

The background of the cover is a close-up photograph of several square matzah crackers with a perforated texture, arranged on a white lace doily. In the foreground, there are several tulips in various colors: a bright orange one at the bottom left, a purple one in the center, and a pink one at the top right. The overall lighting is bright and natural.

Shalom

Magazine

FREE

EDITION 33

Passover/Spring 2018

**Opinion
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Happy Passover

Shalom Magazine 2018
Published by Farber Marketing Inc.
Editor & Publisher: Shirley Nigri Farber
Marketing Director: Scott A. Farber
Copy Editor: Susie Davidson

Gaby Wehman



As Shalom Magazine reaches its 9th year, I look back to when we started in 2009, and gratefully recall all those who have helped keep this publication going throughout those years.

At the time, I was warned that 2009 wasn't a good year to begin an enterprise. The economy was slow, people were losing their homes, and stores were closing. Print journalism had no chance of survival in the face of the internet and social media.

But ever since I produced a Jewish radio program back in Brazil, it had been my dream to create a Jewish magazine that would reach a wide audience in the way that radio did, but with visual impact and interesting articles from community members.

In 2006, I founded a publication in Portuguese for the New England Brazilian community that was paired with my TV show called Bate Papo. It thus took me a few more years to return to my original dream of a Jewish magazine, this time in English.

Shalom Magazine wouldn't be possible without the participation of so many businesses, synagogues and organizations. There are many people to thank for all those years: the advertisers that fund this free publication, my husband Scott who directs the sales department, Susie Davidson who diligently proofreads the articles, and the members of Jewish organizations who provide us with information.

The magazine would not exist if it weren't for all the readers who pick up a copy at locations throughout Massachusetts. I thank all the contributing writers who volunteer to share their ideas with thousands of readers, both in Massachusetts and online, around the world. I believe that we can always learn from other Jewish communities. United we are stronger, especially in times when we are encountering new incidences and modalities of anti-Semitism.

Shalom Magazine strives to present the voice of the community without imposing one opinion. The articles here show that we care about not only our religion and tradition, but all the people across the globe, and the earth. Let us show the world what makes the fabric of our community. Send us your suggestions so we can all hear your voice.

Please recycle this magazine or, better yet, pass it along to a friend.

We wish you and yours a healthy and happy Passover.

Shirley Nigri Farber - Publisher

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- AJC New England
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- David Bedein - Israel
- David Bernat - Synagogue Council
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Interfaith Passover Seder

Friday, March 30, 6:30-9 p.m. All are welcome to take part in a relaxed, interfaith Passover Seder on the first night of Passover. This service will be co-hosted by Open Spirit and will be led by Rabbi Katy Allen and Gabi Mezger of Ma'yan Tikvah.

A Kosher-for-Passover-style potluck meal will be served and organizers will provide a list of dish options that you may select from to ensure that the food is appropriate for the holiday.

People of all faiths and all ages are invited to attend. Please register by March 25 at <http://bit.ly/passover2018>. Cost: \$10-30 per adult and \$5-10 per child. We welcome more if you can, less if you cannot. Payment is requested at the time of registration.

Location: Open Spirit's Edwards Hall, 39 Edwards St., Framingham.

This program is generously being funded by a Combined Jewish Philanthropies Metrowest Community Grant (Visit them at cjp.org).

2018 Mimouna Extravaganza

The event is presented by HaKeshet and the Israeli-American Council, and co-sponsored by the Israeli House.

Sunday April 8 from 7-11 p.m. at the Israeli-American Council, 1320 Centre St., Suite 301 in Newton.

The acclaimed singers Michel Cohen and Michelle Ammar will lead the festive music and dance selections. Special Moroccan refreshments and snacks by the kitchen of Amnon Benabou will be served. The tickets are \$20 in advance or \$25 at the door. For tickets and more info, call 617-738-5038 or 617-935-3250.

For information on how to include your event in our listings, please send an email to: shalomma@msn.com.

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Saturday, April 21, 8 p.m.: From Broadway With Love: A Riverside Theatre Works Showcase. Tickets \$25 per person (includes 2 beverage tickets). Join us for a Cabaret of Broadway show tunes, featuring some of the Greater Boston area's most talented performers. To reserve tickets, please email cabaret@templebethdavid.com or call the temple office at 781-828-2275.

Sunday, April 29, 1 p.m.: Learning to Manage Stress: An Interactive Workshop with Dr. Dorian Mintzer. Free to the public, with a light breakfast before the program. This workshop is an opportunity to "refuel" and learn about positive psychology, the impact of stress and the tools to manage it. You will learn some easy and fun techniques with Dr. Mintzer, who has over 45 years of experience working with people to manage their life transitions.



Seder in Andover

Temple Emanuel's First Seder, Friday, March 30, 6 p.m., at 7 Haggetts Pond Rd., Andover. Cost: \$54 Adult Temple Emanuel Members, \$65 Adult Non-Members, \$36 Children under 16. For more information, please call 978-470-1356, www.templeemanuel.net.

YJP Passover Seder

Connect, dine, and be inspired with fellow young Jewish professionals at the Young Jewish Professionals (YJP) Boston Seder.

Friday, March 30 at 7:30 p.m. Cost: \$36 until March 25, and \$50 after the 25. Limited to 70 seats. To reserve, please visit: <https://www.yjpboston.org/events/seder/>



Happy Passover

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Chai in the Hub event



Curb Your Enthusiasm and Broad City star Susie Essman was in Boston on February 3 as the keynote speaker for Combined Jewish Philanthropies' (CJP) annual Chai in the Hub event honoring 10 local young professionals whose exceptional work has positively impacted the Boston Jewish community. Essman – pictured onstage with CJP's Chai Society Chairs Joshua Kay and Alexis Isenberg – captivated the 500 attendees present at the sold-out event, with her charm, wit and trademark sense of humor, making it the most successful Chai in the Hub event to date.

OUR PEOPLE



UMass Hillel staff dressed in costume at the Purim Party. Top row (L to R): Annie Fortnow, Rebekah Steinfeld, Rachel Schy, Valentina Homenko. Bottom row (L to R): Miriam Cantor-Stone and Ariella Leicht.



Maimonides students Zoe Roda of Sharon and Senai Weglien of Brookline were part of the Team Shalva at the Jerusalem Marathon on March 9.

"My experience with Team Shalva was life-changing and opened up new ways of thinking about human dignity for everyone," said Zoe, who helped raise money for the organization.

The Shalva organization, located in Jerusalem, provides free assistance to children with special needs, regardless of their socioeconomic background or religion.

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YJP Purim Party



Young Jewish Professionals celebrated Purim at the Venu Nightclub in Boston n February 28. The Greatest Purim Party had a Circus theme and included Megillah reading, DJ, aerial artists and face painters. To learn about future events, visit: /www.yjpboston.org

Photos: Andrew MacRobert





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AJC New England Diplomats Seder



Rabbi Jay Perlman (left) of Temple Beth Shalom of Needham, this year's Seder officiant, along with Consul General of France Valery Freland, asking the first of the Four Questions. Each year, four members of the New England Consular Corps are invited to ask one of the Four Questions in their country's own language.



Joseph and Carol Levy with C.G. of Finland Leonard Kopelman and Consul of Morocco Carol Kopelman

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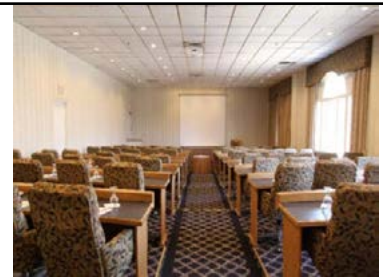
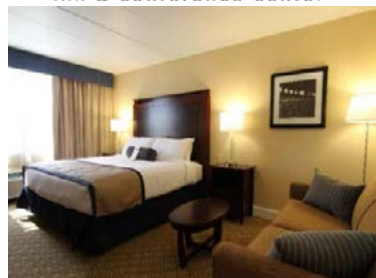
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AJC New England Diplomats Seder



Robert Leikind, Director, AJC New England; Jonathan Dorfman, President of AJC New England; 2019 Diplomats Seder Co-Chairs Josh Fialkoff, Sarah Gottfried, Bruce Singal and Sydney Altman



A group of young adults, some of whom participated for the first time in the AJC Diplomats Seder.



Holocaust survivor Aron Grenfield gave an emotional testimonial of his escape from Poland. Photographed with his wife

On March 18, over 400 people joined the New England office of the American Jewish Committee (AJC) and diplomats from 27 countries to hear testimonies from attendees of their journeys to freedom at the AJC New England 19th Annual Diplomats Seder at the JFK Library. Highlight of the day were the personal testimonies given by Moses Ajou (Sudan), Aron Grenfield (Poland) and Dr. Wisam Breegi (Iraq), who fled persecution and found freedom in the U.S.

For more information on AJC New England's role in global freedom and Jewish advocacy, visit www.AJC.org or contact AJC New England director Robert Leikind at leikindr@ajc.org.



Consul of Morocco Carol Kopelman, Exec. Dir. Mass. Office for Refugees & Immigrants Mary Truong, and Ass't Sec'y of Bus. Dev. and International Trade Nam Pham

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Purim in the Shtetl

Over 200 people celebrated Purim in the Newton Shtetl at Beth Menachem Chabad, together with Tevye, Golda, Yente the Matchmaker and the gantze mishpacha. After hearing the Megillah, they were greeted to the sound of live Klezmer music with the Shtetl's very own animals, including goats and ducks. An interactive market including Basha's Bakery, Moshke's Tavern and Feigel's Soup Kitchen, and the world-renowned Bottle Dancers created an authentic Shtetl experience.



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ADL “A Nation of Immigrants” Seder



The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) held its 11th annual “A Nation of Immigrants” Community Seder on March 5 at the UMass Boston Campus Center.

The keynote speaker was Cardinal Seán O’Malley, Archbishop of Boston. In addition, representatives from the Boston area immigrant community told their stories,

and the entertainment included the Dorchester-based Boston City Singers, which provides programming for over 500 youth aged 4-18.

“The Jewish people know so well what happened during the Second World War and after Kristallnacht, when hundreds of thousands of Jews tried to leave Germany and were refused entrance into other countries,” O’Malley said in his remarks. “How many of them perished because of the selfishness, or the fear, or whatever motivated people not to open the doors of their hearts and their homes to people who needed a new home?” he asked. “I think it is really disturbing when people talk about helping celebrities, ballerinas, and athletes, but not the poor.”

The Seder began with Leviticus 19:33-34: “When a stranger resides with you in your land, you show not wrong him. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

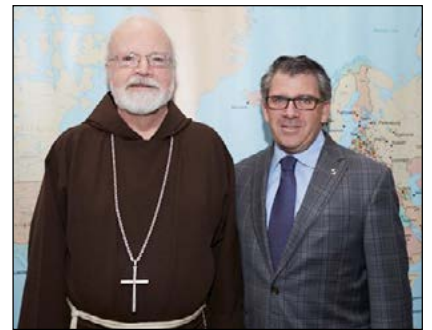
A highlight of the Seder, which was conducted by Rabbi Matt Soffer of Temple Israel, was when attendees asked the Four Questions in some two dozen languages.



Reading of the Four Questions in various languages



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BRITISH PURIM PARTY



On Feb. 28 and March 1, the Wellesley-Weston Chabad community celebrated the Jewish holiday of Purim. The event had a British theme, and over 200 adults and children joined the celebration.



Four of the Bleich children dressed for the Chabad British Purim party



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Finding Hope and Bipartisanship in Washington

By Steven Schimmel

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) Policy Conference was held March 4-6 in Washington. In recent years, critics of AIPAC, in particular leaders of J Street, have painted AIPAC as anti-peace, and opposed to a two-state solution.

Seeking to thus clarify AIPAC's stance on the Arab-Israeli conflict, AIPAC President Mort Friedman reiterated in the very first speech of the 2018 Policy Conference that the organization indeed seeks a two-state solution. For the over 18,000 participants packing the halls of the Washington Conference Center, it was a moment for applause.

Yet for most of those listening to the speech, expressed support for a two-state solution coming from the AIPAC stage wasn't at all a surprise. Several articles written about the conference noted that there was a palpable sense of outreach to progressives. For most of the attendees it was business as usual. That is, the conference felt like it has always felt, welcoming to both conservatives and progressives.

While AIPAC might struggle to define itself in these complicated, partisan times, support for Israel remains a bipartisan issue. And where there are very real differences in how liberals and conservatives approach a solution to the conflict, there are no differences when it comes to their desire for a peaceful future that includes a strong, secure Israel.

Participants at the conference have the opportunity to spend a good deal of time speaking with others from around the country. One of the highlights of the Policy Conference is that it brings together such a huge group of people, and this group is extremely

diverse. Participants are young and old, black and white, Jew and non-Jew, and most importantly, they are both liberals and conservatives.

Several articles published after the conference mentioned this last fact, that there were progressives present at the conference, as if that was newsworthy. It isn't. Israel has always had strong bipartisan support. This year's conference offered some workshops that might appeal more to a liberal than a conservative. Was this something new? Not at all; the workshops have always been this way, and the stage at AIPAC has always been shared by both Democrats and Republicans.

Leaders from both parties receive equal applause, although United States Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley appeared to receive the warmest welcome this year.

Supporting Israel is so important. There are actual, serious, real issues that need to be addressed, and we need to do all we can to maintain bipartisan support of Israel. That means we must resist the urge to make it seem like liberals and conservatives disagree about it.

Polls show that support for Israel remains strong among both Democrats and Republicans, and while approaches to solving the conflict might vary, the support is what matters in the end. Despite what you might read or hear, the 2018 Conference was welcoming for liberals and conservatives - just as it always has.

Steven Schimmel is Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts.



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CJP New President

BOSTON-HAIFA CONNECTION

Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP) Board of Directors announced recently their selection of Rabbi Marc Baker to be the next President of CJP.

Baker is a North Shore native who has served as Head of School at Gann Academy in Waltham for the past 11 years. He has been a scholar-in-residence of the Cynthia and Leon Shulman Acharai Leadership Program at CJP since 2012.

With all that Baker has achieved in his life and at Gann Academy, it was apparent to the Search Committee that he was the most qualified candidate with a level of talent, experience, and passion that made him the ultimate choice to be the next CJP President. He is nationally recognized as an innovative and inspirational Jewish leader. The Search Committee believes that Baker is exceptionally and uniquely qualified to be the successor to Barry Shrage's truly remarkable 31-year legacy as CJP President.



The CJP President Search Committee was led by Shira Goodman and Aron Ain.

The presidential transition will occur during the summer after the completion of Gann's school year and CJP's Annual Campaign.



On March 12, Barry Shrage, President of Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP) in Boston, was named an honorary citizen of Haifa by the City's Mayor, Yona Yahav. The distinct honor is a tribute to Barry's nearly 30 years of work establishing and maintaining the pioneering Boston-Haifa Connection, which has since grown into a flourishing partnership between the two sister cities.

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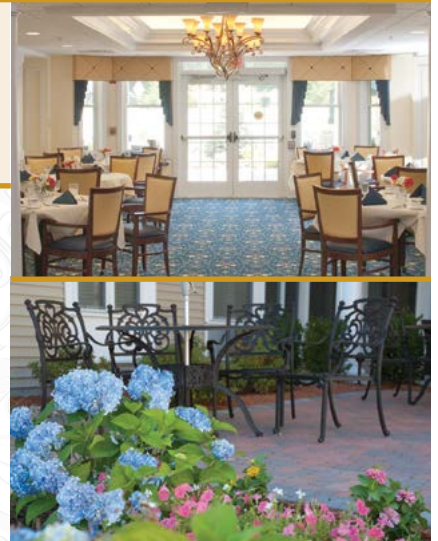
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A Surprise Party With Yachad and Diller Teen Fellows



On Jan. 21, New England Yachad and the Diller Teen Fellows collaborated on a fantastic event. The theme was a surprise party, and the teens only knew that they were coming to an extravaganza created just for them. Over 40 teens with and without special needs attended, and they were all surprised and thrilled!

New England Yachad is dedicated to enhancing the life opportunities of individuals with disabilities of all ages, ensuring their participation in the full spectrum of Jewish life. The Diller Teen Fellows are a cohort of Boston-area high-schoolers passionate about community service, tikkun olam, and Israel. Five of these young leaders chose to work with Yachad as their Impact Project to culminate their time as a Diller Teen Fellow and give back to their community.



For their project, Sara Gotbetter, Talia Barrett, Hana Stern, Hallie Popkin, and Itai Segev chose to design an inclusive program with Yachad that would be fun and bring together teens with and without disabilities.

The fellows wanted to make an inclusive event that teens would want to come to, with a broad appeal and a focus on fun; thus, the theme of a giant birthday party was chosen. The event was open to all high-schoolers in the area, including the rest of the Diller Teen Fellows and teens from the Yachad community.

The core belief and value of Yachad is that everyone belongs. The Diller Teen Fellows were able to create an event where former strangers with varying needs were able to come together and have a blast.

This what Yachad aims to do with all of our events. Looking ahead, we have a family event at Launch Trampoline Park on March 18, we'll be painting Seder plates on March 25, and our Young Adult Adventure Club will go rock climbing on April 15. For information about all of our events, contact Ilana Kruger at krugeri@ou.org.



#WeBelong

Yachad is dedicated to the inclusion of all Jews with disabilities in every aspect of Jewish life. We aim to build inclusive friendships, so no one sits on the sidelines, while supporting families, educating for greater understanding and acceptance, and advocating for a pro-disability attitude.



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Unplague the World



By Tucker Lieberman

Reciting the Ten Plagues at the Passover Seder is ethically uncomfortable. The story holds that Jews spent hundreds of years as slaves. G-d hardened Pharaoh's heart to prolong the violence and drama. It's hard to know how to feel about G-d's manipulation here. Why were the Jews allowed to suffer so long? Why were young Egyptians slaughtered in the end, and what purpose did that serve?

In even pacifist personalities, an inner voice cheers "Right on!" when the Egyptians get their comeuppance. We naturally believe that injustices can be righted through violence. We don't always like to admit this tendency in ourselves, but there are many examples of it.

When Massachusetts governor Michael Dukakis ran for president in 1988, he famously "failed" a debate question about how he'd respond if his wife were brutalized. He replied coolly that "there are better and more effective" policies than the death penalty. Although this policy opinion is shared by many Americans, many felt Dukakis didn't nail the emotional inflection.

More recently, at last February's sentencing hearing of a doctor accused of sexual molestation by hundreds of women, a father of three victims, Randall Margraves, lunged at the convicted man. While the judge rejected meeting "assault with assault," she expressed empathy for Margraves' anger and did not punish him.

Observing situations like these, we glimpse how we expect, and even long for, violent retribution. Yet if we've committed to peace, we know we should try to imagine nonviolent paths. That holds true for the Exodus, too.

My family's custom is to dip our finger into our cups as we recite the names of the Ten Plagues and remove ten drops of wine. This custom may have a superstitious origin (removing contamination

and assigning it to someone else). I grew up with a more humanist explanation about self-deprivation because we are saddened to hear of plagues befalling even our enemies, but today even this explanation seems insufficiently humanist to me.

The plagues were really bad. The Nile, the source of drinking water and irrigation, turned to blood. People were beset by frogs (possibly in mockery of Egyptian gods), lice, predators, cattle disease, and skin boils. It hailed. Locusts ate the crops. Darkness left them in ignorance and fear for three days. Finally, each Egyptian firstborn child died. Depriving myself of ten drops of wine when I am prescribed four glasses anyway hardly counts as empathy.

Whether we understand the Exodus as myth or history, we can't step into the story to change it. To make a difference, we have to act in the real world. As much as possible, we should cooperate with those who might otherwise be our enemies to improve life for all.

So here's ten solutions with which we can "unplague" our world:

- Clean water.
- Religious tolerance.
- Sanitation. Wildlife sanctuaries.
- Humane treatment of domesticated animals.
- Medicine.
- Rebuilding after extreme weather.
- Sustainable crops.
- Education to light the darkness.
- Peace, so children aren't punished for the consequences of today's status quo.

Stand up for a better world however you can. Do it in a way that "feels right," yes, but also really make a difference. Let's unplague houses. Let's use our freedom to write another Jewish story.

Tucker Lieberman's work has appeared in Zeek, Jewish Mosaic Ariga, and the Mayyim Hayyim and JVoices blogs. He recently published "Thoughts and Prayers Corporation" (Amazon Kindle).



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The Seder and The Haggadah

What is a Haggadah?

The Haggadah is the book that is used during the Seder on Passover eve (outside of Israel, we hold Seders on the first two evenings of Passover - this year, March 30 and 31).

The word Haggadah means “telling,” as its primary purpose is to facilitate the retelling the story of the Exodus from Egypt. It also guides participants through the ritual-rich Seder meal, indicating when and how each rite is performed.

It is said that the Haggadah is the most commonly printed Jewish book. Indeed, walk into your local Judaica store, and you’ll be greeted by dozens of Haggadahs, each offering unique commentary, illustrations and translations.

When picking a Haggadah, it is advisable that you choose one that features Hebrew texts alongside an accurate translation into the language of your choice. After all, its purpose is to help you tell the story of the Exodus.

You will want to have a Haggadah for every participant in your Seder so that everyone can follow along.

The Importance of Telling

The word “Haggadah” comes from the word “vehigaadato,” “And you shall tell,” from the verse, “And you shall tell to your son on that day [the eve of Passover], ‘It is because of what the L-rd did for me when I went free from Egypt.’”

When the Jewish people were redeemed from slavery, Moses commanded the nation to remember that day, as it was the day G-d took them out from the house of bondage and made them into a free people. He then instructed the Jewish people to recount the events of this day to their children, so that the story would be passed on from generation to generation.

In the words of the Talmud, “In every generation a person is obligated to view themselves as if they personally left Egypt.” In the Haggadah itself it says, “And even if we were all wise, all men of understanding, all elders, all knowledgeable of the Torah, it would be incumbent upon us to speak of the Exodus from Egypt.”

Authorship

The core text of the Haggadah is found in the book of Deuteronomy, in the verses farmers would recite when thanking G-d for taking their ancestors out of Egypt and bringing them to the Promised Land.

The Haggadah also contains the Hallel prayer, which contains selections from King David’s Psalms.

Many elements of the Haggadah are found in the Mishnah, which was

finalized in the first century. The Talmud records a major disagreement between the sages Rav and Shmuel (in approx. 230-250 CE) on how the Haggadah should be structured. In practice, it has become common to include the texts recorded by both rabbis in a formula that was crystallized by the late Medieval period.

Content

The Haggadah follows a 15-step procedure.

Kadesh – Sanctify the holy day over a cup of wine.

Urchatz – Wash hands without reciting the blessing.

Karpas – Dip a small piece of a vegetable in salt water.

Yachatz – Take the middle matzah and split it in half, setting aside the larger half to be used as the *afikoman*.

Maggid – Recite the story of the Exodus in great detail.

Rachtzah – Wash hands for the matzah.

Motzi Matzah – Recite the blessing over the matzah, and eat the required quantity of matzah.

Maror – Eat the bitter herbs after dipping them into charoset, a sweet, sticky paste of nuts and fruits.

Korech – Eat a sandwich of matzah and maror (again, dipped in *charoset*).

Shulchan Orech – The meal begins.

Tzafun – The *afikoman* is now eaten.

Beirach – *Birkat Hamazon*, the Grace After Meals, is now recited.

Hallel – Recite songs and praise to G-d.

Nirtzah – The Seder is now concluded.

Wishing all of the Shalom Magazine readership an amazing Passover holiday. If you are looking to join a Passover Seder, please email [rabbi@](mailto:rabbi@wwjewish.org)

wwjewish.org to find a Seder near you.

Rabbi Moshe Y. Bleich is the director of the Wellesley-Weston Chabad.



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Jewish Superheroes in Hollywood

By Dr. Rebecca Housel



Black Panther is not the first black superhero to appear on screen, but he is the first black superhero who is not a parody or joke *a la Meteor Man* (1993) or a blood-thirsty vampire like *Blade* (1998). Instead, Black Panther is the first black superhero to not only represent Africa itself, but an evolved way of life. A better world than the one most of us live in today. The film, *Black Panther*, was unique in so many ways, not the least of which was that it is the only male-focused superhero film to portray

women as stronger, more formidable, and even more heroic than the men. The movie has sold just shy of one-billion dollars at the box office, too. A mostly black cast, black director, black writers...and a huge success. And, it all started with two Jews in 1966, Stan Lee (aka Stanley Lieber) and Jack Kirby (aka Jacob Kurtzberg).

No one had yet publicly imagined a world where integrity and honor ruled, where technology had advanced, as well as society, and all deriving from a people fighting for their rights in 1960's America after hundreds of years of oppression and slavery. Stan Lee and Jack Kirby were able to not only imagine, but articulate, what no one else could because Jewish people have also been oppressed. In fact, we were nearly annihilated not even 20 years before Black Panther first appeared in an issue of *Fantastic Four*. But Lee and Kirby didn't stop there. Luke Cage, who debuted in comics in 1972, enjoyed his own TV series on Netflix (2016), and Falcon, who first appeared in *Captain America* in 1969 (and even took over as Captain America after Steve Rogers retired), were early African-American superheroes in the Marvel line up. Thanks to the visionary leadership of Lee and Kirby, children who share an African heritage around the world got to see superheroes who look like they do on a giant silver screen. What was once considered "low culture" is now the thing that has elevated our

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Jewish Superheroes in Hollywood

culture and society to a place it has literally never seen before today.

Comic books are magic in that way. It's a safe space to imagine a better world. *Wonder Woman* was not created by Jews, but she was brought to life on the big screen by Jewish-Israeli model and actress, Gal Gadot. Despite countries like Lebanon banning the film, *Wonder Woman* broke records for having a film carried by a female lead and female superhero, selling \$900-million world-wide. The audience may not realize that a script for the film started with Joss Whedon more than a decade ago - famed creator of the cult-hit, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and most recently, the director of *Agents of Shield*, another Marvel TV spin-off. But Hollywood execs had no confidence in a female superhero film. Boy, were they wrong! And, I'm awfully glad it was a Jew who turned that tide.

Gal Gadot is beautiful - inside and out. She acted with integrity both on and off screen, standing up against the oppression of women in Hollywood by speaking out against it. She represents not just the power of women to earn big-money at the box office, but a new acceptance of diversity in superheroes, in much the same way Chadwick Boseman brings *Black Panther* to a wider audience. For decades, Hollywood mainly used black casts for slave films or things like Blaxploitation and parodies. Women were also type-cast, relegated to submissive roles in film, often being connected to a man or talking about men - hence the creation of the Bechdel test. When a woman was better than a man on screen, she'd usually die. That's something female comic book writer, Gail Simone, railed against of in her early blog, *Women in Refrigerators*, noting that women would often end up dead or kidnapped or victims of crimes in comic books (and Disney films,



major motion pictures and TV shows). DC Comics, home to *Wonder Woman*, ended up hiring Simone to write for comics like *Red Sonja* and *Batgirl* in 1999 to usher in change for the 21st century. Nearly twenty-years later, change is finally happening. For all of us.

While we are a long way from seeing fair representations on the silver screen, it is comic book adaptations like *Black Panther* and *Wonder Woman* that are paving the way to a better, brighter future. One where girls can see themselves as doing more than saving the world from bad face cream a la *Catwoman* (2004) and children with a diverse cultural heritage can see themselves as smart and powerful...true superheroes.

And, it's all thanks to Jewish talent. That's something to be proud of.

Stan Lee is someone I actually know personally. We were on tour together for three years with Wizard World, appearing in nearly 26 cities for Comic Cons all over North America. During that time, I got to know Stan "The Man" Lee fairly well, even having had the pleasure of celebrating his 90th birthday with him in 2012. We spoke multiple times about what he was thinking in the early days of Marvel Comics. I once asked him if he knew back then that comics would one day be a billion-dollar industry bringing change to the world. Do you know what he said?

"No, we had no idea...but we had hope!"

Today, thanks to talents like Lee, I do, too.

Dr. Rebecca Housel is an international author, editor and speaker trademarked as the #PopCultureProfessor. She is best known for her books sold in nine languages and 130 countries in the Philosophy and Pop Culture series with Wiley. Her blog, RebeccaHousel.com, has over two-million readers from 130 countries.

Pictures: Marvel and Warner Bros.

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Counting the Omer

By Rabbi Katy Z. Allen

On the second night of Passover, we begin counting the Omer. We count the 49 days from crossing into freedom to receiving the Torah, the 49 days from redemption to revelation, from Passover to Shavuot, from the Sea of Reeds to the Mountain of Sinai, from the depths of despair to the heights of joy, from physical enslavement to spiritual freedom, from the barley harvest offering to the wheat harvest offering, from the food of animals offering to the food of humans offering. We count 49 days. We count seven weeks of seven. We count seven weeks of Divine Attributes. We count a myriad of human emotions. We count the nights.

I invite you to count the *Omer*. First we say the blessing:

*Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam,
asher kid-shanu b'mitzvotav, vitzivanu, al sefirat ha'omer.*

Blessed are you Adonai our G'd, ruler of the universe,
who sanctifies us with its commandments and
commands regarding the counting of the omer.

Then we count:

HaYom yom echad laomer. Today is Day 1 of the *Omer*.

The first night of Passover the Moon will be full. The second night will be night #1 of the Omer. The Moon will be starting to wane. We will be starting our journey from the Sea to the Mountain.

What do you want to count?

Whom would you choose to remember?

What do you wish to mark?

Where do you dream to be?

What do you desire to notice?

What is the source of meaning?

Each day in the counting of the omer, each *S'firah* day, is connected to a combination of Divine Attributes, the Divine *S'firot*, or luminances. As we count, we are encouraged to engage with these attributes, both those emanating from the Divine, and those emanating from ourselves, as a way to help improve ourselves, to make, step-by-step, an upward physical and spiritual journey from the Sea to the Mountain, from Redemption from Slavery to Revelation of Torah.

These are the seven Divine Attributes associated with Counting the Omer:

1. *Chesed* - Lovingkindness
2. *Gevurah* - Justice and Discipline
3. *Tiferet* - Harmony, Compassion
4. *Netzach* - Endurance
5. *Hod* - Humility
6. *Y'sod* - Bonding
7. *Malchut* - Sovereignty, Leadership

Each week during the *Omer*, we take one Divine Attribute and we connect it in turn each day to each of the other Attributes. We can also take a bit of nature to connect to these Attributes. We begin with the Moon, watching it diminish in size and brightness, and as we watch the natural cycle of the Moon, we connect it to the first of the seven Divine Attributes, *Chesed* (Lovingkindness). Although the size of the Moon may appear to us to be diminishing, in fact, it does not change, just our perception of it, due to its illumination by the Sun, makes it appear to diminish. But we are headed toward *Rosh Chodesh*, the New Moon, and in Judaism, the new month, and so, as we think of Lovingkindness/Lovingkindness, let us feel the love G-d feels for us, let us allow that sense of being loved to grow over this week, and let us make that sense

of G-d's love manifest in the world to a greater and greater degree through how we interact with others, by being kind, sharing our knowledge and our wealth.

I invite you to take the attribute of the week and match it to the next attribute in the list, add in your question, take a look at the natural world around you and then put it all together in your heart and your mind and your soul.

May you find yourself journeying from enslavement to freedom, and may that journey give you the strength to walk beside others and support them as they, too, journey toward greater freedom.

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



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James Slovin Named to Lead Major Gifts Fundraising for March of the Living, Mass. Chapter

Well-known community activist takes on new challenge

By Stanley Hurwitz

Lifelong community activist and noted businessman James 'Jimmy' Slovin of Foxboro has been named Major Gifts Officer for the Massachusetts Chapter of March of the Living (MOTL), an annual educational program that brings Jewish teens from around the world to Poland and Israel to study the Holocaust, their heritage, and the roots of prejudice and hate.

Making the announcement was Irv Kempner of Sharon, Chair of MOTL's Massachusetts Chapter (<https://motlnewengland.org/>). He said, "Jim is a stalwart addition to MOTL's team." MOTL has brought 260,000 teens from 52 countries on the pilgrimage. The Kempner Family Foundation is a key supporter of MOTL's scholarships.

The timing of the upcoming trip, April 8 - 22, holds special significance. Participants will spend Holocaust Remembrance Day (Yom HaShoah) in a march from the Auschwitz to Birkenau concentration camps in Poland, led by Israeli President Reuven Rivlin. Days later, they will celebrate Israel's 70th Independence Day (Yom Ha'atzmaut) in Jerusalem. Being in Israel's capital has added meaning since the US announced plans to move its embassy from Tel Aviv.

2018 Mass. MOTL participants are:

- Yehuda Buff, Brookline High
- Giselle Fellman, Gann Academy
- Ari Kwitkin-Close, Sharon High
- Hanna Zar, Maimonides
- Noah Mamane, Brookline High School
- Micah Kanter, Providence Country Day
- Shelly Edry, Gann Academy
- Maya Mokady, Gann Academy

Slovin said, "I'm concerned about Jewish continuity, inspiring future leaders, and anti-Israel, anti-Semitic activities on campuses. It's impactful when thousands of Jewish kids share this experience, and alumni are ready to combat the apathy of others."

In his professional life, Slovin owned or worked in independent agencies for four decades. For five years he served as Secretary/Treasurer of



the Metro-South Independent Insurance Agents Association (MSIIAA). As part of the Pan-Mass Challenge for the Jimmy Fund / Dana-Farber Cancer Center, Slovin participated in nine consecutive 180-mile PMC rides, logging over 10,000 miles training and racing and raising over \$31,000.

In the Jewish community, Slovin held leadership posts with the Brotherhood of Temple Israel of Sharon, served as President of the B'nai B'rith Sports Lodge, Vice President of the Greater Boston Council, and served on the B'nai B'rith District One Board of Governors and on the ADL's N. E. Regional Board. He worked on the capital drive for the Striar JCC in Stoughton, and was key to the success of the Northeast Regional Junior Maccabiah Games. He's active with the YMHA/Hecht House Alumni Association and chairs its Reunion Program Directory.

Anyone interested in learning more about MOTL and/or making a Major Gifts donation can contact Jim at jaslov1@msn.com.

Donations of \$1,000 for March of the Living 2018 will be matched dollar for dollar by the Kempner Foundation. Donations may be made online at <https://motlnewengland.org/>. To donate to the Friends of the MOTL Endowment Fund, tax-deductible donations to the extent

allowed by law may be sent to: CJP - Kempner Family Foundation, c/o Combined Jewish Philanthropies, Kraft Family Building, 126 High Street, Boston, Mass. 02110. To ensure proper credit, on the memo line write "March of the Living." For more about donations and/or participation in Friends of MOTL and teen MOTL trips, contact IrvKempner@gmail.com at (617) 285-8620, or visit <https://motlnewengland.org>.

Don't Miss This Moving Story of Courage and Hope...

'Always Good With a Needle: My Journey from Radom to Redemption'

By Marlene Freidenreich Kempner

Although the numbers tattooed on Marlene's arm fade with age – they never truly disappear.

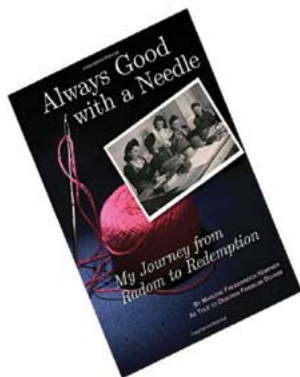
In her teens and 20's, Marlene Freidenreich Kempner of Radom, Poland, struggled to survive and safeguard her family from the Nazis. Ultimately, after narrowly escaping death in labor and death camps, only she and her younger sister survived, blessed with the opportunity to begin life again in a new land.

In her 94th year, the author summoned the courage to share her story - a cautionary tale of terror that also testifies to the power of courage and hope.

Proceeds from book sales will help fund scholarships to send teens on the N. E. March of the Living heritage trips to Poland and Israel in 2018 and 2019.

Donations of \$500 or more to March of the Living will receive a free book. Donations of \$1,000 will be matched dollar for dollar. Tax-deductible donations may be made online: <http://motlnewengland.org/>

Order from Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/Always-Good-Needle-Journey-Redemption-ebook/dp/B01EER05HS> \$15 per paperback copy.



Judaism in Italy

By Joseph Frank

Where do you think the oldest Jewish community in Europe is? Somewhere in Russia? Maybe Greece? If you are like me, you might be surprised to find that Italy is actually home to the oldest Jewish population, which is in Rome, according to myjewishlearning.com. You may be further shocked, like I was, to learn that Jews first arrived in Rome over one hundred years before the Common Era, years before the destruction of the Second Temple.

Before I left Massachusetts to study abroad in Florence, I had no idea that there was a legacy of Judaism in Italy. I hadn't met many Italian Jews before arriving in the Mediterranean country, and I thought the country was generally a Jew-less state. I learned quickly that my assumptions were very wrong.

Florence is a gorgeous city; I highly recommend visiting. Like many European cities, it is filled with churches that boast impressive architecture, like the Cattedrale di Santa Maria del Fiore (commonly referred to as "The Duomo") in the center of the city, or the Basilica di Santa Croce to the east. But lesser known is the Great Synagogue of Florence, which was finished in 1882. With marble floors and stained-glass windows, it's the kind of synagogue that is unlike anything you'd expect to find in the United States. Its massive dome and arches are similar to other majestic places of worship in Florence, but rather than paintings of biblical scenes on the inside, the walls are covered with patterns reminiscent of an oriental rug. Personally, I found it a pleasant change to visit a landmark of my religion, rather than of Christianity.

The first records of Jews in Florence date back to the 15th century. Indeed, for centuries, Jews were forced to live in a ghetto inside the city until they finally gained full citizenship in 1861, according to the website for the Jewish Community of Florence.

Even today, the Great Synagogue of Florence still holds services and is home to the Jewish community. There are bar and bat mitzvah services, weddings, and holiday services. The synagogue doubles as a museum where visitors can learn about Florence's Jewish past, view



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Judaism in Italy

Jewish artifacts, and admire the synagogue.

Chabad is active in Florence, too, and is a helpful resource to Jews in the area, especially young students studying abroad, like myself. They hold Shabbat dinners and other events. I attended a Shabbat dinner hosted by the Chabad of Tuscany, and there were dozens of people there. They came from all over the world – Italy, America, France, Latin America, Canada, etc. – but we all had Judaism in common.

Moving south, I found Jewish connections in Rome as well, which is unsurprising given the long history of Jews in Rome, as I mentioned earlier. While I did not have the chance to spend Shabbat with the Roman Jewish community or to visit the majestic Great Synagogue of Rome, I was able to still find Jewish connections, ones that even reminded me of Passover, as I will explain next.

When visiting the ruins at the Roman Forum, my tour guide stopped my group in front of the Arch of Titus, a nearly two-thousand-year-old monument that celebrates Titus' conquest of Jerusalem in 70 AD and the ensuing march of Jewish slaves to Rome. It was an unavoidable reminder of the long history of anti-Semitism in Europe. For thousands of years, Jews were not supposed to even walk under the arch, according to a rule from the ancient Roman Jewish community, a rule that was only lifted a few decades ago. Nearby is the Colosseum, which was built partially by

those same Jewish slaves depicted on the Arch of Titus. On Passover, we talk about Jewish enslavement in Egypt, but just as horrendous was the enslavement of Jews in Rome.

This Passover, it is important to remember that even though we are no longer slaves in Egypt, we have been slaves in other places, both literally and figuratively. Passover gives us time to reflect on the persecution of Jews wherever and whenever it has occurred. Standing by the Arch of Titus, I was reminded of the history of anti-Semitism that reaches all the way back into ancient times.

Other cities in Italy, such as Pisa, Siena, Pitigliano, and Livorno, have Jewish histories. And now, when I look at Italy, I see Judaism everywhere. I see modern Jewish communities, and Jewish history that is bittersweet. Jewish history and Jewish communities are often found in the places that you least expect them.

I am only a month into my four-month semester. All over the world, there is so much Jewish history to learn and there are so many Jews to meet.

Joseph Frank is a junior at UMass Amherst from Foxboro, majoring in marketing and minoring in psychology, who writes for the Massachusetts Daily Collegian.

Photo of the Great Synagogue of Florence by Max Bell.



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Jews and the Carnival

By Shirley Nigri Farber

Brazilians are known all over the world for their extravagant Carnival celebrations, and Jews living in Brazil are not immune to the colorful and popular festival of music, dance and provocative costumes. But this year's carnival parade in Rio had a special meaning for some of the estimated 40,000 Rio de Janeiro Jews.



When I read that this year's Portela, a samba school in Rio de Janeiro, was going to present a theme about the Jewish immigration to Brazil during the time of the Inquisition, I decided to travel to the Carnival parade. I haven't gone to the parade in Rio since I got married in 2001 and moved to the Boston area. But while I was living in Rio, I used to go every year to cover the Sambodrome parade as a journalist.

In February, 2001, working as a correspondent for the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA), my report on the competition resulted in an article called *Jewish Culture Amid Madness of Carnival*. That year, the samba school Paraiso do Tuiuti brought to the Carnival Jewish symbols

such as the Star of David, menorahs, and tefillin, as they presented a story about how African slaves were influenced by Jews and Arabs who fled the Spanish Inquisition.

The Portela theme of 2018 was created by Carnival producer Rosa Magalhães to depict the saga of immigrants in search of freedom and peace. Magalhães is also the creator of the closing ceremony of the 2016 summer Olympics in Rio.

The school wanted to tell the story of how Jews fled from Europe because of the Inquisition, went to Recife (Pernambuco) in the Northeast of Brazil, then ruled by Holland, and had to flee again, this time to New Amsterdam, due to the Portuguese reconquering the area. Shalom Magazine readers had a chance to read about the connection between Brazilian Jews and the early days of New York City in an article by Ann Helen Wainer in the last Chanukah/Winter edition.

Portela is one of the largest and most traditional samba schools in the city of Rio De Janeiro, and was the champion of the 2017 Carnival parade. It is the school with the largest amount of championship titles, 22 in total; their colors are blue and white, and their symbols is an eagle.

The Carnival moves the community and the economy as it creates an industry inside poor areas producing costumes and floats and teaching dancing, music and the skills necessary for the once-a-year parade. The parade at the Sambodrome is also a tourist event, attracting people from various parts of the country and the world.

Brazilian Jews have always participated in the Carnival, some by dancing in the parade, some by helping the schools with funds, and others by cheering the live event.

When Portela announced their 2018 theme, the Jewish community in Rio began to get involved. For about a year before the event, people got together to examine ways by which to participate, which resulted

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Jews and the Carnival

in about 60 members of the community performing with Portela, most of them in handmade costumes created just for the event.

Luiz Maurovitch, president of Club Hebraica (equivalent to the JCC in Rio), is one community member who became involved early on. He paraded along with Portela at the samba avenue, and when the school won fourth place, he was seen holding an Israeli flag during the winner's parade. He said, "I congratulate all members of the school for telling the story of our people. It was very emotional when the Israeli flag was presented and the spectators applauded."

Although the intention was to tell the story of Jewish immigration, the greater theme of world migratory crisis and the spread of religious intolerance among peoples took over the parade. When during the parade, an inflatable boat appeared with people dressed as refugees just like the ones we see on TV arriving in Europe's shores, it received huge applause, showing the true welcoming spirit of Brazilians.

Ilana Cohen, director of Casa RAI (an assisted living organization for Jews with disabilities) said, "It was nice to see that the community got together to participate in the homage by Portela. I think they could have used more explicit Jewish symbols in the parade, but the school touched the reality of immigration in a nice way."

While walking among the dancers to take pictures of the parade, I was a bit disappointed by the lack of Jewish symbols in the Portela segment. I was expecting to take photos of something Jewish just like I took in 2001, which were publicized all over the world. But this year, I



saw one Star of David and two men with tzitzit on the top of the float, and the rest was very subtle.

Designer Tamar Zisman saw the parade on TV and said, "I didn't see much of Judaism other than the Star of David on the dancer costume."

This year's parade included a lot of political criticism, because the country is going through a political crisis with a bad economy, unemployment and governmental corruption. But the happiness of Carnival goes to wash it all away. After all, it is only Carnival, the world's largest event of its kind. For me, it is a mix of Macy's Thanksgiving Parade with Broadway shows. It has music, dance, costumes, floats, and a great energy, while telling a story, all while intermingling the rich and the poor in the same choreography.



Brazil is a Catholic country, but is well known by its religious tolerance and its people, with their warm and easy lifestyle. My parents arrived from Lebanon with their families in the late 50s, without knowing the language,

and with little money. We always felt very welcomed in Brazil. I never felt as a "first generation Brazilian"; no one ever asked me if my parents were immigrants.

Currently, Brazil is receiving new waves of immigrants. There are Muslim refugees, many from Syria and Lebanon, and Latin Americans coming from impoverished countries such as Bolivia and Venezuela. Soon they will all be dancing together in the Carnival parade.

Photos by Shirley Farber and Carlos Vieira (of the Israeli flag).

For more pictures of the event, please check my Instagram @shirleyfarber.

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Naked Holiness



By Rabbi Dr. Yosef Glassman, M.D.

Clothing. An enigma of sorts. An expression of color, of style. A message, a conversation. Protection, warmth. Practical, functional, absorbent. What is the function of clothing? Clothes are the ultimate expression of superficiality, of externality, almost of apparent meaninglessness. The quintessential secular purist may say that there are no societal need for clothing, other than for warmth in cold regions. But, other than for warmth, does

one truly societally require clothing?

In a discussion of clothing, it is easy to point to the story of *Adam* and *Chava* (Hebrew for Eve) with their famous fig leaf covering, shamefully worn after the having eaten the forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. The story goes that after that fateful moment, they discovered not that they were naked, but rather the shame of their nakedness. Is this why we dress today? Shame? The secular hedonist may argue that the Torah story is a parable created to encourage people to get dressed.

Nakedness, the hedonist may add, is freedom from restriction, and represents boundlessness, bravery, and comfort with one's self. Is there a moral reason that one should not buck the establishment on this issue? To throw off the system? Overturn The Man? Isn't boundless, shameless nakedness the ideal state?

Societal laws and norms perhaps restrict us, make us dress for work, and school, but is this justified? Is society too traditionally bound to the Adam and Eve story? Should the religious monuments of clothing come down in the public area? Are most secular hedonists offended by this "forced" Biblical modesty? If so, where are the protests and parades? There haven't been too many anti-religionists naked at work lately.

While the point may be extreme, society indeed, has a love-hate relationship with clothing. In certain beach-bound areas of the world, bikinis and heels are the norm on the street, as minimalist as it may appear. More extreme attitudes toward a lack of clothing exist in areas around the equator, where, similar to early Eden, nakedness may bear no shame. But this is happening in America too. After all, with the click of a button, nakedness is notoriously normal, accepted, and unabashed.

What is the problem? Is there a higher meaning to clothing, and the areas which they usually cover?

For those who are not currently unclothed on a full-time basis, and have begrudgingly accepted the basic societal norms of covering one's body in public, one must truly ask "Why?" Surely, the secular hedonist doesn't accept the idea of Biblical shame. Does secular shame exist in the "free-minded" scientific world, or has the divorce of modernity from religion widened the dress-code gap? There is no rational explanation for covering sexually associated organs specifically, per se. And the combination of internet, smartphones and alcohol are turning nakedness into a Western norm.

Yet, is there any spirituality in the world of physical clothing? Let's see. Einstein told us that energy equals mass times the square of the speed of light ($E=mc^2$). This means that any mass (even clothing) is energy at its core. After all, the Big Bang began with pure energy that expanded, hardened and became the physicality of the universe. Thus, clothing, in the world of mass, has its roots in the world of pure energy - the spiritual world, along with our bodies.

Enter Torah, where clothing is indeed a conscious expression of higher worlds, not a simple fashion statement, not even a covering to fit into societal norms. Additionally, every physical expression in this world (*Olam Ha'zeh*) corresponds to a spiritual expression in the world of truth (*Olam Ha'Emet*), which is the next world. At a most basic level, clothing, or, in Hebrew, *bEgEd*, is rooted in the letters, *bet gimel dalet*, implying trickery. The word *bOgEd* means to deceive. And, at a basic level, clothing, indeed, is not the true self. It is merely an expression of the self at an external level. At best it is an opaque mirror of the self, but the Torah takes it further.

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Our mystical tradition teaches that the expression of clothing comes from the aspect of “*Chashmalim*.” This literally translates in modern Hebrew as “electricities,” yet the Torah definition of *Chashmal* is a type of angel that is intermittently quiet (“*chash*”) and speak (“*mal*”), according to the Rambam. The name implies an oscillating back and forth unseen entity. This idea is well known in science, where electrons, protons and neutrons oscillate in and out of a virtual reality. In the Torah description of this reality, the *Chashmalim* “dress” and surround the world of *Adam Kadmon* (lit. Primordial Reflection of the Infinite), which is the highest spiritual world before the Infinite, yet that which mirrors the highest Infinite Light. It is the world from which the earthly human was modeled, according to Kabbalah.

Adam (commonly translated as “human”) is derived from the the root letters “*aleph*,” referring to the *Aluf* or Expert, and the letters *dalet* and *mem*, implying *dam* (Hebrew for “blood”) as well as *do’meh*, meaning “resemble.” Putting that together, the human resembles the expert Creator, and is indeed flowing with the supernal blood of the expert Creator, despite the fact that the Infinite has no body. Yet, of course, it is not our body that resembles the expert Creator, rather our intellect, extrapolated from *Adam Kadmon*, a projected light onto the microscopic Earth stage in human form.

In that vein, when people get dressed every day, humans mimic the world of *Adam Kadmon*, and connect to those energies of the *Chashmalim*, to which the Infinite Creator endowed very unique powers to dress us. The more consciously and strategically the Jew covers his or herself, the more the Jew connects to encompassing the

energetic clothing of the *Chashmalim*, the world of Adam Kadmon, and, ultimately, the Unified Infinite Creator bearing the Ineffable Holy Name. Surely, when the Children of Israel display clean clothing, the sanctification of the Holy Name is even further enhanced and praised.

And, certainly, there are levels of bodily coverings. Though the human is covered in hair, the hair which emanates from the head has special significance. The head is considered the holiest area of the body, housing our inner *chochmah* (wisdom), *binah* (understanding), and the highest level of *da’at* (knowledge), given by the Creator. From this holy place emanates the hair on top of the head over the brain, which is likened by our Sages to the Holy of Holies to the original Temple in Jerusalem. Yet, despite hairs’ highest origins, once external, scalp hair represents strict and harsh judgments (*gevurot*) in the mystical tradition. Strict judgments in Torah, are always derived from the highest level of love from the Infinite.

Thus, Jews are encouraged to limit exposure of their scalp hair. The hair of the head has holy spiritual roots, yet manifests as external judgements. Perhaps it can be compared with (*l’havdil*) to having \$5 million dollars in one’s pocket. Typically, in that case one would not even let the corner of such a stack of heavy bills even peek out one’s pocket, giving no hint to the wealth.

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Similarly, in some ways, gazing at the physical counterpart of human wisdom, understanding and knowledge on top of the head can be problematic. Pondering the hair on another's head may manifest in judgments on both sides, despite hairs' roots in innate holiness.

Scholars of the mystical teachings of Torah point out that staring at the hair of others may even extract and deplete spiritual energies, by virtue of that gaze. This is a particularly acute risk for women's immense power, as men tend to fall into the temptation of extracting spiritual energies from women's hair. This lock-stare can lead to strict judgments at many levels, particularly outside of a marital relationship. Thus, Torah places a strong emphasis on covering one's head and/or keeping one's scalp hair short, as unseen as possible.

In contrast, the beard, an external reflection of higher spiritual wisdom emanating from the face, represents *chasadim* (kindnesses), according to the mystical tradition. The beard is considered like "beams of light," a visual form of *chochmah* (wisdom), yet projected in the externals of *chesed* (kindness). This parallels the Infinite Creator whose infinite wisdom formed the universe, yet whose physical manifestation

of that wisdom is in *chesed* (kindness, or unconditional giving), and does not require covering, rather, the opposite. This reflects a general Kabbalistic concept: male energies are expressed as superficially and publicly external, while female energies are deeply and powerfully internal, expressing themselves in untold ways.

The remainder of the external, hair covered, physical body also possesses a certain holiness - though at various levels - and represent other manifestations in the upper worlds. Most obviously, the intimate perineal region of the body is an area which must be covered by virtue of the fact that it represents the foundation (*yesod*) of creation. This area of the body is where reproduction occurs, and is the place where a man and woman can connect to the Infinite Creator in the most profound of ways. Again, in this case, men, physically speaking, are superficially external, whereas women are deeply internal, reflecting their corresponding spiritual worlds.

Thus, it is important to keep the perineal area of the body covered thoroughly at all times, except during those most intimate of connections between husband and wife. Surely the remainder of the body is

holy, and commands the definition of "nakedness" to one degree or another, depending on how close to the torso it is. The torso of the human represents the divine emanation of balanced beauty (*tiferet*). The feet are the least in holiness, as are hands, as useful as they are, since they both are frequently dirtied, requiring constant re-purification throughout the day with ritual hand washing.

When all is said and done, the body, being the clothing of the soul, has intrinsic holiness, and, as with anything holy in this physical world, its covering has vast spiritual implications. What the secular purist may have right is that, in the ideal world, nakedness represents a paradise of sorts, as *Adam* and *Chava* (Eve) originally enjoyed. Yet, until Jews rectify the original pre-shame sin, via Torah and *mitzvot*, Israel and the world are not quite shamelessly naked yet. Israel and the world must patiently wait - fully and beautifully clothed - until the Infinite Redeemer redeems us all from the shame of duality. May the imminent and urgent Unification occur on the next page.

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

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Questions to G-d from Parkland



By Tamar Lilienthal

We all grow up being taught that G-d took the Jews out of Egypt “*B’Yad Chazakah U’V’Zroah Netuyah*” (with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm). We are told of all of the miracles that He performed: ten epic plagues, the splitting of a sea, and so much more. It all seems like it could come straight out of a Hollywood film (so much so that Charlton Heston turned

it into one!). A powerful and benevolent G-d saves His people from bondage...what could get any better than that?

But how about the 210 years that this G-d allowed an innocent nation to remain enslaved?

How about all of the newborn Jewish boys who this G-d allowed to drown in the Nile at the hands of Pharaoh’s subjects?

Why don’t we ever question why G-d sent the Jewish people through so many trials and tribulations? Why don’t we ask Him why He allowed such horrible suffering for so many years?

On February 14, tragedy struck my town. At Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, a shooter gunned down 14 students and three staff members. I have many friends who attend MSD, and the feeling I felt that day as I waited for texts from them, not knowing if they were dead or alive, is something I will never forget.

Thankfully, all of my friends left unharmed, but they lost friends of their own. All of a sudden, what was once our small, quiet town became a crime scene, as well as the focus of national media attention. Our parks became memorials for the victims, our roads became plastered with the slogan #MSDStrong, and every day, another funeral service was held at one of our city’s synagogues, churches, or funeral homes. To an outsider, it would have looked like a war zone. As for me, I saw my home in a way I had never before imagined.

As their prototype “religious” friend, many of my friends have looked to me for answers. But I don’t have any. I have questioned G-d just as

much as they have. Why a G-d who is benevolent and gracious would allow such a tragedy to occur makes no sense to me. I have sobbed, I have gotten angry, and I have spent numerous days staring blankly at my prayer book, unable to get out a word.

A few days after the shooting, I attended the funeral of one of the 14-year-old victims. The service was, of course, filled with raw emotion, and beautiful memories were shared about the student who had passed away. But what struck me the most was when the parents stood up to speak - the mother, completely overcome with grief, insisted that she still believed that the world was an overwhelmingly good place. Her daughter had just been murdered by an individual who specifically sought to take away lives. She was burying her child! And yet, she was still able to affirm that the world was good.

Much like we don’t know why G-d allowed the Jewish people to go through slavery, I don’t know why G-d allowed the Douglas shooting to happen. And I’ll keep questioning Him for as long as I live. But as I try to move forward, I will also make an effort to notice all of the blessings that G-d gives me every day. Because, like that victim’s mother said, in spite of this horrible tragedy, I still believe that there is much more good in the world than there is evil.

Granted, G-d is not splitting any seas for me. But He has blessed me with an incredible community that has come together to support one another at this difficult time. He has blessed me with family and friends who love and care about me, and who have held my hand or wiped away my tears whenever I have needed it. G-d has given me shelter, sustenance, and a beautiful world to wake up to every morning.

Yes, right now that world looks really ugly.

But for as long as I believe that there is still more good in the world than evil, I will try my hardest to bring out that good in myself and in others. Hopefully, that’ll bring us toward a brighter future.

Tamar is currently a high school senior at Rohr Bais Chaya Academy in Tamarac, Florida. She is an avid reader and writer, and hopes to study in Israel for a year after high school.

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WOMEN LEADERS IN THE PASSOVER STORY



By Sandra Lilienthal, Ed.D.

Pesach is around the corner, coming earlier than usual this year. I couldn't avoid noting that we will be having our Seder (s) still in the month of March, the month in which we celebrate women. Although women seem to be absent from our Haggadah, they were very much a part of the Pesach story. Rabbi Akiva, one of the most famous rabbis of all times, stated: "Israel's deliverance was in reward for the righteous women" (Talmud, Sotah 11b). Shifrah, Puah, Yocheved, Miriam, and Pharaoh's daughter all were an integral part of the story which led to the redemption of the Children of Israel from Egyptian bondage.

Shifrah and Puah were the midwives who helped the Israelite women give birth. When Pharaoh ordered them to kill every son born to an Israelite woman, they blatantly defied his command. Some consider this to be one of the first Biblical examples of civil disobedience, showing their strong moral compass stood above the more common "not wanting to make waves." At this point in the story, the midwives had no idea they were ultimately saving the future redeemer of the slaves, and with him, all the future generation of Israelites. Their

ethical behavior, though, went even further. As one Midrash tells us, "Not only did the midwives not do what Pharaoh told them, they even dared to do deeds of kindness for the children they saved. On behalf of poor mothers, the midwives would go to the house of rich mothers and collect water and food, which they gave to the poor mothers and thus kept their children alive" (Exodus Rabbah 1:13-1:15)

Yocheved was Moses' mother. When she delivered a baby boy, she was well aware that she had to do something to protect him. Yocheved hid the baby for three months. After three months, afraid that he would be discovered and harmed, she planned a desperate move: she placed her infant son in a basket made of river reeds and put tar on it to make it waterproof. She then sent it down the River Nile, in the hopes that the baby would survive. She sent her daughter, Miriam, to watch over the basket. One would think that Yocheved would want to follow the progress of her son, but that probably would have been too dangerous. And so she did what she had to do, as much as this must have been heartbreaking for her. Because of Miriam's intervention with Pharaoh's daughter, who found and rescued the baby, Yocheved was able to feed and nourish her own son for some time. Only then did she give him over to Pharaoh's daughter.

Miriam, according to our Rabbis, was quite an intelligent little girl! When Pharaoh decreed that the Israelite newborn boys must be killed, Yocheved and her husband separated because they didn't want to lose a child to Pharaoh's decree. But Miriam, who was 6 years old at the time, reminded her father that Pharaoh only decreed the death of the boys, and by choosing to separate from Yocheved, he was imposing the decree on the girls as well. Because of her comments, her parents decided to get back together. It is Miriam who stood guard as the basket with baby Moses floats down the river. It is Miriam who had the guts to ask Pharaoh's daughter if she would like to have a Hebrew woman nurse that baby.

It was also Miriam who had faith that ultimately things would work out, so much so that she brought her tambourines with her as they left Egypt, knowing she would be able to sing and dance in celebration of

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WOMEN LEADERS IN THE PASSOVER STORY

freedom. And although the Bible does not record the complete song of Miriam, the Dead Sea Scrolls have a complete rendition of her song. Some Jews add a cup of water to their Seder table in honor of Miriam, however the idea to include Miriam is not new. In the 10th century, Rav Sherira Gaon related that some people placed three kinds of food at the Seder table honoring Moses, Aaron and Miriam.

Perhaps the most unusual female participation in the Pesach story is that of Pharaoh's daughter. Having been down at the Nile when the basket carrying baby Moses was floating, she realized this was an Israelite child by the weave of the blanket (some commentaries say the weave of the basket), and decided she had to save this baby and make it her own. Pharaoh's daughter took in the child and raised him with love and devotion. Rabbinic commentaries tell us that she used to kiss and hug him, loved him as if he were her own son, and would not allow him out of the royal palace. Realizing her amazing act of courage, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks once said that Pharaoh's daughter saving Moses was the equivalent of Hitler having a daughter who was saving Jews. The Midrash (*Vayikra Rabbah*) tells us that G-d spoke to the daughter of Pharaoh and told her that just as she took Moses as her son, He would take her as His daughter. From now on, her name would be Batya, meaning G-d's daughter.

While each of these women had a different role in the story, there is something we can learn from all of them: we must take action. They all understood, regardless of their faith in G-d, that sitting and waiting for G-d to get things done was not the way to go. They displayed the courage for decisive action, stood for what was right, and took the

risks. They did not wait for signs and miracles. They understood that G-d wants us to act in this world.

In this regard, we should look at the Torah text: the Israelites are running away and reach the Sea of Reeds. Pharaoh's army is behind them, approaching quickly, and it seems they are faced with being captured by the Egyptians or drowning in the sea. Moses begins to pray, and G-d tells him: "Why do you cry out to Me? Speak to the Children of Israel and let them journey forth." It is only after G-d tells Moses and the Children of Israel to take action that He promises Moses that if he lifts up his staff and stretches out his arm, the sea will split. Both the Talmud (Sotah 37a) and the Midrash tell us the story of Nachshon ben Aminadav, who, seeing that no one was taking action, decided to jump into the sea and start walking, and his tribe followed after him. It was because of his action that G-d parted the waters.

Pesach seems to remind us that all of us are required to take action when needed, that G-d expects us to be His partners on making this world a better place. We are required to do what is right here and now. This year, when we sit down for our Seder, let's pause to reflect

on the human qualities we learn from these stories of Shifrah, Puah, Yocheved, Miriam, Batya and Nachshon. Let us pray for courage when faced with adversity, the foresight to act instead of waiting for something to happen, and for the ability to do what is right even when it is unpopular.

Chag Sameach!

Sandra Lilienthal is an adult educator in South Florida. She is the recipient of the Covenant Award for Excellence in Jewish Education. Artwork: Moses and his People by Daniel Schinasi.



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Passover Lessons Toward a Sustainable Environment

By *Richard H. Schwartz, Ph.D.*

In view of the many current environmental crises that face the world today, this is a good time to consider environmental messages related to Passover, and the events and concepts connected to the liberation of the Israelites from Egypt:

1. Today's environmental threats can be compared in many ways to the Biblical ten plagues:

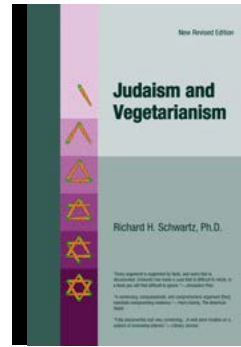
* When we consider the threats to our land, water, and air, we can easily enumerate ten modern "plagues." For example:

- (1) climate change;
- (2) rapid melting of glaciers and polar ice caps;
- (3) destruction of tropical rain forests;
- (4) acid rain;
- (5) soil erosion and depletion;
- (6) loss of biodiversity;
- (7) water pollution;
- (8) air pollution;
- (9) an increase in the number and severity of storms and floods; and
- (10) increased use of pesticides, chemical fertilizer, and other toxic chemicals.

* The Egyptians were subjected to one plague at a time, but the modern environmental 'plagues are threatening us simultaneously.

* The Jews in Goshen were spared the Biblical plagues, but every person on earth is imperiled by the modern 'plagues.'

* Instead of an ancient Pharaoh's heart being hardened, our hearts today have been hardened by the greed, materialism, and waste that are at the root of current environmental threats.



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Passover Lessons Toward a Sustainable Environment

* G-d provided the Biblical plagues to free the Israelites, while today we must apply G-d's teachings in order to save ourselves and our precious but endangered planet.

2. The Passover Seder is a time for questions, including the traditional "four questions." Now, additional questions can be asked related to modern environmental threats. For example: Why is this period different than all other periods? (At all other periods, only local regions faced environmental threats; today, the entire world is threatened.) Why isn't there more activism in the Jewish community (and other communities) about current environmental threats? Why aren't Jewish values applied more toward the alleviation of environmental problems?

3. Rabbi Jay Marcus, rabbi emeritus 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" (desert) 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. The consumption of animal-centered diets 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 an estimated 20 million of the world's people die of hunger and its effects and about 800 million of the world's people are chronically hungry. This simpler diet would also have positive environmental effects, since modern intensive livestock agriculture contributes significantly to climate change, uses vast amounts of water, fuel, chemical fertilizer, pesticides, and other resources, and contributes to the destruction of habitats and many other environmental problems.

4. A popular song at the Seder is "dayenu" (it would have been enough). The message of this song would be very useful today when so many people seek to constantly increase their wealth and amass more possessions, with little thought of the negative environmental consequences.

5. The Talmud indicates that Job's severe punishment occurred because when he was an advisor to Pharaoh, he refused to take a stand when Pharaoh asked him what should be done with regard to the Israelites (Sota 11a). This story can be discussed as a reminder that if we remain neutral and do not get involved in working for a better environment, severe consequences may follow.

6. According to 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). Today, about 70 billion animals are raised annually worldwide for slaughter, mainly on factory farms under very cruel conditions, and raising food and providing water for these animals and getting rid of their wastes cause many environmental problems.

In view of the above points, Passover would be a wonderful time to increasingly apply Jewish values in response to the many current environmental threats to humanity, in efforts to help shift our imperiled planet onto a sustainable path.

*Richard H. Schwartz, Ph.D. is the president emeritus of Jewish Vegetarians of North America (www.JewishVeg.org) and the author of *Judaism and Vegetarianism*, *Judaism and Global Survival*, and *Who Stole My Religion?* Visit www.facebook.org/JewishVeg*

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Criminal Justice Reform: The Passover Story of Our Time

By Cindy Rowe

On Passover, as we sit around the Seder table, we tell the story of how our ancestors freed themselves from slavery, daring to dream about the liberation of our people. We do this not just to remind ourselves of an ancient history lesson, but because in every generation, we are commanded to seek justice, and change systems which oppress people in our communities.

Today, our national criminal justice system incarcerates nearly 2.3 million people. The U.S. has the highest incarceration rate of any country in the world. According to a 2016 study by the Prison Policy Initiative, if Massachusetts were an independent nation, it would have the 10th highest incarceration rate in the world. It is not only the number of people who are imprisoned that is so striking. In Massachusetts, Black people are incarcerated at nearly eight times the rate of White people, and Latinos are incarcerated at 4.9 the rate of Whites.

This racial disparity is not a coincidence. it reflects a national history of hundreds of years that our country has isolated minority communities, both socially and economically, creating situations of extreme poverty, impoverished school systems, and lack of access to legal assistance. The end result is there is increased imprisonment, causing families to struggle to make ends meet, and to cope with the trauma of having a loved one taken away, often to prisons that are far away and expensive to access.

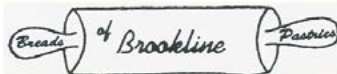
Is a system in which people are denied equal access to owning a home or receiving a quality education, isolated in poor neighborhoods, and then represented by overworked and under-resourced counsel during criminal proceedings, just? Is this really the best we can do as a society, or can we create a path by which we try to improve the lives of people caught up in the criminal justice system to the benefit of them and their communities? As we recall our ancestors belief in justice, and celebrate their rising up to resist oppression, let us question whether a system that works by punishing and removing people from society, as opposed to giving them the support and tools to repair harm, heal, and grow, is ethical or effective.

Our approach to criminal justice is simply not working. Recognizing this, our state legislators are now working on a landmark bill to grapple with this reality, so it is an important time to look at the facts.

46 percent of Massachusetts prisoners are convicted for nonviolent crimes such as burglary and drug possession. Many of these people are incarcerated for trying to support themselves or their families, or struggling with addictions. It is highly unlikely that prison is where people will learn how to deal with problems caused by poverty and drug dependence. It should come as little surprise, therefore, that nearly

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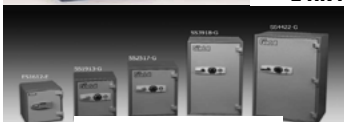
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Criminal Justice Reform: The Passover Story of Our Time

40 percent of prisoners return to incarceration in Massachusetts. We are putting people in dehumanizing environments, not equipping them with any new tools, and expecting them to do something different when they return to their communities.

One particularly insidious element in this system is the concept of mandatory minimum sentences. It is well documented that mandatory minimums disproportionately and unjustly affect Black and Latino communities. For crimes involving drug distribution at lower weights than corresponding mandatory minimums under federal law, Massachusetts judges have no discretion to craft a sentence which takes into account a defendant's particular circumstances, and could lead to a better life. Instead, the judge is required to send a defendant to jail for a prescribed period of time, without regard to any other factors. This is a tragedy, and prevents judges from being able to value people as individuals, unable to treat them with the compassion and dignity that we owe all human beings.

At the Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action (JALSA), we learn from our histories of persecution in and beyond Egypt that freedom is not a guarantee, but an active struggle. We fight to change policies that we know are unjust and ineffective. And we urge our Jewish community to understand that the fight to reform the criminal justice system in our state today is similar to the Passover story. It is a fight to overcome systematic oppression, and to develop solutions which lead to people who are free to live in their communities, take care of their families, and break a cycle of poverty.

We welcome your involvement in JALSA. If you are interested in working with us on the issue of criminal justice reform, or in our work on social, economic, or environmental justice, please reach out to JALSA Lead Organizer Hannah Klein at hannah.jalsa@gmail.com.

Cindy Rowe is the Executive Director of Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action.




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Passover Thoughts

By Mark E. Linde

As we commemorate the holiday of Passover, I am reminded by an article written by Rabbi Benjamin Blech: "The 5 Most Important Things to Know About Passover." This article focuses upon Jewish contributions to the world, and speaks to the importance of **memory, optimism, faith, family and responsibility** to others.

Rather than replicate the article, I offer my own thoughts on this subject, not in the same order.

Responsibility to others and repairing the world, *Tikkun Olam*, which is the Jewish concept defined by "acts of kindness to perfect or repair the world," is what I strive to live by every day. I do this by following in the footsteps of my grandmothers, my father and my mother, which in my case is by teaching. Each of them taught, as do I at Massasoit Community College. My happiest days are when I teach and help others grow.

I have a lifetime commitment to public and community service in Brockton. I volunteer in many community organizations as a library Trustee, and as an elected member of the Southeastern Regional school committee. Both stand for learning and community, which are key Jewish concepts. I'm the President of the Bridgewater Rotary Club, the motto of which is "Service Above Self."

Giving back strictly as a community volunteer is very rewarding and warms my heart. My mission to help others, especially those who are underserved and unrecognized, is what life is all about to me. I work at Brockton Community Access, our local community television station, where our mission is to help people communicate and advocate for their respective non-profits. Many times, I end up volunteering to help. To me, social justice comes directly from our religion. My mission is that we should lift others up so they can succeed, and then, in turn, help others who have already been through the struggle.

My **memory** reminds me of both of my father's grandparents, who immigrated to this country from Eastern Europe via Cuba, and their struggles to survive. I also recall challenges faced by my great uncle. They all survived difficult transitions to come to America and to make their home and lives here.

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Passover Thoughts

My father David served in the U.S. Army during World War II, and was able to liberate my great uncle Philip from one of the concentration camps. Philip lost his wife and daughter during the Holocaust, and he was never the same. It is important to me to “Never forget” history’s lessons, which I faithfully do every year during *Yom HaShoah*, to remember and honor Philip.

Despite the horrors that Philip suffered, he was **optimistic** and wise, and taught me that no matter how bad things get, you have to try and look at things in a positive way. Having a roof over your head, a good job, friends who care about you, and your health are all important. During the recent storms in New England and the loss of electricity and heat, I am now thankful for something I took for granted. Passover always reminds me that our ancestors as slaves had it much worse.

Faith is something you learn as a child in Hebrew school. It sustains you in times of trouble. When things are good you may take it for granted. My religious life started as “I had to go to Temple.” Now in later years, especially due to the loss of my father, I appreciate it even more and welcome it. Passover is one of the holidays that re-affirms my faith in G-d, and in good people who care for others.

I grew up in Brockton and attended both Temple Israel and the Temple Beth Emunah. Neither temple still exists here. As a matter of fact, there are now, sadly, no synagogues in my community. I visit Temple Beth Emunah in Easton and Temple Kol Tikvah in Sharon.

Family isn’t always easy. Mine is very small, as both of my parents were only children - meaning there are no aunts, uncles or cousins. As someone who has been divorced, things have been difficult. Luckily, I now have a very supportive wife who is good to me and good for me. She is always positive and optimistic no matter what life brings us, and I don’t know what I would do without her. What also sustains me are my cherished friends that have been with me through bad and good times. Especially during this time of Passover, I realize that I am fortunate to join many of them, or to invite them to my seder. May your seders also be filled with your memories, and your friends.

Mark Linde is the director of Brockton Community Access and teaches at Massasoit Community College.

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The Patient

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"A brilliant idea!" marveled Shepsil.

A short time later he was visited by the Sage of Chelm, who wanted to see how his old friend was feeling.

"Oy, I don't feel so good," Shepsil sighed as he leaned over in his bed to greet the Old Sage.

"Did you go to see a doctor?"

"Of course, I went to see a doctor!" explained Shepsil.

"Which doctor did you go to?" asked the Old Sage.

"Doctor Kronkiet," replied Shepsil.

"Nu, so what did the doctor do for you?" asked the Old Sage.

"What did he do for me?" repeated Shepsil. "He gave me a prescription and charged me 20 kopecks."

"20 kopecks?" gasped the Old Sage.

"After all, the doctor has to live," sighed Shepsil.

"Nu, so what did you do then?" asked the Sage.

"So I sent my wife, Raisel, to the pharmacy to have the prescription filled. And she came back yelling and screaming about the price of the medicine."

"How much did the pharmacist charge," asked the Sage.

Shepsil weakly raised his hand, holding up five fingers, and sighed, "He charged five kopecks."

"Five kopecks!" screamed the Sage.

"After all, the pharmacist also has to live," sighed Shepsil.

"Nu, so what did you do next?" asked the Sage.

"I tasted the medicine and I threw it away."

"You threw it away!" shrieked the Sage.

"Of course," sighed Shepsil knowingly. "I also have to live!"

Excerpted from the book, "The Silly World of Chelm." Available at www.WorldOfChelm.com and at Amazon.com.



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Israel360 podcast



Israel360 hosted one of Israel's first sports superstars, basketball legend Tal Brody, for a screening of the documentary film "On the Map." The film chronicles Maccabi Tel Aviv's unlikely (some say miraculous) victory over the heavily favored Soviet Red Army team in the 1977 EuroCup Championship. Tal, known as "Mr. Basketball," led the team to victory, uttering the memorable line, "We're on the map," which became a slogan for the 30-year-old modern State of Israel, which had just endured a terrible war only a few years earlier. The event, which drew more than 60 Greater Boston young adults, was hosted at Google's offices in Cambridge.

Israel360 is a biweekly podcast series produced by Combined Jewish Philanthropies. To learn more, visit www.israel360.org.



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UNRWA Textbooks Still Contain Endless Indoctrination

By David Bedein

At a time when UNRWA (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) is pleading for donations, UNRWA has reviewed its textbooks and teaching materials - and declared that three percent of the total pages of its new school books were inconsistent with UN values.

This three percent number is a total sham.

And regarding the offensive materials that it found - UNRWA didn't actually remove them. Instead, UNRWA says that it issued some additional materials for teachers to supplement this offensive material.

In other words, the shocking textual paragraphs, pictures, maps, poems, exercises, etc. are still widely used in UNRWA schools - just as before.

The same goes for other books that came out recently, which I just reviewed and included in our latest study of February 2018.

<http://israelbehindthenews.com/israel-jews-peace-new-pa-textbooks-used-unrwa-schools-today-final-study/16903/>

Below are examples of what can still be found in the newest UNRWA teaching materials:

1. A terrorist attack on an Israeli civilian bus by Molotov cocktails is described in a story as "a barbecue party" [*haffat shiwaa* in Arabic] - Arabic Language, Grade 9, Part 1 (2017), p. 61.

2. A verse in a poem describes the fate of the Jews following the predicted Palestinian liberation of Israel: "I swear! I will sacrifice my blood to water the land of the noble ones, to remove the usurper [code name for Israel] from my land and to exterminate the remnants of the foreigners..." - Our Beautiful Language, Grade 3, Part 2 (2017), p. 64.

3. A picture of Dalal al-Mughrabi, who led the terrorist attack on an Israeli bus on the Coastal Highway in 1978, in which more than 30 civilians - men, women and children - were murdered. The photo appears alongside a text describing her as a martyr who "painted with her struggle a picture of challenge and heroism which has made her memory eternal in our hearts and minds." - Arabic Language, Grade 5, Part 2 (2017), p. 51.

4. Promises that Palestinian refugees will return to their former places of residence, which will be part of sovereign Palestine: "We shall return to hoist Palestine's flag ... on our green hills." Arabic Language, Grade 5, Part 1 (2017), p. 82.

5. A cartoon appears in one of the books showing an Israeli bulldozer digging beneath the mosque on the Temple Mount, thus explicitly accusing Israel of planning to destroy it — Social Studies, Grade 7, Part 1 (2017), p. 64.



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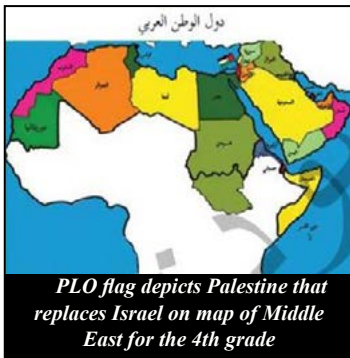
UNRWA Textbooks Still Contain Endless Indoctrination

6. A poem describes Jews as the Devil's aides, in the context of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem - Arabic Language, Grade 7, Part 1 (2017), p. 66

7. Hebrew inscriptions are erased from a coin of the British Mandate period - Mathematics, Grade 6, Part 2 (2017), p. 63.

8. A paragraph denies the Jews' share in Jerusalem's history: "Jerusalem is an Arab city built by our Arab forefathers thousands of years ago. Jerusalem is a holy city for Muslims and Christians." - National and Social Upbringing, Grade 3, Part 1 (2017), p. 28.

9. An assignment next to a map of the whole country - under the name "Palestine" - presents Israel's pre-1967 territory as occupied Palestine: "We will distinguish between the Palestinian cities occupied by the Zionists in 1948 and the ones that they occupied in 1967." - Social Studies, Grade 7, Part 1 (2017), p. 56.



PLO flag depicts Palestine that replaces Israel on map of Middle East for the 4th grade



Tel Aviv shown as an Arab village on PA map for 1st grade

10. The whole country appears in one color with the name "Palestine" next to it, and with the Palestinian flag flown above - National and Social Upbringing, Grade 4, Part 1 (2017), p. 7.

And these are only a few examples.

There are also cases in which Israeli cities such as Ramleh are described as occupied Palestinian cities. Other passages exalt jihad and martyrdom in the Palestinian context.

Moreover, the whole attitude in the 2017 books used by UNRWA is war indoctrination "for the liberation of Palestine," with almost complete avoidance of the use of the name "Israel" - and numerous demonizing descriptions using the term "Zionist occupation."

This war indoctrination is intensified by inserting remarks about various aspects of the conflict into non-related school subjects, such as biology, physics, mathematics, chemistry, history and religion.

In short, UNRWA has not really addressed any of the problems in its education curriculum.

This article was based on research by Dr. Arnon Groiss, a graduate of Princeton University's Department of Near Eastern Studies, from which he received his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees.

David Bedein is an investigative journalist and director of Israel Resource News Agency. He is the author of Genesis of the Palestinian Authority and Roadblock to Peace: How the UN Perpetuates the Arab-Israeli Conflict: UNRWA Policies Reconsidered.

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Is anti-Zionism the new face of anti-Semitism?



By Tammi Rossman-Benjamin

It is hardly surprising that anti-Zionist activists answer this question in the negative. What is surprising is that many of those same activists, particularly on college campuses, feel obliged to take time out from building Israeli “apartheid” walls, running anti-Israel divestment campaigns and engaging in other anti-Zionist activity, to make the case for their movement’s ideological purity. Over the last few years, groups like Students for Justice in Palestine have organized dozens of talks such as “Anti-Zionism is not Anti-Semitism” at Wesleyan, “Untangling the Roots: The Difference between Anti-Zionism and Anti-Semitism” at UC Irvine, and “Misusing Anti-Semitism to Promote Islamophobia and Silence Criticism of Israel” at Northeastern.

In the face of growing worldwide acknowledgement of the anti-Semitic nature of anti-Zionism - for instance, France’s President Emmanuel Macron recently joined President Trump, President Obama, Pope Francis, British Prime Minister Cameron and Secretary of State Clinton in declaring anti-Zionism a clear form of anti-Semitism - the campus anti-Zionist crowd doth protest too much, methinks.

Like any hateful ideology, anti-Semitism is recognizable when it results in speech or action that dehumanizes, threatens, or harms the object of its hatred. So instead of arguing that anti-Semitism is an unfair charge brought by malevolent Zionists to silence all criticism of Israel, anti-Zionists should be feverishly making the case that anti-Zionism is not a hateful, dehumanizing ideology that frequently leads to the targeting of its opponents, many of whom are Jewish students, oftentimes regardless of their personal feelings on Israel. The only problem is, no such case can be made.

Anti-Zionism is an ideology that stands in direct opposition to the millennia-old aspiration of the Jewish people for self-determination. Anti-Zionism’s goals include dismantling the Jewish state and quashing any expression of aspiration for Israel’s continued survival.

Anti-normalization - the notion that the Jewish state is so reprehensible, so vile, so evil that it has no right to exist among the family of nations, and that Zionists are equally unworthy to express themselves in civil society - forms the basis of strategies in support of anti-Zionism’s eliminationist goals. When Israel and its supporters are the target, as they are on campuses across the country, anti-normalization fuels campaigns of defamation and vilification, and attempts to threaten, harass, and bully pro-Israel students into silence and force their exclusion from campus life. For example:

• At UC Berkeley, “Zionists should be sent to the Gas Chamber” was etched into a wall.

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Is anti-Zionism the new face of anti-Semitism?

· At Oberlin, an email sent to students read, “Zionist Jews are pure evil. They did 9/11.”

· At UCLA, a Jewish candidate for student government was initially denied a position by anti-Zionist students who accused her of being unable to remain unbiased given her affiliation with Jewish organizations.

· At Temple University, a Jewish student standing next to the information table of Students for Justice in Palestine was punched, knocked down and called a “baby-killer” and “Zionist pig.”

· At a pro-Israel event at the University of Chicago, protesters shouted down the speaker and shut down the event, with one protester yelling, “I’m going to destroy this place!” and threatening the speaker, saying, “I’m going to kill this mother*****!”

· At UC Irvine, anti-Zionist protesters screamed to students at a pro-Israel event, “You people...should not be allowed on this f*****g campus!”; at San Francisco State University protesters shouted at the participants of a pro-Israel event, “Get the hell off our campus!”; and at a protest rally at Hunter College, members of an anti-Zionist group shouted, “Zionists Out of CUNY!”

It’s not hard to see that anti-Zionism is a profoundly hateful, intolerant ideology, the goal of which is the elimination of the object of its hatred by any means. In that regard, it is no different from any other hate-filled ideology, including racism, homophobia and, of course, anti-Semitism.

So is anti-Zionism a form of anti-Semitism? The answer is, it doesn’t really matter. Hatred by any other name would smell as rotten.

Rossmann-Benjamin is the director of AMCHA Initiative, a nonprofit that combats anti-Semitism on college campuses, and was a faculty member at the University of California for twenty years. She was in Boston last month meeting with concerned parents, high school and college students, professors, local campus Chabad centers, and Northeastern’s Hillel to discuss ways they can work together to combat rising anti-Semitism.



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EVENTS

ADL Law and Education Day

ADL New England's Annual Essex County Law and Education Day: The Road from Hate to Hope. This year's event will feature Christian Picciolini, a former Neo-Nazi turned peace activist, who will share his journey from hate to hope.

The event will honor Catherine C. Latham, Ed.D., Lynn Superintendent of Schools, and Chief James A. DiGianvittorio of the Middleton Police Department, for their remarkable impact on the North Shore community.

Wednesday, May 9 from 7:30-9 a.m. at the Kernwood Country Club, 1 Kernwood St., Salem. For more information, visit <https://lawanded2018.eventbrite.com>, or contact Jenna at jklein@adl.org.

Yom HaShoah in Sharon

Young Israel of Sharon will be hosting a community commemoration of Yom HaShoah on Wednesday evening, April 11 (time TBA). The program will feature first-hand accounts and remembrances in a poignant presentation. As the calamity of the Holocaust retreats further into the pages of history, we and our children will have fewer opportunities to bear witness to those who bore witness. This evening will provide us with such an opportunity. For further information, call Young Israel of Sharon at 781-784-6112.

Ruggedly Jewish

Spectacle Management Presents: Ruggedly Jewish, an evening with Bob Garfield at the JCC of Greater Boston's Riemer Goldstein Theater, 333 Nahanton St., Newton on Saturday, April 14 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets: \$39-\$59 at www.spectacleshows.com or by calling 617-531-1257.

Jewish Food Conference

This year's Boston Jewish Food Conference will be Sunday, June 10, at Temple Israel in Boston. The BJFC is an annual springtime event in its 7th year. In a multi-generational, pluralistic setting, it serves to educate and connect the greater Boston Jewish community around issues of sustainable food systems and what guides our food choices. More information at www.beantownjewishgardens.org. The cost for the event is \$18-\$40.

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EVENTS

Blue & White Night Israel Independence Day Party

Thursday, April 19 at 7:30 p.m. at Liberty Hall,
Revere Hotel, 200 Stuart Street, Boston

It's time to hit the dance floor! Join hundreds of young adults at the Revere Hotel for Blue & White Night as we celebrate Israel Independence Day and dance the night away. Enjoy cocktails at the cash bar, mingle with friends, and let your Israeli flag fly! Snacks will be served. Dietary laws will be observed.

Cost: \$10 advance online registration; \$18 at the door. (valid ID required, 21 plus event). Register now at cjp.org/bluewhite. Online registration closes Wednesday, April 18, but walk-ins are welcome! For more information or special accommodations, please contact Karen at karenn@cjp.org or 617-457-8870.

Zamir Goes Baroque!

The Zamir Chorale of Boston presents *Zamir Goes Baroque!* Joshua Jacobson, Artistic Director. Two performances: Wed., May 23 and Thurs., May 24 at 7:30 pm, Slosberg Concert Hall, Brandeis University, Waltham. Tickets: zamir.org.

Zamir will explore rarely-heard Jewish polyphony from the 17th and early 18th centuries: synagogue motets (and a few love songs) by Salamone Rossi Hebreo of Mantua, *Cantata ebraica* by Carlo Grossi of Venice, Louis Saladin's *Canticum Hebraicum*, written for the Provençal Jewish community, excerpts from Giuseppe Lidarti's oratorio *Ester*, composed in Hebrew for the Jewish community in Amsterdam, and more. Zamir will be joined by an instrumental ensemble led by renowned violinist Daniel Steper.

Celebrate Israel in Boston

Sunday, May 6, from 12-5 p.m. at
the Flynn Cruiseport Boston Terminal

The Celebrate Israel Festival is organized by the Israeli American Council (IAC) Boston and Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP) in collaboration other community organizations. Cost: \$5 per person before April 27.

For more information, please visit: www.celebrateisraelboston.com.

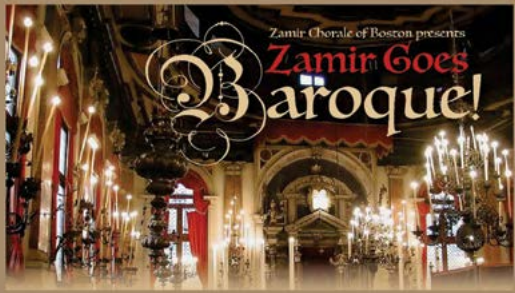


Israel Independence Day in Wellesley

Friday, April 20 at 8 p.m.
Temple Beth Elohim, 10
Bethel Rd., Wellesley

The cantors Sufrin and Zell will Celebrate Israel in Song with the Temple Beth Elohim Choir in honor of Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel Independence Day. Open to the public, free of charge.

To learn more or to RSVP, please visit www.TBEWellesley.org/CantorsConcert



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New York Newsday called Cooking With The Calamari Sisters "delightful and absolutely delicious."

The show is straight from sold-out engagements across the country,. Be prepared to eat your heart out and laugh until your sides hurt as Delphine and Carmela perform outrageous musical numbers while designing their latest culinary offerings.

Don't be surprised if they get a bit naughty when they update their treasured family recipes with saucy secrets and anecdotes that will leave you rolling in the aisles. And who knows? You may get a chance to sample these two sisters' kitchen creations.

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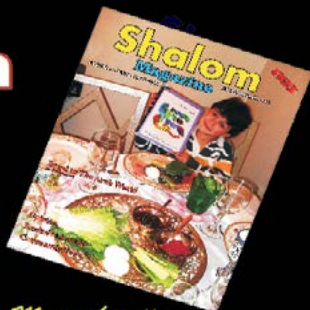
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