and save lives. Mobileye helped develop devices to enable cars to "sense" approaching obstacles like other vehicles, pedestrians; and even walls and other obstacles in parking lots.

This resulted in what is now known as Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) that are now

commonplace in many new cars. These systems have been used for years in taxis in Israel.

As stated by Ziv Aviram, CEO and co-founder of Mobileye: "Drivers are responsible for 93 percent of road accidents. We have an epidemic of the modern world, and in some sense, we've become indifferent. There is a remedy that will save a million and a half lives and 50 million injuries a year, and therefore the autonomous car trend has caught on and can't be stopped. It won't be stopped."

Once installed, Mobileye's vision sensors literally view the road ahead and warns the driver in real-time of approaching road dangers.

So why would a computer chip giant like Intel want to invest so much money, \$15.3 Billion, in a company like Mobileye? The answer: Intel wants to be a partner and major game player in the development of driverless cars. The future of this technology appears to be well worth such a large investment from Intel's point of view. There is also much more at stake than only having cars with artificial intelligence sophisticated enough to drive themselves.

Mobileye's advanced vision systems are already in use in many late model cars today. This will hopefully help reduce the number of road accidents on major streets and highways. These vision systems alone gave Mobileye a total revenue of more than \$358 Million in 2016; a gain of over 47% over the previous year.

With Intel and Mobileye joining forces in such a big way, it shouldn't long before the driverless car concept will be commonplace in large American, European and Asian cities; especially with taxi companies like Uber.



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The Temple Connection



By Larry Lencz

Our commitment to Temple Israel/Sharon began almost 39 years ago, soon after we became parents for the third time. Since our first two children, both boys, celebrated Brit Milahs at our home, we did not need a place to name them.

However, when our daughter was born, we went to a local synagogue to which friends of ours belonged. It was then that we realized it was time to join our own Temple, one that reminded

both of us of our own experiences growing up.

Those experiences were in Conservative synagogues in our home towns, so even though it took us a while into our family's development to do so, we felt very comfortable with choosing Temple Israel.

The warm welcoming and the camaraderie that we both experienced was memorable. Our connection to both the spiritual leadership and the lay leadership made us feel like we should have joined years earlier.

I got involved in the renovation and expansion plans soon after joining, and I always felt that my opinion was valued, as if I had been a member for years and years. Our children attended the Hebrew school, and we were able to make a lot of new friends, many of whom we still are connected to.

Seeing their families grow, along with our family, has always been special, especially around the holidays. Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, weddings, and the birth of grandchildren for some are always special simchas. Becoming active in the Brotherhood has been a big piece of my connection, and it still is, as we have developed into the most awarded chapter in the country.

My connection to the Temple has also opened my eyes to the entire Jewish community in Greater Boston, as I have also become active in many of the wonderful local chapters of some very important and influential national organizations. Our synagogue made that involvement even easier, because it seemed that everyone knew of Temple Israel of Sharon.

Whether it's attending Purim schpiels with my family, or going to Shabbat services, the Temple has always made me feel grounded in not only my religion, but also my heritage. As we approach Passover, we all understand the importance of celebrating together as a family, whether related or not. I truly believe that the commitment to Temple membership is as needed now as ever before, to bring Jews of all backgrounds and traditions closer, in order to help fulfill our roles as "doers" in the community at large. This is important on local, state, regional, and world stages, as we try to make a difference - not just for fellow Jews, but for our many global friends as well.

The stronger ties that we develop not only will help us, but also those who may not have the same opportunities. They enable us to reach out to individuals and groups everywhere, much like Israel continues to reach out to its local neighborhoods, and to the far corners of the world.

I know that my Temple membership has not only made me a better Jewish person, but a better human being. I hope that this resonates with others, so that they too can relish in the truly meaningful spirit which can be theirs to enjoy.

Larry Lencz works in health care management and is an adjunct professor at Stonehill College. He raised his family in Sharon with his wife Darlene; they currently live in Stoughton.

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Genesis of the Palestinian Authority

By Amram Sherby

In "Genesis of the Palestinian Authority," journalist David Bedein, who runs the Israel Resource News Agency and the Center for Near East Policy Research, takes us inside the world of the Palestinian Authority, which Bedein has covered for the past 23 years since the day of its inception in 1994.

Here are a number of topics that Bedein's book and research shed light upon:

The Palestinian Authority:

In 1993, the PLO and Israel signed the Oslo accords, in which the PLO agreed to fight terror and disarm Hamas, end incitement against Israel and cancel the PLO covenant that called for Israel's destruction. Bedein hired an Arab TV crew who filmed the PNC (Palestinian National Council) session where the PLO covenant was being discussed, and was the first reporter to reveal that the PLO covenant was never cancelled.

At the Nobel Peace Prize press conference in 1994, Bedein asked PLO leader and Nobel peace laureate Yasser Arafat whether he would disarm Hamas, to which Arafat responded, "I do not understand the question. Hamas are my brothers."

David Bedein was the first journalist to research the Palestinian Constitution, which very few people know even exists, in which the "right of return" to homes and villages from 1948 remains a fundamental right. Bedein noted that this document makes no mention of civil rights, and to this day the PA regime still calls for the destruction of Israel.

This book also reports on David's coverage of the new PA armed forces - often trained in the U.S. - who have included terror groups in their midst, and who have repeatedly turned their weapons against Israeli soldiers and civilians and violated human rights within the PA.

Fatah:

Bedein brings in numerous sources that document that the

"moderate" faction of the PA still calls for the destruction of Israel.

The book includes several quotes from Fatah leaders calling for war against Israel, with the end goal being its destruction.

The book also brings documentation that names PA president Mahmoud Abbas as the financier of the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre.

It also does not sugarcoat Abbas' Ph.D. thesis that concludes that the Zionist movement worked with the Nazis, and that Jews collaborated with them because the Zionist leaders viewed "Palestine" as the only legitimate place for Jewish immigration.

Abbas is also quoted in the book praising Hajj Muhammad Amin Al-Husseini - Jerusalem's Mufti - who took part in planning the Nazi extermination of the Jews.

Abbas has never retracted these views, yet he is viewed worldwide as a moderate Palestinian leader.

Bedein notes that Abbas has used the PA security forces to stop dissent, retaliate against critics and opponents, and pursue Palestinians selling land to Jews - a crime punishable by death in the PA.

UNRWA:

Numerous articles in the book document how UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) resettles refugees to end their plight. UNRWA, created specifically on for Arab refugees in 1949, has confined 650,000 refugees from 1948 within 59 refugee camps, giving refugee status to roughly 5 million descendants.

UNRWA was formed in order to promote the supposed "inalienable right" of Arab refugees to return to the villages where they lived before 1948. To this day UNRWA continues to confine hundreds of thousands of descendants of Arab refugees to their refugee facilities, where they languish, under the premise and promise of the "Right of Return" to villages that no longer exist.

Bedein provides voluminous research that documents how UNRWA camps have become breeding grounds for terrorists, and that their school system calls students to join the armed struggle in order to realize the "right of return."

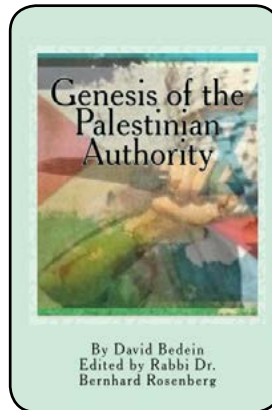
Palestinian Arabs are quoted throughout the book describing UNRWA's assistance as "meaningless," since it does not improve their day-to-day lives in the slightest, but rather holds out hope for the destruction of Israel at which time - and only then - UNRWA refugees would be allowed to return to their villages. It makes no effort to seek long-term solutions for descendants of refugees who have wallowed within the indignity of refugee life for nearly 70 years.

The Hamas terror organization's takeover of UNRWA is well documented in this book, which explains how it used UNRWA schools and facilities to store, and also to fire rockets at Israel.

Bedein writes numerous articles which are cited in this book that point to the news media, along with successive American and Israeli administrations, as having turned a blind eye to Arab incitement and terror, instead attempting to push forward the peace process, while the Palestinian leadership has done everything besides promote peace.

This book should serve as a guide to policymakers of which mistakes should not be repeated in the pursuit of a lasting peace.

Amram Sherby was an intern at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Spokesperson for Bar-Ilan University's Model UN Society and the co-host of the "Bus N' Tank NFL Weekend Analysis" show on IsraelSportsRadio.com.



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Now Is the Time to Unite

By Steven Schimmel

Over the past several months, we were shocked as Jewish cemeteries were vandalized, swastikas were painted onto synagogues, and bomb threats were called into Jewish community centers, all right here in the United States. It is shameful that only seven decades after the end of the Holocaust, our Jewish communities are confronted with such hatred, and it is a tragedy to realize that Jews are being targeted in this way.

In my role as Executive Director of Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts, which is part of the collective effort to protect and strengthen the Jewish world, I see some startlingly discomfoting trends. The recent bomb threats and vandalism in Jewish communities across the United States has shocked us all, and anti-Semitism in Europe is at a post-WWII high. But that's not all; we also face aggressive protests against Israel that often become hateful rallies crossing the line into anti-Semitism.

The cyber world is even worse. Anti-Jewish rants can be found on Facebook and other internet sites where long-familiar tropes are being recycled by a new generation of Jew-haters. College students are experiencing overt anti-Semitism brought on by events like Israel Apartheid Week, and anti-Israel boycott activity. In a trend that has been going on for at least 40 years, we can visit the United Nations, where we witness representatives of member states publicly calling for the destruction of Israel. We also see that over the past two years, Jews have faced gruesome stabbing attacks across Israel, and acts of violence played out on the streets of Europe.

Each of these issues on their own is serious and will likely demand significant attention and resources to address, but taken together, they are monumental. That means our response must be equally as powerful. Instead of fear, this should be an opportunity for a renewal of Jewish life in our communities. We should double-down on all of our efforts to build and strengthen our people. We should remind ourselves every day that we have survived so much. We should retell the stories of our heroes to our children, remember to observe Yom HaShoah and talk of the strength of our people who experienced the worst genocide in human history and survived to rebuild our Jewish homeland, Israel, only a few short years later. We should celebrate our triumphs at Passover and continue to proudly tell the world about Israel, our miracle that continues not only to make the desert bloom, but also to make the world bloom.

Join your synagogue and JCC and support your Jewish Federation. There are a million things we can do to help the Jewish community. These threats and acts of violence are nothing new to the Jewish people. We have seen it all before, century after century. But unlike years past, this time we are prepared. In the past we didn't have the resources, the unity or the power to prevent ourselves from being attacked.

Let's unite to show the world that this time when we say never-again, we mean it. *Am Yisrael Chai.*

Steven Schimmel is the Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts in Worcester. He has an MBA from Rutgers University, and both a B.A. in History and a B.A. in Political Science from Manhattanville College in Purchase, New York. He serves on the Board of Directors of American Friends of Kaplan Medical Center in Israel.



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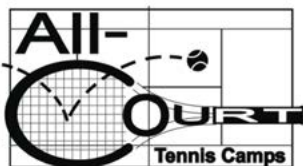
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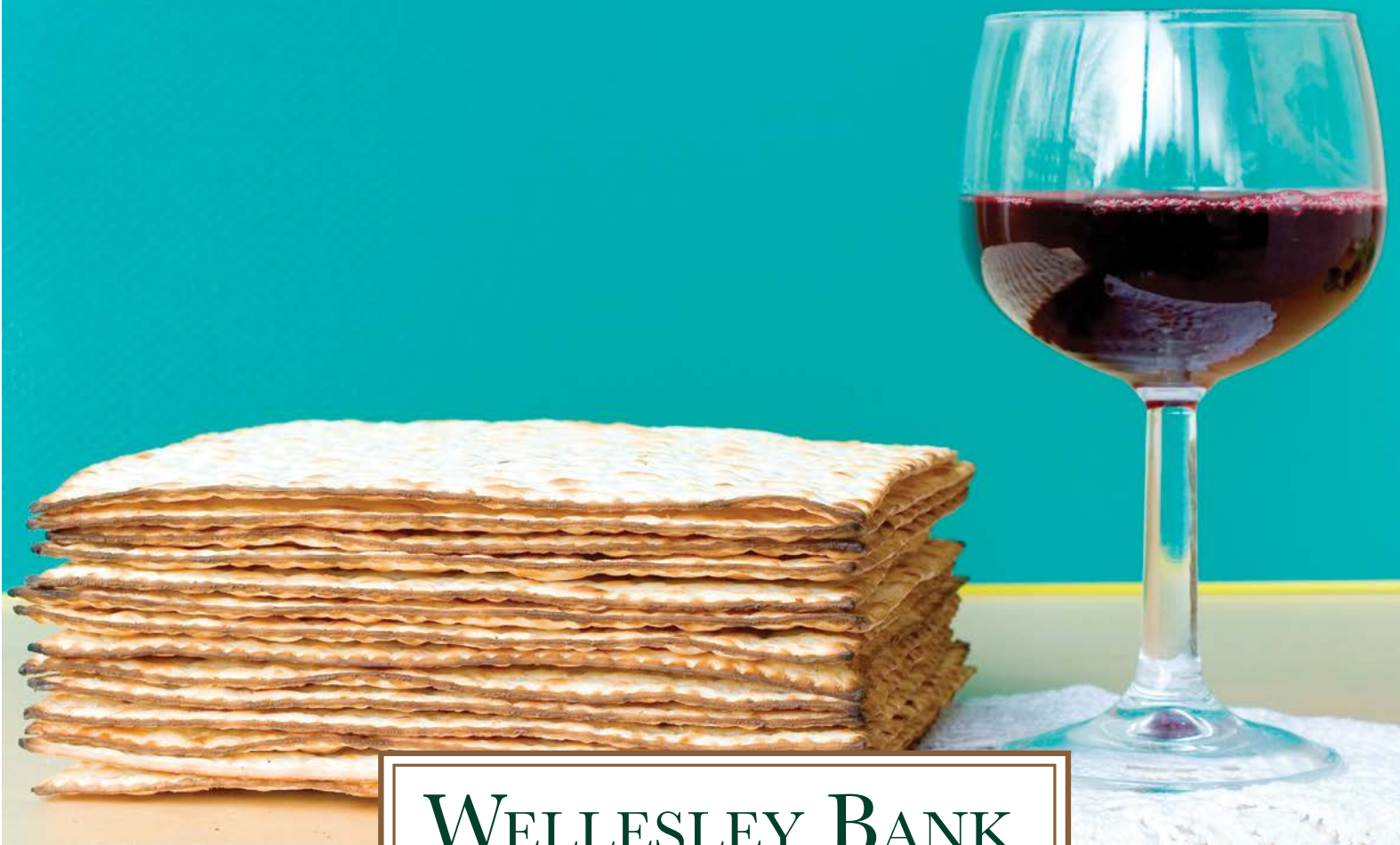
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