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Chanukah / Winter 2018
EDITION 35

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Shirley Nigri Farber

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As we celebrate the miracle of Chanukah and remember the victory over a tyrant king, we hope to bring light to our present moment. We see around the world the rise of anti-Semitism, the attack that killed 11 Jews inside the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, and the constant rockets launched by Hamas from the Gaza Strip toward Israel.

As a Jewish and Brazilian immigrant, I feel the double punch when I see the hate against Jews and immigrants. The Pittsburgh gunman posted on social media that he hated the fact that Jews support immigrants and refugees through an organization called the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society. This is an organization that for decades, has helped Jews move around the world, including my parents from Lebanon to Brazil.

Since I arrived in Boston in 2001, I have worked to inform Americans about immigrants and Judaism. I've done that through my Bate Papo (Brazilian) TV show, Bate Papo Magazine, and Shalom Magazine. I believe the more we know about the other, the easier it is to love your neighbor. People are afraid of the unknown and that leads to prejudice and misjudgement.

Unfortunately, we live in a dark time when have to deal with anti-Semitism, racism and hate in general. People are moving around the world in search for a better life or to escape persecution, and some are afraid of the influx of new immigrants. We cannot let fear and hate take control of this country. In this edition we bring articles with subjects ranging from the story of Chanukah to anti-Semitism and recent Jewish events. We hope to bring together Jews from different parts of our community with different perspectives, but with a common goal. It is only when we are united and committed to our Judaism that we show that we will continue to fight for what is right, for our right to exist as a Jew and to protect our land of Israel.

I would like to thank our advertisers, Jews and non-Jews alike, who support our publication and our goal, to inform and unite the Jewish communities around Massachusetts. With our advertisers' support, we have been able to distribute Shalom Magazine for free to thousands of people around Massachusetts for nearly 10 years.

May the lights of Chanukah bring light and peace to our world.

Shirley Nigri Farber - Publisher

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Full Moon Outdoor Shabbat Service

Friday, December 21, 6 - 7 p.m. at Greenways Conservation Area, Green Way, Wayland. Welcome Shabbat with a full moon walk across the open fields and down to the Sudbury River with Rabbi Katy Allen of Ma'yan Tikvah - A Wellspring of Hope (www.mayantikvah.org). We'll stop to enjoy the moon, pray, and meditate. Chances are we won't need flashlights, but dress warmly! Afterward, you're invited to a nearby private home nearby for a vegetarian (vegan is even better) potluck Shabbat dinner. Please RSVP to rabbi@mayantikvah.org.

Rap Star Nissim Black in Boston

Join hundreds of young adults to celebrate Chanukah at one of the greatest events of the season! Pop open the champagne, mingle over cocktails and enjoy an evening of live music featuring Hasidic rap star Nissim Black LIVE in Concert, for the first time ever in Boston. There will be a cash bar, DJ, hot latkes, donuts and chocolate coins. Wednesday, December 5 at Bijou Boston, 28 Exeter St. Boston. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. Tickets: from \$20 to \$100 at <https://www.yjpboston.org/events/chanukah-live-at-bijou-i-nissim-black-in-concert/>

Produced by YJP Boston and co-sponsored by FIDF, CJP, Moishe House Brookline, and CAMERA.



David Broza and Friends

Israeli singer David Broza will be performing in Boston with Trio Havana and special guests on Dec. 24 at City Winery.

Broza's 40+ year career spans from blues to jazz, rock, country, folk and world music. Singing in Hebrew, Spanish, English, and Arabic, he brings together audiences of all cultures. The doors open at 5 p.m., show starts at 7 p.m. For more information and tickets which start at \$40, please visit <https://citywinery.com/boston>.

Challenges and Conflict Resolution in Israel

Sunday, Dec. 16 at 7 p.m.: The Chabad Center of Sudbury will host a lecture and conversation on Challenges and Conflict Resolution in Israel, and the IDF in the 21st Century. The event is co-presented by Lt.Col. Hagay Carmi and his wife Michal Carmi, and will be followed by a Q&A session. Light refreshments will be served. 100 Horse Pond Rd., Sudbury. Please RSVP at www.chabadsudbury.com.

2nd Annual Inspo:Expo Brookline Action Fair

More than ever, actions count. In collaboration with Brookline's MLK Celebration Committee and the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, & Community Relations, the 2nd Annual Inspo:Expo Brookline Action Fair will take place on Monday, January 21, 2019. Kehillath Israel (384 Harvard St., Brookline) is generously hosting this free, family-friendly event from 12-3 p.m.

"Inspo" means "something that serves as inspiration." Meet your Brookline neighbors and fellow activists, learn about their social action projects, and take part in fun, hands-on activities for both kids and adults, including projects led by: Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action, Jewish Family & Children's Service, New England Yachad, Shalom Magazine, Welcome Blanket, Yad Chessed, and many more.

Get inspired. Volunteer. Take a stand. For more information, please email Hadassah Margolis, at inspoexpo.brookline@gmail.com or check us out at [@inspoexpo](https://www.facebook.com/inspoexpo) on Facebook.

B'nai Tikvah of Canton

Shabbat morning service at B'nai Tikvah featuring international Jewish recording star Sue Horowitz on Dec. 22 and Feb. 2, 2019 at 9:30 a.m. B'nai Tikvah is located at 1301 Washington St., Canton. For more information, please call 781-828-5250.



Happy Hanukkah

May the spirit of the holiday be with you now and throughout the year.

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AJC New England Co-Existence Award



*Honoree
Colette Phillips
with Shalom
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The 2018 AJC New England Co-Existence Awards took place on Nov. 13 at the Artists for Humanity EpiCenter in Boston. The award was established to celebrate leaders who have contributed to a more peaceful, pluralistic and democratic world by advancing our collective commitment to co-existence. This year, AJC New England recognized Colette Phillips, CEO of Colette Phillips Communications, Inc., and founder of GetKonnected!, a multi-cultural business network.



Mayor Marty Walsh addresses the audience

Birthright Alumni Volunteer in Dorchester



More than 100 Birthright alumni representing 14 Boston-area universities joined with Greater Boston residents for a one-day volunteer effort in Dorchester in early November. Projects included refurbishing an outdoor classroom and adding artwork at an elementary school, cooking and serving lunch to elderly residents of the Hearth Senior Center and assisting customers at the Daily Table Food Bank. In total, the one-day effort netted 408 volunteer hours (or 51 business days). The project was sponsored by CJP's IACT (Inspired, Active, Committed, Transformed) Campus Initiative, which provides support and inspiration to students before and after their Birthright trips to Israel.



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Women of Valor Luncheon

The 12th Annual Women of Valor Luncheon honoring Geraldine Acuña Sunshine took place on November 2. Over 300 people packed the ballroom of the Mandarin Oriental Hotel to pay tribute to Geraldine, as well as to hear from ADL CEO Jonathan Greenblatt, ADL New England Regional Director Robert Trestan, Sharon High School junior Rachel Wachman, and Parker Middle School (Reading) Principal Richele Shankland.

Geraldine is the president of the Sunshine Care Foundation for Neurological Care and Research, an international non-profit organization dedicated to finding innovative ways of delivering free clinical and neurological care to indigent patients in rural areas of Asia. She was honored for her extraordinary contribution to our communities and dedication to securing justice and fair treatment to all.



Robert Trestan, Geraldine Acuña Sunshine, Jonathan Greenblatt, and Deb Shalom

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Yachad held its annual regionwide Sukkah Party at their director Liz Offen's Sukkah. Yachad members and volunteers celebrated the holiday among friends, good food and good weather.

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Boston's Jewish Community Stands with Pittsburgh



CJP joined with interfaith leaders and community organizations from around Greater Boston to remember the victims of the mass shooting at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh. Speakers, including Governor Charlie Baker, Senator Ed Markey, joined with thousands of people of all faiths on the Boston Common. The Sunday, November 28 vigil was followed by a “Solidarity Shabbat,” organized by the Jewish Federations of North America and the American Jewish Committee, which saw tens of thousands of people attend Friday and Saturday morning services, November 2 and 3, at synagogues across Greater Boston.

☆ In Memory of: ☆

- David Rosenthal, 54*
- Cecil Rosenthal, 59*
- Bernice Simon, 84*
- Sylvan Simon, 86*
- Daniel Stein, 71*
- Jerry Rabinowitz, 66*
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Jewish Community Housing for the Elderly renamed as “2Life Communities”



Claire Saxe, Ed Saxe, and Amy Schectman



John Keith and Arthur Winn

2Life2Life Communities, a national pioneer in providing high-quality homes, officially revealed its new name and brand at its annual gala on October 14, in Cambridge. The tagline of the organization, “Age affordably. Live well,” reflects its ongoing commitment to making community, dignity and independence affordable to all.

For over 50 years, the nonprofit, formerly known as *Jewish Community Housing for the Elderly*, has provided safe, affordable and supportive communities for a diverse population of older adults throughout Greater Boston, filling a serious void in the marketplace. Roughly 1500 residents representing 26 different countries and 22 primary languages currently live in 2Life Communities' 1200 fully equipped apartments on four campuses in Brighton, Newton and Framingham. The median household income of 2Life Communities' residents living in subsidized units, which comprise 93 percent of 2Life's apartments, is \$10,100 a year.

The new name, 2Life Communities, captures the central Jewish tenet of “L'Chaim,” celebrating life, and is also meant to express enthusiasm for the second phase of life.

“Residents of 2Life Communities are active, they volunteer, and they are engaged in lifelong learning,” said Amy Schectman, President and CEO. “Our new name more accurately reflects how they see themselves and how they view life in our communities.”

Central to the core of 2Life Communities' mission is the belief that *aging in community* is crucial to battling the public health crisis of social isolation and loneliness in older adults, which research demonstrates lead to increased risk for heart disease, stroke, and dementia.

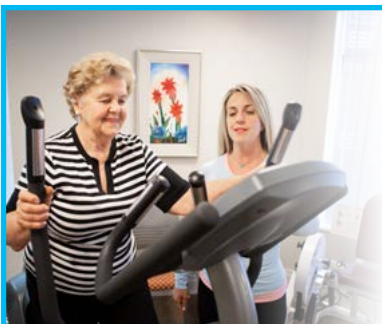
Though aging in place is the model most often associated with independence in our country today, in reality quite the opposite is true; it leads to the very social isolation and onset of health issues that 2Life Communities is trying to prevent every day.

Jewish Community
Housing for the Elderly
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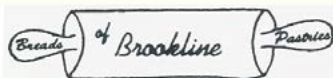


Esta Epstein with outgoing chair Marvin Nathan and CEO Jonathan Greenblatt (right)

Esta Gordon Epstein was nominated Chair of ADL's Board of Directors. A Boston native and longtime leader with both the national organization and in the New England region, Epstein becomes the second woman to assume ADL's top volunteer role in the organization's 105-year history. "I am honored, humbled and privileged to assume the position of board chair," Epstein said. "At this difficult time in our Jewish history, it is more important than ever for ADL to continue its crucial work. Over the past 11 days, we have seen how so many people around the country depend upon us for help and guidance in the face of anti-Semitism."

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Choosing between miracles

The story of Chanukah is one of the first we tell our children; how there was a great war and when the Jews prevailed, they re-entered the Temple, only to find it desecrated. After searching through the destruction, they could only find one small bottle of anointed oil, necessary for lighting the candles. It looked like enough oil to last maybe one day. Amazingly, as the Jews continued cleaning the Temple, that little amount of oil somehow lasted eight whole days. The next year the holiday of Chanukah was instituted to remember God's miracle for the full eight days.

This story, however, was not written during the time of the Maccabean war - rather, it is found in the Talmud, a series of discussions that took place at least three hundred years after the revolt. The Rabbis of the Talmud were not living during the time of the revolt, or during the subsequent years of the Hasmonean kingship. They were actually living after the destruction of the second Temple in Babylon, having never known Jewish rule in Jerusalem.

Another version of Chanukah is found in the books of the Maccabees, which were not accepted into the Jewish cannon, but were preserved in different Christian church traditions. It is unclear as to when these accounts were recorded, but they give an intimate view into the war itself and the sacrifices made by the Jewish fighters. In these books, there is no mention of a miracle of oil. In fact, there is no mention of G-d intervening in any explicit way. Rather, it is the Jewish community that comes together and defeats their enemies - men and women fighting and dying alongside each other.

The Talmud, when discussing the rules and rituals of Chanukah, does not mention the bloody battle, choosing instead to minimize the human experience of revolt and focus on G-d. Indeed, it was the same group of Rabbis who decided to exclude the books of the Maccabees from the Jewish cannon entirely.

Why do we have these two different, perhaps competing traditions about the focus of Chanukah?

If the books of Maccabees were written closer to the time of the actual revolt, or at least during the years of the Hasmonean dynasty, the authors would most likely be not only comfortable but intensely

proud of the image of the Jew as a warrior, fighting against prevailing powers and coming out victorious. However, hundreds of years later, after the fall of Jewish leadership in Jerusalem, when Jews are now living under foreign rule in a strange land, that narrative does not have the same resonance. It may even be dangerous.

Circumstances matter. The stories we choose to tell depend on where we are in our lives and where we are as a society. When the Jewish community was in exile, they did not see themselves in the stories of the Maccabees. They did not want to measure themselves against the image of the warrior. That would only reinforce the negative experience of exile. Rather, they needed to be assured that G-d was with them, in different ways throughout the ages. The story of the oil emphasizes the protection of G-d, not the physical prowess of the human. The oil was the story the people needed in the days of Babylon.

There was a dramatic shift when the nation of Israel was being fought for and established. Suddenly, the image of the Jewish warrior was relevant and powerful. This story was reclaimed because circumstances had changed.

Today, we see ourselves in both stories. Sometimes we need to have faith that G-d is with us, giving us protection in some way. Other times, we need to be reminded of the power of human capacity, that we can come together as a community and change our circumstances. This is the beauty of having thousands of years of tradition. Jews have lived through different circumstances and have reacted with multiple stories and images. We find ourselves the inheritors of a wealth of options, and depending on where we are and what we need, we can find it within our tradition.

This holiday season, take time to explore a Jewish story you haven't encountered before. Go to Torah study or an adult education session on a topic you haven't given much thought to. Who knows what you will discover, and when that new image could take on an importance and relevancy in your life. The more we expand our understanding of what Judaism can encompass, the more we can find ourselves in our texts, and the more useful our tradition can become.

Jessica Lowenthal is in her last year of Rabbinical school at Hebrew College and lives in Dedham with her husband and son.



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CJP Launches Listening Tour



With the arrival of Rabbi Marc Baker, CJP's new President and CEO, the organization is launching a year-long listening tour, "The 360Five." The tour will focus on five key questions to gain insight on our large, diverse Jewish community:

1. Considering Jewish life in Greater Boston, what is our Jewish community doing well?
2. When you think about a vibrant Jewish community, what do you imagine it to look like?
3. What do you think gets in the way or could get in the way of us creating a more vibrant Jewish community in the future?
4. In what ways, if any, do you feel connected to Judaism, Jewish practice, Jewish institutions, and the Jewish community?
5. When you think about the future of the Jewish community, what gives you hope? What concerns you?

The many answers to these questions will help build a community of learning and action to strengthen Jewish life in Greater Boston and beyond.

At the centerpiece of 360Five will be six community conversations held all around Greater Boston, including Cambridge, Canton, Brookline, Natick, Salem, and Lexington. All are invited to attend an event in their area. To learn more about 360Five and to register for an event, visit cjp.org/360Five



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The Grudge



By Dr. Rebecca Housel

Jesus Christ was a Jewish man. He lived more than 2,000 years ago and died at the hands of Roman soldiers, not Jews. And yet, every Catholic Palm Sunday mass, Ash Wednesday mass and Easter mass talks about how Christ was betrayed by his own people. Everywhere you look in a Catholic Church, there are images of Christ bleeding, suffering and dying. And, all of it is anti-Semitic.

Before people start calling me a “hater,” you should know that I grew up with half of my family being Catholic. My mother converted before I was born; she kept a kosher home and sent me to yeshiva, but we would visit with her family during holidays like Christmas and Easter. I’m very proud to count Irish Catholic uncles, aunts, cousins, and a beloved grandmother as cherished members of my family. So, when I speak out against the anti-Semitic rhetoric perpetuated by the Catholic Church, I don’t do it to hurt or offend the people I love - I do it because, ultimately, it is the truth.

Imagine seeing your parents, relatives, friends, neighbors, bowing their heads solemnly every week at how Christ was treated by his fellow Jews during the formative years of your life. Now, imagine

being a Christian adult and hearing the media talk about Israel attacking innocents - eerily similar to how I’ve heard Catholic priests talk about the relationship between the Jews and Jesus. Given the Christian context of nearly two-thirds of all Americans, does any Jew really believe that someone who was raised Christian can ever truly accept you, or your Judaism???

Fear-based thinking applies across the board with biases in gender, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, and race. The difference is, Jews are persecuted more than any other ethnicity, yet those hate-crimes are talked about less. That’s anti-Semitism. When Jews are blamed for the death of God’s son, Christians aren’t going to lose much sleep over any act of anti-Semitism. Muslims aren’t known for standing by the Jewish community either. That’s not to say members of those faiths aren’t outraged...who wouldn’t be when innocents are slaughtered? But Jews are not considered innocent, are we??? That means the only people who can help us, is us - but we’re often too busy tearing each other down. If Jews don’t accept other Jews - regardless of their background - we don’t have a shot at changing the current paradigm. And, we have to if we want to survive.

In a New York Times article dated October 31, 2018, Ginia Bellafante reported that there have been four-times as many hate-crimes against Jews than against African Americans. Hate crimes against Jewish people also outnumber hate crimes against transgender persons by a “factor of 20.” Yet, how often do you hear about those crimes? With that many hate-crimes against Jews, you’d imagine there would have been something in the news before now? Some inkling of the growing anti-Semitism, particularly in a state like New York, which has one of the highest Jewish populations in the United States.

But, you don’t hear about it. And, you won’t. The Catholic Church has taken an active role in minimizing Jews since the legalization of Christianity in 313 AD, including placing Jewish children with Catholic families after the Holocaust instead of reuniting those children with surviving family, or with any Jewish family at all. This took place

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The Grudge

AFTER Eugenio Pacelli, Envoy to the Holy See (later, the “Nazi Pope”), contributed to Hitler’s rise to power as early as 1920. Pacelli is also connected to influencing the Catholic Zentrum (or Central) Party to vote for the Enabling Act, giving Hitler the power to strip Jewish people of political rights, take their homes, their possessions, their money, ghettoizing and/or killing those same HUMAN BEINGS.

You may ask why and how all this could happen... it’s a good question. And, I have a good answer.

Constantine was the first Holy Roman Emperor; he came to power in the early fourth century AD. Constantine literally created Christmas, one of his many efforts in his campaign against the Jews, including legalizing anti-Semitism: Different taxes for Jews, different laws for Jews...and this continued well after the fall of Rome in every country that was once under Roman rule. It was part of Theodosian Code - similar to the laws Hitler created using the Enabling Act. Jewish people were persecuted as much as any early Christian under Roman rule. But before Constantine or his father, Constantius, came to power, Jewish people enjoyed a “protected” status - one they had to pay for every week. So, if you were a “fringe” Jew, like many early Christians were, you were pushed out of your own community and did not enjoy any such protections.

The Roman Empire under Constantine included most of Europe, parts of Asia, the Middle East, even Northern Africa. Before Constantine, his father, Constantius Chlorus, was a soldier who became a “junior emperor” under Diocletian. Constantine’s father was connected to Christianity through Constantine’s mother, Helena. Helena was an early Christian. Her Christian status was why she was only a mere stable maid when Constantius first met her. Diocletian persecuted anyone who did not pay him to stop, and that included early Christians, like Helena. Constantius’s resentment of Diocletian only deepened when Diocletian forced Constantius to divorce Helena because of her religion...but that’s not all. Diocletian then required Constantius to marry the daughter of Diocletian’s co-Emperor. The sum of these

crucial moments in the shared history of Jews and Christians helped to cement Christianity’s role in the future destruction of millions of Jews.

The Jewish community has a long history of ethnocentricity that stretches back to the origins of Christianity - early Christians were fellow Jews cast aside by their community, until one of them came to power. That single individual changed the course of Jewish history, and, the world. When Jews scrutinize each other, we are perpetuating a terrible mistake made by our ancestors. This bias within our own community existed during the time of Christ and is 100% responsible for dividing us into two sects. That division created what has to be the longest grudge match in history. Given that Jews now represent about 3% of Americans and Christians represent upwards of 70%, are the exclusionary tactics we’ve been using against our own people for the last 2,000 years helping us, or hurting us?

You tell me....

It’s not the fault of any Jew that some zealot decided to murder innocents gathered at temple for a celebration on Shabbat. That’s not my message. My message is that Jewish people often use judgment over compassion within the Jewish community. We can blame anti-Semitism for the majority of our social problems - and, it’s true - but we forget how we perpetuate it ourselves through prejudice against our own people. I mean, does it really matter if a Jew isn’t born Jewish, or doesn’t marry another Jew?

No, it doesn’t. But that’s not the attitude many Jews have shown people like me, with family from different backgrounds. If we want others to stop judging us and start being more compassionate, we first have to take responsibility for our own biases and unite as one Jewish people - stronger together than apart.

Dr. Rebecca Housel is an international author and editor with books sold in nine languages and 90 countries. Her blog on RebeccaHousel.com has 2.8-million readers from 144 countries. Please see RebeccaHousel.com for more details.



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The Paradox of Chanukah

A paradox exists in the Chanukah candles. Each night we light one more candle, increasing the light over the course of eight days, because the ancient rabbis insisted on increasing the holiness throughout the holiday. At the same time, we are remembering a single cruse of oil, enough to burn for one day, that - in the miracle of Chanukah - burned instead for eight nights. A little tiny bit of oil diminished day after day after day, but so very much slower than expected.

Increasing light in the face of decreasing resources - this is the paradox that is the essence of Chanukah, which we play out each year as we light the candles of our Chanukkah.

In today's world, with the impact of burning fossil fuels now endangering life on the planet, how can we extend the paradox of Chanukah throughout the year? How can we increase the light in the world in the face of decreasing resources and decreasing livability of planet Earth, along with increasing carbon in the atmosphere?

The answer for today is also paradoxical. We create more light by reducing our consumption and advocating for more renewables, and by burning fewer fossil fuels. When we extend the power of the energy we have to make it last longer - eight times longer, to keep the symbolism of Chanukah - we indeed bring great light into the world.

Here's one example of this journey:

One candle: The light of a single candle breaks the darkness, and we can be that light, so it makes sense to start with ourselves. Most of the planet's largest creatures - as well as some really small ones - are mammals. Wild mammals - from blue whales to mice - account for only 4 percent of the biomass, or weight, of all the mammals on the planet. We humans account for about 36 percent of the biomass of mammals. Domesticated livestock, mainly cows and pigs, make up the remainder, a whopping 60 percent of the biomass of all mammals. By reducing or eliminating our meat and dairy consumption, we can help change these numbers, and increase the light.

Two candles: Next, we can consider our home. How much are you already increasing the light and stretching the oil? Solar panels, solar hot water, heat pumps, and insulation are all ways to help bring the paradox of Chanukah into the world, increasing the amount of rene-

wable energy. So are smaller efforts like using a cold water wash for laundry, hanging your laundry to dry, using Energy Star light bulbs, and removing electronic chargers from the electric outlet when not in use. You may be surprised at how much money you can save in the process!

Three candles: Chances are you don't sit in your home all day and all night, but get around your neighborhood and beyond. Transportation does a lot to increase the darkness - stretching a gallon of gas in your car is best done by not using it. Public transportation, bicycling, walking, carpooling, and moving to a more efficient automobile are all ways to strengthen the sustainability side of the Chanukah paradox.

Four candles: Planting trees - everywhere - is super important. Like all green plants, trees sequester carbon, absorbing it from the air. Planting trees, and keeping them alive once planted, can be one of the most fun ways to tip the balance of the paradox toward sustainability, especially if you do it with friends or children. The planet needs 3 billion new trees to absorb the excess carbon dioxide. You can plant trees in your yard, in Israel, in a nearby park, at your synagogue, in the school yard - the options are myriad.

Five candles: No matter what our party affiliation, our job is to break the darkness of climate change by voting for candidates that promise to work hard to preserve human life on the planet. Check out the Environmental Voter Project (<https://www.environmentalvoter.org>) and the Jewish Environmental Voter Pledge (www.jewishclimate.org).

Six candles: From the first night to the second night of Chanukah, from the second to the fourth, the third to the sixth, we double the amount of light. When we advocate for clean energy, we can potentially more than double the impact of our personal changes toward reduced energy usage and increased renewable energy. Write to the governor and your state representatives and let them know that you want them to increase the light. (Find your legislators here: <https://malegislature.gov/Search/FindMyLegislator>.) Our elected officials like hearing from us!

Seven candles: When we get to seven in the week, we stop to rest. With the seventh candle, you can also pause to rest and to take stock. How are you doing? Are you managing to extend the light? To increase the holiness? The light? To stretch the resources available to you? Breathe deeply and know that all that you do is important.

Eight candles: By now, a lot of light is shining forth from you, and also onto you - can you feel it? Is it helping you find strength for our difficult times? When we let our own lights shine, when we allow our passions and our compassion to be expressed, we help everyone around us maintain their sense of wellbeing, and we find ourselves also becoming stronger. This is the basic message of Chanukah - be strong in the face of a formidable foe. You can do it! You are doing it!

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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The mitzvah of Chanukah

While wishing a very happy and meaningful Chanukah to all, I would like to share a thought based on the teachings of my teacher and mentor, the Chabad-Lubavitcher Rebbe.

The miracle of Chanukah was completely unnecessary.

Every Jewish schoolchild knows the story: the Greeks had defiled the Holy Temple's store of olive oil. So when the Maccabees liberated the Temple, they could not find ritually pure oil with which to kindle the menorah. Then, a single cruse of uncontaminated oil was found, enough to keep the menorah lit for a single day. Miraculously, the oil burned for eight days, until new oil could be prepared.

Strictly speaking, none of this was necessary. The law which forbids the use of ritually impure oil in the Temple would not have applied under the circumstances which then prevailed. According to Torah law, the prohibition of impurity, if affecting the entire community, can be waived, if the entire community, or all the *kohanim* (priests), or all the Temples vessels, are ritually impure. It is then permissible to enter the Temple and conduct the Temple services under conditions of impurity.

Nevertheless, G-d wished to show His love for His people: He suspended the laws of nature in order to enable them to rededicate the Temple without any compromise on its standards of purity - even if it be a perfectly legal and permissible compromise.

Going Overboard

Every Chanukah, we reciprocate in kind. How many lights must be kindled on the Chanukah menorah? Most would reply: one on the first night, two on the second, and so on. The law, however, is otherwise. According to the Talmud:

The *mitzvah* of Chanukah is [fulfilled with] a single light for each household. Those who do more than is obligatory, kindle a single light for each individual. Those who do more than those who do more than is obligatory, kindle one light on the first day and add an additional light on each succeeding day.

There are those who buy the least costly *tefillin* on the market, who

give the absolute minimum that the laws of charity mandate, who employ every halachic exemption and loophole they can lay their hands on. But when was the last time you saw a single light in the window of a Jewish home on the sixth night of Chanukah? On Chanukah, we *all* do more than those who do more than is obligatory - after all, G-d did the same for us.

Fanatical Educator

The name Chanukah comes from the word *chinuch*, which means "inauguration." Chanukah celebrates the renewal of the service in the Holy Temple after it was liberated from the Greek defiler, purified, and rededicated as the seat of the divine presence in our world.

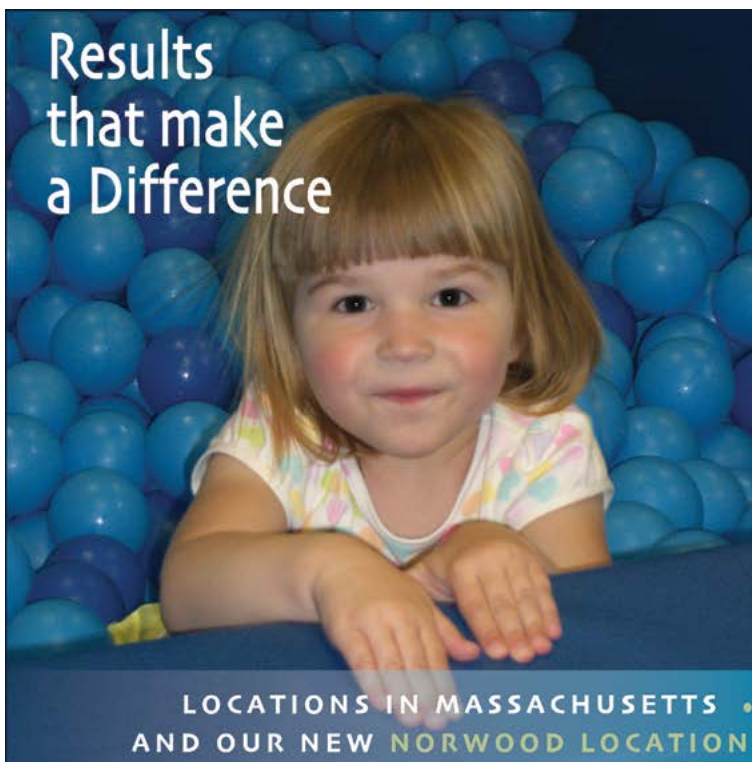
Chanukah serves as a model for all inaugurations, including the most significant inauguration of all - education, a child's inauguration into life (indeed, *chinuch* is also the Hebrew word for "education"). The uncompromising insistence on purity and perfection which Chanukah represents holds an important lesson regarding the essence of the educator's task.

Compromise is anathema to education. To a mature tree, a gash here or a torn limb there is of little or no consequence. But the smallest scratch in the seed, the slightest nick in the sapling, results in an irrevocable deformity, a flaw which the years to come will deepen rather than erase.

Virtually every life is faced with demands for compromises - some tolerable, others not. The educator who wishes to impart a set of values and priorities that will weather them all must deliver, in word and example, a message of impeccable purity, free of even the slightest and most acceptable compromise.

To learn more about Chanukah and the many customs associated with it visit www.wjewish.org. I encourage you to attend a Temple or Synagogue to enjoy the holidays to their fullest. And of course, you can always join us at Wellesley-Weston Chabad for one of our many Chanukah events, services or classes.

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



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After Pittsburgh and Louisville, Our Path to a Non-Violent Society

By Steve Schuster and Jeffrey Cohan

Last month's tragic events in Pittsburgh and Louisville occurred in a cascade of toxic streams in our society.

- The poisonous growth of all forms of bigotry – all fertilized by social media.
- The proliferation of easily-procured, fast-firing military-style assault weapons in the American populace.
- Inflammatory and irresponsible political rhetoric stoking xenophobic fears.
- An unrestrained, unapologetic normalization of violence as a means of expressing or "resolving" grievances.

This essay will address only the last of these four streams: violence. The events of last week, when put in the context of America's overall murder rate, underscore the urgency of transitioning to a non-violent society.

The vegan movement, at its core, is a movement about non-violence, with regard to animals and humans alike. Donald Watson, who coined the term "vegan" in the 1940s, had this principle very much in mind and said, "If the vegan ideal was generally adopted, it would be the greatest peaceful revolution ever known."

As Watson understood, if we're not going to countenance violence

against animals as a civilized society, we're certainly not going to support or engage in violence against humans.

Simply put, animal agriculture represents the normalization of violence in our society. In order to justify participating in murder on such a massive scale when consuming meat, dairy and eggs, we consumers are compelled to desensitize ourselves. We sublimate our natural inclination to be compassionate (like we are to our beloved housepets), and as parents, many of us intentionally deceive our children about the sources of their food, tacitly recognizing that our young ones are born with an innate sense of compassion.

Jewish sages have long fretted about this desensitization and deception, fearing with good reason that violence against animals would so easily spill over into violence against humans. Rabbi Yosef Albo, one of the most revered Sages of the Middle Ages, warned: "In the killing of animals, there is cruelty, rage, and habituation to the evil of shedding innocent blood."

Of course, such concerns have not been limited to rabbis. Legendary Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy wrote, "As long as there are slaughterhouses, there will always be battlefields." Because of its massive scale, because of its depravity and because it's ongoing, animal agriculture has been aptly called the "biggest crime in human history" by Yuval Noah Hariri, the Israeli historian and mega-popular author.

In the United States alone, more than 9 billion farmed animals are slaughtered every year. As participants in these naked acts of violence, we define ourselves unambiguously as a violent society. Forgive me if I don't mince words. These animals aren't dying of old age in their sleep. And the violence doesn't begin in the slaughterhouse – the process of raising animals for food involves violence from start to finish, including bodily mutilations, barbaric confinement, and deprivation of basic needs.

The fact is, all meat and even eggs and dairy products arrive on our table through acts of lethal, unjustifiable violence.

Yes, unjustifiable. If humans absolutely needed animal products for our survival, or even for our health, it might be a different matter.

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After Pittsburgh and Louisville, Our Path to a Non-Violent Society

But the reality is, every major long-term, massive-in-scale nutrition study in the U.S. and Europe has arrived independently at the same conclusion: plant-based diets cause humans to live longer and with lower rates of chronic diseases.

So in the end, we're spilling oceans of blood because we like the taste of meat. And, again, that defines us a violent society.

We have a viable, available path to peaceful coexistence, a path identified 3,000 years ago in the very first chapter of the Torah, a path articulated again hundreds of years later by the prophet Isaiah.

In the Biblical account, G-d instructs us, in the first conversation with a human, to eat plants and only plants. Among rabbis past and present, there has never been any confusion about what this means: our Torah begins with an unequivocal prohibition against killing animals for food.

Revisiting G-d's first conversation with a human in the Torah, the prophet Isaiah revisited G-d's instructions to eat plants and only plants. In the most iconic verse of his written prophecy, in imagining the Messianic era, Isaiah wrote: "The wolf and the lamb shall dwell together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox." Thousands of years before the onset of factory farming and industrial slaughterhouses, Isaiah understood that the trailhead on the path to peace is found in our stomachs, in our dietary choices, to "eat straw like the ox."

None other than Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, one of the founders of Modern Orthodoxy, described meat-eating as the most reluctantly granted permission in all the Torah. He wrote, "Man animal became a life killer, an animal eater. He became bloodthirsty and flesh hungry. Is the Torah very happy about this change? The Torah was [after Noah] compelled to concede defeat to human nature that was corrupted by man." Only after the Flood, after humanity had sunk to its lowest spiritual depths, was meat-eating permitted for the first time, and even then only with severe restrictions and deep reservations.

Shalom is the opposite of violence. "Shalom begins on our plate," is not just a slogan on our Jewish Veg t-shirt. Belief often emanates from actions and behaviors. When we say "Oseh shalom – make peace," we must take responsibility for making peace, for eliminating violence, for all the living inhabitants of our world.

As the antithesis of shalom, animal agriculture is, by many orders of magnitude, the largest manifestation of violence and bloodshed in our world. It is the bar we set for the ethical behavior we will permit to exist in our society, and it inherently condones every variety of murderous violence.

I recognize that a few readers might accuse us of exploiting the tragedies in Pittsburgh and Louisville to "score vegan points." To be absolutely clear, we're not comparing the victims of the shootings in the Pittsburgh synagogue and the

Louisville supermarket to farmed animals. Nor would we try to tell you what to eat. Rather, we're discussing the generalized prevalence of violence in which we, as a society, freely participate.

The fact that the Pittsburgh shooting took place at a synagogue called "Tree of Life" is a bitter juxtaposition. The name comes from the Book of Proverbs, which describes the Torah as a "Tree of life for all who cling to it." "The Torah's ways are pleasant ways," Proverbs states in the preceding verse. "And all its paths are peace."

As so many of our wise leaders throughout our long history have encouraged: Oseh shalom – join us on a path to peace. Our country and world need you to, now more than ever.

For free help and resources in transitioning to a plant-based diet, please fill out the short form at JewishVeg.org/Pledge

From Westborough MA, Steve Schuster is a member of the board of directors of Jewish Veg. A member of the Pittsburgh Jewish community, Jeffrey Cohan is the organization's executive director.



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Jewish Federations's General Assembly

By Steven Schimmel

Jewish Federations of North America's General Assembly always attracts a lot of media and press coverage. The gathering is a one of a kind convening, bringing together top Jewish leaders and philanthropists. Roughly 5,000 attendees meet for the conference annually, and each year dozens of journalists from around the world fill the halls of the conference centers to report on the gathering.

This year's coverage of the three-day event was different, as there was unusual amount of controversy and criticism surrounding this GA. It seemed that as soon as marketing for the conference began, so did the criticism. The two items that got the most backlash were the theme of the program, "We need to talk," and the location, Tel-Aviv. Journalists on all sides of the political spectrum also added their thoughts. Some reporters focused on what they perceived to be the lack of "actual" dialogue that would take place during the conference. They accused planners of not seeking such actual dialogue. They said they wanted more talk, and more diversity in the presenters. Other reporters criticized the Federations for meeting in Tel Aviv. These reporters wrote that the GA was planned there as a sort of snub to President Trump. They believed that choosing Tel Aviv over Jerusalem was connected to the Trump administration's recent Embassy move.

So this was the mood during and after the conference, which ended on October 24. I believe that these conferences are both difficult to plan and hard to pull off, and in my opinion, JFNA did well in both their theme and location choices, and I feel it was a good conference.

Let's start with the theme. Yes, we do need to talk - there are difficult issues that we need to discuss, and to me, the theme was a thoughtful choice that reflects the current environment in our communities. The need to talk was mentioned by many of the speakers and was consistent with their remarks. In fact, it was highlighted in just about every workshop and plenary session presenter. Speakers made a point of reflecting and emphasizing this issue in their remarks. I feel it was relevant and important - even if it was just the theme.

In fact, at most conferences, not only is the theme forgotten, but it usually doesn't even show up in the program. At the GA, it was front and center. I was pleased that many speakers were unfiltered and honest about the difficulties of finding compromises and areas of agreement on many issues, and thought it was important to hear that candidness. I believe that most of the participants were satisfied with the program as it related to the theme.

About the location - anyone is entitled to their opinions about where the conference should be held, but it's unfortunate that some of the reporters claimed the location choice was connected to politics, especially since there seems to be no evidence for these claims. Those reporters who took issue with the location could have detailed why a different city should have been selected instead. And to say that the planners in some way value Tel Aviv over Jerusalem is also without evidence.

JFNA took risks with these choices, and that's a good thing. I think it shows that the Federation is relevant and is working to evolve. Tel Aviv was a good choice. Of course Jerusalem would have been good too - maybe next year. Maybe the GA should always be in Israel. As for the theme, I liked that too - I think it is essential to work to bridge the gaps, to do better to unite our people. I also recognize that a three-day conference has its limits. Instead of focusing on the more controversial aspects of the GA, reporters could have written about all of the great work that the Federation does year after year. The millions of people around the world who are touched by its work, the thousands of volunteers in our communities, and the donors who care so much - this, too often, is the underreported story.

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 or its members.

Photo: US Ambassador David Friedman at the GA.





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REMEMBERING TOGETHER

By Leora Tec

There's a photograph of a little boy taken in 1939. It's black and white. He's standing on a step in front of the concrete facade of a building in Lublin, Poland. His shirt is white. The stiff collar is buttoned to the top. He's wearing shorts, short white socks with black stripes, and white shoes. He has a tentative smile on his face, like maybe he's happy but unsure about getting his photo taken.

The little boy's name is Henio Zytomirski. He was born in Lublin in 1933. His father, Shmuel, took a photograph of him every year. This is the last photograph, because Henio was a Jewish boy, and on Sept. 1, 1939, the Germans invaded Poland. Eventually, Henio's family was forced to move to the ghetto. After that, we believe that he was sent the death camp Majdanek and murdered. Most of Lublin's 43,000 Jews (out of a pre-war population of 120,000) were murdered during the Holocaust.

Henio, unlike many who perished in the Shoah, has people who remember him. His uncle had left Poland and moved to Palestine before World War II, and Henio's father in Poland sent him photographs.

But it's not only Henio's family who remembers him. A remarkable group of 50 non-Jewish Poles in Lublin run a center called Brama Grodzka-Teatr NN, a cultural institution and theatre dedicated to preserving Jewish memory.

I was first introduced to them while accompanying my mother, Nechama Tec, on a book tour in Poland in 2005. She had been born in Lublin, but had painful memories associated with the city. Though hers was one of the three intact nuclear Jewish families who had managed to survive World War II, she had lost over 100 members of her extended family, her friends and her whole childhood. In order to survive, she and her sister had been forced to take on false Catholic identities and



Henio Zytomirski, 1939



Letters to Henio

leave the city. When they returned after the war, much of the Lublin she knew had been destroyed. The only other time she had visited (though as a Holocaust scholar she had been to Poland a number of times) since leaving in 1946 with her family was in 1978.

That was a painful visit. The street she was born on, Szeroka Street, was no longer there - it had been turned into a parking lot. The street that she had lived on when the war broke out, Pijarska Street, was also gone - a bank stood where the entrance to the street used to be.

Thus, Lublin for my mother was a painful prospect, while for me it was a blank slate. Some of the people who came to hear her speak in 2005 worked in Brama Grodzka-Teatr NN. I saw their passion for preserving Jewish memory and was intrigued that non-Jews would want to do this. Two years later I returned for several weeks to see more. It was then that I got to know two men: Tomek Pietrasiewicz and Witek Dabrowski, the Director and Deputy Director of Brama Grodzka. They originally planned to start a theatre group in the space, but when Tomek discovered that Brama Grodzka or "Town Gate," used to also be called Brama Zydzowska, or "Jewish Gate," he began

asking questions.

He found out that the space where they were planning to house a theatre used to be the dividing line between the Christian and Jewish worlds in Lublin, and the Jewish world on the other side of the gate was gone. And so he changed his mission. Instead of starting a theatre company, he founded an "Ark of Memory"- a center dedicated to preserving the sights, sounds, memories and facts about that lost world. Slowly, Brama Grodzka grew. Now there are 50 people who work there, remembering the Jews of Lublin - those who like Henio

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REMEMBERING TOGETHER

who have a name, and those who do not. NN stands for “Nomen Nescio,” or “Name Unknown,” in Latin.

The story of Henio Zytomirski is part of the permanent exhibition at Brama Grodzka. Everyone who takes a tour will learn of Henio. And there are other ways to learn of him as well. Every April 19 - Holocaust Remembrance Day in Poland - people gather at that spot where the last picture of Henio was taken. They walk together to the place where the Zytomirski family lived before the war and in the ghetto. And then they walk to where Tomek has set up an eternal lamp that burns in memory of the Jews of Lublin. People are asked to write a letter to Henio, fold it, put it in an envelope, address it to Henio, and put a stamp on it.

Of course, the letter gets returned to sender because Henio no longer exists. Brama Grodzka has hundreds, perhaps over a thousand, of these returned letters. I wrote one with my home address as the return address. I was at my home in Massachusetts getting the mail on my porch one day, and saw my writing on an envelope. When I saw the name, “Henio Zytomirski” it made me think of Henio, but of course Henio stands for so many children who were murdered, many whose names we will never know.

Dąbrowski was recently visiting the U.S. During his visit I took out my grandmother’s photo album. I was about to embark on a journey of several months to Poland and wanted to make sure that I had a scan of one particular photo - the only photo of any of my grandmother’s sisters, all three of whom were murdered in the Holocaust. This sister, Golde, had four boys and had moved to Kovel during the war. When my grandmother saw the photo in the album in the 1980s when I was visiting her in her Ramat Gan (Israel) apartment with a friend,

she quickly stopped chatting, gasped and slammed the album shut. I now opened up the album to scan this precious photo. Witek noticed another photo on the same page,

“Isn’t that Henio’s father?” he asked, pointing at one of six men seated in a meeting with a caption that said, “Po’alei Zion” in Yiddish.

“I don’t know.” I answered, not being as familiar with the images of Henio Zytomirski’s family as he was.

He looked online and found an image of Shmuel Zytomirski. It sure looked like the same guy.

I emailed Henio’s cousin Neta in Israel, “Is this your uncle?”

“Yes!” Neta replied back via email.

“This man is absolutely Shmuel Zytomirski, my uncle, Henio’s father!” she continued. “He was the chairman of the Poale Zion (Z.S.) party in Lublin. This picture is all new to me. I am so happy to have it. Thank you Leora and Witek!”

This was a magical moment for me. I believe the work of Jewish remembrance is strongest when we do it together - me together with my non-Jewish friends at Brama Grodzka-Teatr NN and elsewhere in Poland. The fact that my non-Jewish, Polish friend was able to recognize a Jewish man from 1930s Lublin

in my grandmother’s photo album attests to the connection that the people who work at Brama Grodzka have made with my ancestors. I would have never taken a second glance at that photo. To me it was just a boring picture of a committee meeting. I have known Henio’s story for 11 years, but not until now have I known that I had a picture of his father waiting to be discovered in my home!

Leora Tec is the Director of Bridge To Poland. She is currently working on a book about her experiences. Please visit www.bridgetopoland.com.



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THE JEW IN THE AMAZON

By Regina Igel

Ilko Minev was born in Bulgaria in 1946, having lived in several countries before reaching Brazil. There he stayed on, operated a business, had and still has a family, now with grandchildren, and began publishing his books after retiring as a successful businessman. Of a total of three novels, two have been translated into English while the latest one, published in 2018, is in the pipeline, in several languages.

Minev's life has been filled with interesting and compelling moments. Growing up in a communist country, he soon realized that his life wouldn't be completely fulfilled if he remained under a regime that did not offer the necessary encouragement for his ambitions. He wanted to study further, but seeing some of his colleagues and friends harassed by questionings and even arrests, he decided to become a dissident, and was so recognized by the United Nations.

It was when he was able to enter Belgium, after having lived for short periods in several European countries, that he was able to study economics at the University of Antwerp.

With the help of relatives already settled in Brazil, the young and recently graduated Minev was able to get a Brazilian job offer, which he accepted, and then, in 1972, moved to São Paulo. He was later transferred to the city of Manaus, the capital of the state Amazonas, where he met Nora Benchimol, the daughter of Mr. Samuel Benchimol, a prominent entrepreneur, author and University professor.

One of Benchimol's most important book widely read and consulted is "Eretz Amazonia." Like Minev, the Benchimol family was also of Sephardic roots, but from Morocco, like the majority of Jewish immigrants to the Amazonian region.

Ilko and Nora got married, and the young economist soon became part of his father-in-law's enterprise. He worked there for 40 years until his retirement. During these years, the future author would travel all over the forest, across its thick trunks and dense foliage and through its rivulets, while listening to the stories told by the locals, mostly by the caboclos. He learned and became enchanted by their way of life and in his novels, related some of their stories describing the variety of their daily activities as fishermen; collectors of latex (of which rubber is derived); gold prospectors and diggers; and as explorers of the diverse possibilities in the very rich Amazon basin.

Minev received several awards that acknowledged his contribution to the progress of the Amazonian region and, most recently, he was recognized as well for his literary production. His first book has been translated into Spanish and Bulgarian. He was honored by the government of Bulgaria in Sofia, and also at the Bulgarian Embassy in Washington, where he launched and signed his book to a sizable audience. In 2012, he received the title Honorary Citizen of Manaus, and presently is the founder and president of the club Hebraica in that city.

Of his three books, "As Flowers Go," which was translated from *Onde estão as flores*, (2014) by Diane Grosklaus Whitty and "The Daughter of the Rivers," the English version of *A filha dos rios* (2016) by the same translator, are the works available in English. Both are related to situations that were either lived by Minev, by his relatives, or were told to him. He discovered his dexterity in writing after he had reached his mid-60s. The episodes described seem to retain a magnetic spell on the readers: there are adventures, love, lust, greed, loyalties, treason, all portrayed by the characters in all of his three books. It is advisable to begin reading the novels chronologically.

In "As Flowers Go," Minev's uncle, Licco Hazan, arrives in the Amazonian region with his wife after both escape from the Nazis. Their dramatic adventures begin in Bulgaria, where the couple were

THE JEW IN THE AMAZON

saved from death by none other than Albert Goering, a lucid, humanist businessman and the brother of the infamous Herman Goering.

Thanks to Albert, who himself ran serious risks of being arrested and killed, several Bulgarian Jews, and those of other religions and nationalities as well, were given false passports and papers that enabled them to flee from the hard labor camps where they were confined. Licco Hazan was one of them, and with his girl friend Berta, soon to become his wife, was able to get on a boat to South America. They crossed the Atlantic Ocean, incurring several perils, until the ship, seriously damaged, stopped in the port of Belem of Pará in northern Brazil.

Tired of the navigation and impatient with the boat's delay in resuming its journey, the couple decided to stay in that city. Soon they met Sephardim of Moroccan origin. As Licco was a descendant of Spanish Jews who fled the Inquisition, he knew Ladino, which made it easier for him to understand Portuguese.

The novel follows the couple, who move to Manaus due to Licco's skills as a car mechanic and, later, as an airplanes maintenance worker during a time of war. Once it ended, the couple began to explore a most incredible source of revenue gleaned from extracting perfume from the varieties of flowers and aromatic wood found in the Amazon and exporting their products to France and other countries (without being a spoiler, suffice to say that there is much more to be found in the book).

Minev's second book, "The Daughter of the Rivers," is a sort of a sequel to the first one. It is also set in the Amazonian jungle, but in one of its most remote corners, almost on the frontier of Bolivia. In this story, two natives of the region decide to join another couple in traveling to that isolated area, where life has nearly become happy due to the digging of gold. This goes on for only a short time, however, because a fever kills three of them, leaving only the young native

woman, a true daughter of the rivers, to take care of her children and the orphaned child of the other couple.

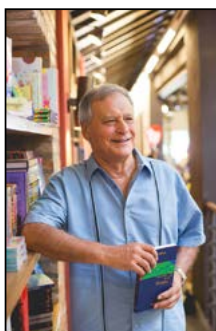
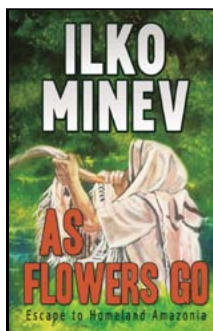
This young woman joins another gold digger leader, this time a young Jewish Bulgarian man who had escaped from Bulgaria with his father, lived in Israel, where he served in the Army, and following the death of his father, decided to adventure in the Amazon. We follow the friction among several gangs formed among the gold diggers, who, blinded by the brightness of the gold they extract from the black, wet and muddy pebbles at the bottom of the rivers, have apparently lost all of their humanity.

The gang attacking the Bulgarian man did not know that his stint in the Israeli army taught him about enemies' attacks... It is almost obvious that the hero and the heroine of this novel will be together some day. Then life continues – or stops – with another tonality. The novel explores, in depth, the mysterious manners of digging for gold, the history of the land, the mystical belief that there was an Eldorado land in that region.

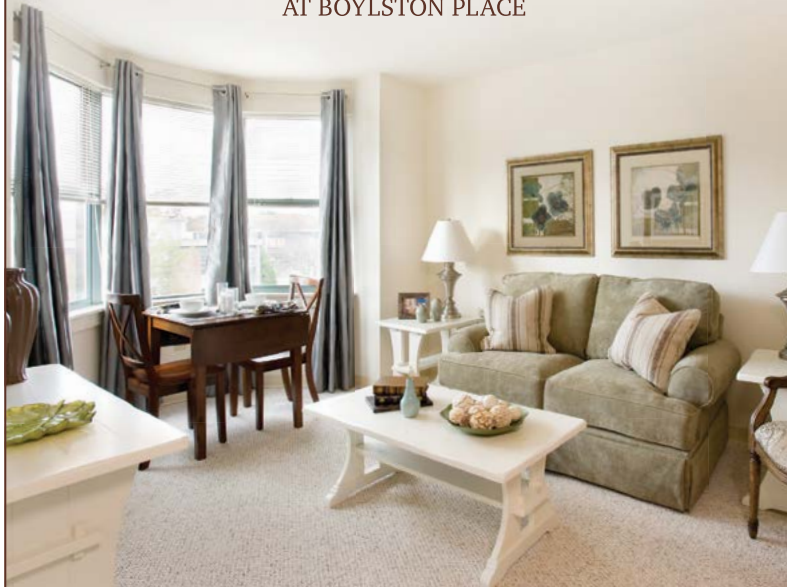
Minev isn't the first Jewish author to write about the Amazon, but his narratives in these two novels reflect historical and personal concerns and dynamics such as World War II, the blind race to the gold mines in the region, love stories that soothe the atmosphere of struggle, prostitution, hunger, fears, and all of the sentiments that escalate among isolated communities. Within this panorama, Minev is a pioneer.

His third and most recent book, "Na sombra do mundo perdido," is filled with travels, escapes, and conflicts provoked by totalitarian regimes. However, since it is not yet available in English, a review will be presented at another time.

Dr. Regina Igel is a Professor of Brazilian Literature and Culture at University of Maryland, College Park. Photo: ilkominiev.com.



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THE CHANUKAH SYMBOL

By Rabbi Jonathan Hausman

The most obvious symbol of Chanukah is the Menorah (more correctly – the Chanukiah). Chanukkah is described as the Festival of Light (Chag HaUrim). Yet, Chanukah is essentially a celebration of a military victory, one that could not have been expected. In fact, it was a victory of the small non-professional army of the Jews led by the Maccabees against the mighty Greek Empire. Judah the Maccabee is so revered for his military prowess that a statue of him (despite the fact that his visage is unknown) stands at the US Military Academy at West Point. Though it was his innovative guerrilla warfare tactics that vanquished a seemingly superior enemy, it is the Chanukiah that still stands out as the most obvious Chanukah symbol.

I think this has to do with our fascination with light. It is such a special and beautiful symbol which lends itself to a myriad of interpretations. Light can supplant darkness and show us the right path. Light means education, culture and purposeful living. Light represents so many metaphors for culture, humanity, progress, compassion, etc. One metaphor proffered by the Rabbis is the fact that the light of a single lamp remains undimmed even when used to light dozens of wicks and flames. The candles continue to burn just as brightly and warmly as they did before they were used to light another candle. The Rabbis liken that to a Mitzvah. When we give of ourselves to the other, we are not diminished nor do really lose anything. When we give Tzedakah, visit the sick, comfort mourners, study Torah or help make a Minyan, we not only are not diminished – we are actually strengthened. We feel stronger as a result of the Mitzvah we fulfilled. Think about it. You may be exhausted when you need to stop by a house to make a Shiva Minyan, but you are exhilarated upon your departure that you made the effort. We give generously to the causes that our dear to us and we feel better about who we are and about our community.

There was a great debate in the Talmud about how we should light the Chanukiah. The School of Shammai taught that we should start with eight wicks and then diminish the light by one each night. The


School of Hillel taught that we begin with one candle (plus the Shamash) and we increase each night by one until all eight burn on the final night. Hillel's argument obviously won out. Why? Because it is psychologically damaging to see things as diminishing rather than expanding and growing. Shammai may have been more 'scientifically' correct in that the amount of oil must have diminished with each passing day. But, Hillel was psychologically correct in suggesting that a person needs to see his/her world as getting brighter and better with each passing day.

There is a very serious battle going on in the world today between good and evil and we are caught up in it in every way conceivable. We are Americans and our country and our way of life is under attack. Moreover, as Jews our concern for Israel has us in a state of great anxiety. Learn the lessons of the Chanukiah. Whatever we give for Israel and for our country will only serve to strengthen us – not to diminish us. Know that we are only at the beginning of the struggle. Just as the first candle is burning, we should be aware that each successive period of time in this battle against the evils of terrorism will find us lighting additional candles. The Maccabees knew that the day would arrive when they would reenter the Temple and liberate it from the 'heathens' who had defiled it. They just were not sure what day that would be. We light the Chanukiah today – adding a candle each night – to remind ourselves that whatever sacrifices we are called upon to make now will leave us stronger – not weaker; – and, that the day will arrive when the light of freedom and peace will burn brightly for us in America and our brethren in Israel. And when that happens it will burn brightly and the entire world will bask in the glow and the warmth of the light that it we will bring to the world by bringing terrorism to its knees.


Chag Urim Sameach.

Rabbi Jonathan Hausman is the rabbi at Ahavath Torah Congregation in Stoughton.

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The Rise in Anti-Semitism

By Rabbi Mendel Gurkow

Recently, there has been an increase in incidences of anti-Semitism around the world, and my town of Stoughton has been in the news as well. Anti-Semitism is an unfortunate natural phenomenon. We have lived with it for as long as we can remember, and I hate to say, it will not go away any time soon.

People always ask why? Why does the world hate Jews? What have we done wrong? Are we really that cheap? Are we really that arrogant? Yet, Jews have been the greatest contributors to society, while representing only a very small percentage of population.

There is no satisfactory answer. Education or diplomacy will work, but will only go so far. We may quench the fire in one spot, and then it will inflame somewhere else.

One response to anti-Semitism is to show the world that Jews are not so special at all, and that we are like everyone else. The next step is to integrate with society to the point that we begin to sacrifice our name and heritage. This never works in the long run. It may save lives in the short term, but will destroy our fabric in the long term.

So, what is the answer? There is none. This is the nature of creation. The Bible says: "And Esau will hate Jacob." And yet we survived throughout history.

However, there is an answer that no one wants to hear. It does not sound logical at first, but it all makes sense. In the greater picture of life, everything is monitored and sanctioned by G-d. We have the responsibility to keep up who we are by valuing our long history and our faith. At the same time, we need to respect every person for who they are. Then, they will respect us.

It's not about being punished or rewarded. It's just about doing the right thing. When one is bitten by an insect, he cannot help but scratch. The more you scratch the more you want to scratch. It will take away the itch, right? No. You need to let go, endure the temporary discomfort and the irritation will go away.

We treat anti-Semitism the same way. Some say if they resist learning the truth, show them that you are like them. The more you do, the more you will need to do to gain their acceptance. But the truth is that it will only relieve a temporary irritation, and it will keep on festering and coming after you. We need to remove ourselves from them, focus on a better self and all will be healed.

We need to show them exactly why the Bible says we are chosen, and at the same time respect every individual for who they are. In other words, if we value ourselves, they will value us. We need to remember that we did not choose ourselves to take the credit; someone else did. This may not help the ingrained and brainwashed hatred in the world, but it will raise eyebrows amongst our own neighbors.

This Chanukah, don't hide your menorah out of fear of hatred. Bring it out in the open, and show the world that you are proud of who you are. You may indeed find that others respect this after all.

Rabbi Mendel Gurkow is the director of Shaloh House Chabad of the South Shore.

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Welcoming the Strangers

This year at Passover, Judy Katz, a member of Congregation Beth El in Sudbury, and her family were joined for Seder by a Salvadoran family, with whom she was sharing her home. There were two sets of Haggadot, one in Hebrew and English, the other in Hebrew and Spanish. Early in the Seder they sang the hah lachma anya prayer which welcomes the stranger to the table with the words, "All who are hungry, let them come in and eat. All who are needy, let them come in and celebrate Passover with us." As Judy put it, "Never had these words rung so true."

This scene had a special poignancy and relevance because the Salvadoran family, who are actively seeking asylum in the U.S., were guests in the Katz home at that Seder because of the commitment made by Congregation Beth El the previous June. The family was initially introduced to our congregation through the MetroWest Immigrant Solidarity Network (MISN), a local immigrant's rights organization. At the temple's annual meeting, the membership voted nearly unanimously to become a Sanctuary Congregation. The core of this resolution is the following commitment:

We encourage our members to join in this effort and to actively give aid and comfort to these people. We say our government's policy should be changed so that immigrants and refugees should be welcomed to our country, treated humanely, and given a path to citizenship.

Since then, many Beth El members have engaged in activities to enact that commitment. These include working with other residents of Sudbury to pass the Sudbury Welcoming Town resolution, participating in a weekly demonstration on the common in Sudbury Center, training to accompany immigrants as they wrestle with the difficulties they face as refugees and asylum seekers, and lobbying for a just immigration policy in our state and our nation.

In addition to these Sanctuary initiatives, the Beth El Tzedek Scholarship fund provides financial support to deserving first generation immigrant students from the MetroWest area who have completed at least one semester at Framingham State University.

To date, three of those students have completed their undergraduate education and one is a rising junior. Since 2004, Congregation Beth El has hosted the volunteers of the MetroWest Free Medical Program as they offer free health care services to our neighbors in need through a Tuesday evening clinic. Hundreds of volunteers, including licensed physicians, nurses, social workers, and others transform Beth El's sanctuary into a walk-in medical program serving MetroWest

residents who lack health insurance, many of them immigrants. In its 14 years of service, the MetroWest Free Medical Program has provided care to our community through more than 17,000 patients visits. We are proud to host this program, which was the first synagogue-based free medical program in the U.S.

One key Sanctuary activity is the Congregation's support of this Salvadoran family as they navigate the difficult road to asylum status. This family of four—mom, dad, an eleven year old son, and a four year old daughter—has been here almost one and a half

years. The family fled El Salvador after two close family members were murdered. They had no choice; they had to leave, or risk being murdered too. They escaped and made their way to Texas from their rural home in El Salvador. Their case is now pending. When they go to court, their full story will be told and, while there is no guarantee that they will be granted asylum, they are safe for now.

As undocumented immigrants their opportunities to work are extremely limited. Mom is home with the little girl. Their son is now in sixth grade and is learning English at school and at home with the help of a team of Beth El members who have set up an ESL program for him and Mom. The girl has just started Head Start and is learning English and preparing to go to kindergarten.

For the past eight months they've been living in the home of Judy Katz, rent free. They recently moved into an apartment of their own, which will enable them to get to church and shops without being dependent on members of the congregation for rides. Their needs are modest and they wish to be independent, but their opportunities to earn money are limited and they are paying off the debt that they incurred to flee to the United States.

Congregation Beth El entirely supports the family's decision and is actively raising funds to help the family meet their needs. If any readers wish to contribute to this effort, they can send their contribution to Beth El. Checks should be payable to Congregation Beth El with "Sanctuary Committee" written on the memo line and sent to 105 Hudson Road, Sudbury, MA 01776 or visit the website: <http://bethelsudbury.org/donate/>. Any questions may be addressed to Carl Offner at offner@cs.umb.edu.

Bernie Horn is a member of Congregation Beth El's Sanctuary committee and a professor at Framingham State University.






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Rededication Ceremony of Cape Verde's Jewish Cemeteries

Ponta do Sol



President of CVJHP Carol Castiel with President of National Assembly Jorge Santos, and Mayor of Ribeira Grande Fernando Orlando



Inside Ponta do Sol with Gardenia Benros, Rabbi Natan Peres, President of National Assembly Jorge Santos, Israeli diplomat Daniel Aschheim and Mayor Fernando Orlando



The dedication ceremony of two restored Jewish cemeteries in Santo Antao, Cape Verde took place on November 6. Descendants of Cabo Verde's Jewish community, local and national government officials, dignitaries from the United States and Israel, and the chief rabbi of Lisbon, Natan Peres, gathered to honor the memory of Sephardic Jews who immigrated to Cape Verde from Morocco and Gibraltar in the 19th century.

The President of the Cabo Verdean National Assembly, Jorge Santos spoke with pride of the many Jewish families who contributed to the island's economic development. Carol Castiel, President of the Cape Verde Jewish Heritage Project (CVJHP), which financed the restoration, thanks to a generous grant from H.M. King Mohammed of Morocco, praised her Cabo Verdean partners and the many descendants of the Jews who inspired her to bring this day to fruition. "The Sephardic Jews who came to Cape Verde in the 19th century from mostly Morocco and Gibraltar, were a small group, but they and their descendants had a tremendous impact on the development of the country," said Castiel who is broadcaster at the VOA and devotes her time on a pro-bono basis as the manager of the multi-faceted project. Daniel Aschheim, Deputy Chief of Mission of the Embassy of Israel in Dakar (responsible for Cape Verde), said: "It was a true honor to represent Israel, the Jewish State, in this important and moving dedication ceremony, commemorating the rich Jewish heritage, culture and history of Cabo Verde."

The Santo Antao burial grounds are the second and third of four slated to be restored and rededicated by the Cape Verdian authorities with funding from the CVJHP. The Praia burial ground was dedicated in 2013.

Jewish immigrants first arrived in Cape Verde, a former Portuguese colony comprised of an archipelago of 10 islands off the coast of Senegal, in the 15th and 16th centuries, fleeing the Inquisition in Spain and Portugal. Most of the immigrants were men who end up marrying with local non Jewish women. Massachusetts and Rhode Island are home to the largest Cape Verdean diaspora.

To learn more, please visit: www.capeverdejewishheritage.org.
Photos: Carol Castiel/Cape Verde Jewish Heritage Project, Inc.

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Congressman Richard Neal

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Anti-Semitism and the Many-Headed Hydra of Hate

By Prof. John J. Michalczyk and Prof. Susan A. Michalczyk

In Greek mythology, whenever Hercules severed a head of Hydra, the immense water snake monster with nine heads that dwelt in the swamp near Argos, a new head would appear. The challenge seemed daunting - this was the Hydra, a relentless destroyer of life.

But over the past two years, both globally and nationally, with the most recent tragedy at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, monstrous hate has also reared its ugly head. In France, an assailant killed 85-year-old Mireille Knoll, a Holocaust survivor, and an anti-Semitic attack upon the Hyper Cacher kosher market left four Jews dead.

Standing in solidarity with the Tree of Life Synagogue shooting, the French Jewish community prayed before the U.S. Embassy in Paris, solemnly reading aloud the names of the 11 Jewish victims, the guardians of the faith. In the town of Chemnitz, Germany, a haven for neo-Nazis and extremists, the Jewish restaurant “Shalom” came under attack from black-clad individuals who screamed “Get out Jewish Pigs!”

With the attack in Pittsburgh, Americans must come to terms with anti-Semitism here in our backyard. The extremism of nationalist parties can no longer be kept at a distance, and nor can the spread of such extreme hatred. Yet another head of the Hydra has emerged from the sea, violating the peaceful and prayerful worshippers at Tree of Life in Pittsburgh.

The assailant’s wish “that all Jews must die” hauntingly recalls the anti-Semitic tirades of the Nazi death machine. On social media, Bowers’ assertion that “Jews were committing genocide to my people” has an ironic tone, in view of the Final Solution.

Through vehement criticism and condemnation of the work of the century-old Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), Bowers distorted not only the purpose and value of the agency, but also the refugees in need, with demeaning and threatening language: “bringing in the unwashed and unwanted who were slaughtering his people.”

Only a week before the anti-Semitic attack in Pittsburgh, Cesar Sayoc employed another method of violence, mailing pipe bombs to target an extensive list of individuals who helped foster a democratic system of government. His attacks began with George Soros, who was labelled a “millionaire Jew” by a U.S. Government-run network website that was eventually removed. Do these senseless acts of hatred reflect more deeply rooted anti-Semitism in the United States?

Already in October 2004, seeing the impact of anti-Semitic violence in the U.S. and abroad, President George W. Bush initiated the Global Anti-Semitism Review Act. The Act spelled out the dramatic rise

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Anti-Semitism and the Many-Headed Hydra of Hate

globally, warning that the U.S. could be equally vulnerable to similar hatred.

“It is the sense of Congress that -

(1) the United States Government should continue to strongly support efforts to combat anti-Semitism worldwide through bilateral relationships and interaction with international organizations such as the OSCE, the European Union, and the United Nations;

and (2) the Department of State should thoroughly document acts of anti-Semitism that occur around the world.”

The Act called for the creation of a position of Special Envoy to serve as liaison and agent in tracking and controlling anti-Semitism throughout the world. Now, more than ever, vigilance and legislation are needed both abroad and in the U.S., in response to the political growth of extreme nationalism. At present, there is a dire need to enhance the position of a Special Envoy. In June 2017, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) introduced a bill, entitled “Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism Act,” in order to elevate the existing position to that of ambassador. With the Pittsburgh atrocity, there may be greater opportunity for further bipartisan dialogue and action on this position.

The most recent Anti-Defamation League Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents, completed yearly since 1979, indicates a sharp rise in this phenomenon, reporting: “Anti-Semitic incidents in the U.S. surged more than one-third in 2016 and jumped 86 percent in the first quarter of 2017. There was a massive increase in the amount of harassment of American Jews, particularly since November 2016, and a doubling in the amount of anti-Semitic bullying and vandalism at non-denominational K-12 grade schools.” The statistics cry out for more direct action. Those concerned about this spread of anti-Semitic acts ask: “Will we soon need armed security guards at every place of worship, theater, and grocery store?”

Hiding behind the right of the freedom of speech, often unbridled social media posts connect the world of anti-Semites and neo-Nazis who emerge from the shady recesses of the Internet to act upon their rabid anti-Semitic beliefs. On neo-Nazi websites such as <https://dailystormer.name/> and [Stormfront.org](https://stormfront.org), white nationalist extremists spew out racially directed hate speeches against Jews, immigrants, and African-Americans. Prior to his attack on the synagogue, the assailant’s anti-Semitic posts on social media reflected a pattern of this hatred of “The Other.”

The many-headed Hydra of Hate has not been slain, and as new challenges emerge on American soil, the U.S. Government has an opportunity to pave the way for greater tolerance and unity by choosing engagement over complacency, as part of a socially conscious world.

Prof. John J. Michalczyk, director of the Film Studies at Boston College, has taught literature and film since 1974. His publications, lectures and documentaries principally deal with WWII, the Holocaust, genocide and conflict resolution. Prof. Susan A. Michalczyk, a professor at Boston College, teaches comparative literature, art, and film, with an emphasis upon the autobiographical narrative/memory experience. In her film work with her husband, Michalczyk’s focus is on issues of social justice and human rights.

SAVE THE DATE: On April 25-26, 2019, Professors

Michalczyk will further the discussion of the Third Reich's lethal campaign against the Jews with an international conference, “Mein Kampf: Prelude to the Holocaust,” revealing how the genesis of the Holocaust already lay in Hitler's vision of a greater Germany.



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Chocolate Ganache Glazed Doughnuts

Recipes excerpted from *Holiday Kosher Baker*

By Paula Shoyer, Sterling Publishing Co., Inc.

Photography by Michael Bennett Kress

Chocolate Ganache Glazed Doughnuts

Makes 10 to 12

When I was contemplating new flavors for doughnuts, the cupcake craze came to mind, particularly chocolate ganache cupcakes. You can dip these doughnuts into the ganache, but you can also double the filling recipe and squeeze some inside the center of each doughnut as well.

Dough

1/2 ounce (2 envelopes) dry yeast
1/4 cup warm water
1/2 cup plus 1 teaspoon sugar, divided
1/3 cup soy milk
2 tablespoons margarine, at room temperature for at least 15 minutes

1 large egg

1/4 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

1/2 cup parve unsweetened cocoa

1 3/4–2 cups all-purpose flour, plus extra for dusting
canola oil for frying

Ganache

5 ounces bittersweet chocolate

1/4 cup soy milk

1 tablespoon confectioners' sugar

1 tablespoon margarine

To prepare the dough

IN A LARGE BOWL, place the yeast, warm water and 1 teaspoon sugar and stir. Let the mixture sit for 10 minutes, or until thick.

ADD THE REMAINING SUGAR, soy milk, margarine, egg, salt, vanilla, cocoa, and 1 cup flour and mix on low speed either with a with a dough hook in a stand mixer or with a wooden spoon. Add another 1/4 cup flour and mix well. Scrape down the sides of the bowl. Add another 1/4 cup flour and mix again.

If the dough is still sticky, add more flour, if needed, a tablespoon at a time, and mix it into the dough until it becomes smooth, but not sticky. Each time you add flour to the dough, make sure you mix it in thoroughly, so that it's well integrated. You don't want to see any white patches of flour before you add more to the dough.

COVER THE DOUGH with a clean dishtowel and let rise for one hour in a warm place. I use a warming drawer on a low setting, or you can turn your oven on to its lowest setting, wait until the oven reaches that temperature, place the bowl in the oven, and turn off the oven.

PUNCH DOWN THE DOUGH by folding it over a few times and reshaping it into a ball. Then re-cover the dough and let it rise for 10 minutes.

DUST A COOKIE SHEET with some flour. Sprinkle some flour on your counter or a piece of parchment and roll the dough out until it's about 1/2 inch thick. Use a 3-inch round cookie cutter or drinking glass to cut out circles and place them on the prepared cookie sheets. Reroll any scraps. Cover the doughnuts with the towel. Place the cookie sheet back in the oven (warm but turned off) or warming drawer. Let the doughnuts rise for 45 minutes.

HEAT 1 1/2 inches of oil in a medium saucepan for a few minutes and use a candy thermometer to see when the temperature stays between 365°F and 370°F; adjust the flame until the oil stays in that temperature range.

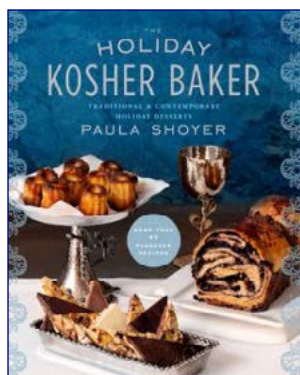
COVER A COOKIE SHEET with foil. Place a wire rack on top and set it down near your stovetop. Add the doughnuts, no more than five at a time, top side down into the oil and cook for 1 1/2 minutes. Use tongs or chopsticks to turn the doughnut over and cook another 1 1/2 minutes. Remove the doughnuts

with a slotted spoon, letting any excess oil drip off, and place them on the wire rack to cool. Repeat for the remaining doughnuts.

BREAK THE CHOCOLATE into small pieces and melt it in a double boiler or in the microwave oven for 45 seconds, then stir; heat again for 30 seconds and stir. Heat for another 15 seconds and stir until melted. Heat the soy milk until it's hot, not boiling. Whisk it into the chocolate mixture a little at a time and then whisk it again after each addition. Add the confectioners' sugar and mix. Add the margarine and whisk well. If the chocolate ganache hardens, heat it in the microwave for a few seconds and stir.

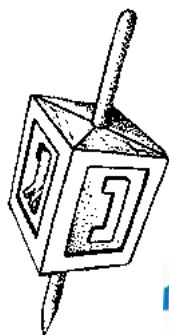
To glaze the doughnuts

DIP THE SMOOTHEST SIDE of the doughnut into the ganache and swoosh it around a few times for a generous coating on one side, and then lift it out of the ganache. Eat the doughnuts immediately or store them covered at room temperature for up to one day. Reheat to serve.



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The #MeToo Movement and Teshuvah

By Sharon Weiss-Greenberg

I have spent the past year fairly involved in the #MeToo movement. From the week that the #MeToo movement went viral, I've heard stories. I've heard and shared whispers. I have cried. A lot. I have argued. I have advocated. I think that I have been able to help some people. I have participated in conversations, groups, alliances, etc. to try to be both proactive and reactive.

Throughout the past year, and in years past before the #MeToo movement, the onus of fixing and changing things has tended to fall on the victim or survivor. Not only have these individuals needed to bear the brunt of being harassed, assaulted, and mistreated, they also had to deal with the judgement, the need to prove their case as being bad enough to warrant action. What type of harassment should be tolerated in our midst? What type of harasser should go unchecked? Who is responsible for ensuring that members of our community are able to recognize wrongs and know what to do when they find themselves in that situation. It is not a matter of if, my friends, it is a matter of when.

I would like to propose one way in which members of the Jewish community are responsible for eradicating #MeToo from our midsts. We need to take on the obligation of "Lo ta'amod al dam re'echa," a Biblical commandment which can be translated "Thou shall not stand idly by the shedding of the blood of thy fellow man." When someone discloses information to you, to us, you are now responsible for helping that individual and preventing the aggressor from harming others. Until you are confident that victims have been assisted and that the future will not allow for future victims, you are responsible, we are responsible. It does not matter how little power or influence you think you may have, you and we hold the power of truth. Use it.

While much of the #MeToo movement leaves people feeling helpless, there are action items that we can and should be taking. We can make sure that Jewish organizations are safe places. We can make sure that we have strong policies in place including timely responses that protect and address past or future potential wrongs. We can practice transparency in these processes. We can provide various types of trainings including bystander training. We should

be following the laws, protocols and guidelines of the EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission). Jewishly, however, we can be doing something additionally.

We are now heading into the Festival of Lights and celebration. Let us shed light on all that is good in our community and not allow our communities to contain dark, hidden wrongs. The Chanukah story tells us that the impossible is anything but that, and that we have the possibility of taking fate in our own hands. Let's not shirk that responsibility.

Sharon Weiss-Greenberg is the Director of Development and Communications at ELI talks.

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Another Miracle of Chanukah

By Daniel Brook, Ph.D. & Richard H. Schwartz, Ph.D.

Hope springs eternal. Indeed, it's always been an integral part of Jewish history, spirituality, and politics. Without hope, there wouldn't be a Chanukah; without hope, there might not even be a Jewish community. That's the power of radical hope!

Jewish survival is a miracle of hope. Increasing light at the darkest time of the year to celebrate Chanukah and Jewish survival is also a miracle. This year (2018/5779), Chanukah begins on Sunday night, December 2. Each year, we should work and hope for further miracles.

We sincerely hope that Jews will enhance their celebrations of this ancient, beautiful, and spiritually-meaningful holiday of Chanukah by making it a time to strive even harder to live up to Judaism's highest moral values and teachings. For most of us, we certainly don't need more "things" in our homes; instead, we need more meaning, purpose, and spirit in our lives. There are a variety of ways to accomplish this. One significant way we can do this, on a daily basis, is by moving towards vegetarianism.

Chanukah commemorates the single small container of pure olive oil - expected to be enough for only one day - which, according to the Talmud (Shabbat 21b), miraculously lasted for eight days in the rededicated Temple on the 25th of Kislev 165 BCE. This was exactly

two years after it was defiled by the Syrian-Greeks, who were ruled by the tyrannical King Antiochus IV. In kabalistic (Jewish mystical) theory, according to Avi Lazerson, "oil is symbolic of *chochmah* (wisdom), the highest aspect of the intellect from which inspirational thought is derived."

A switch to vegetarianism would be using our wisdom and compassion to help inspire another great miracle: the end of the tragedy of world hunger, therefore ensuring the survival of tens of millions of people annually. Currently, from one-third to one-half of the world's grain, and about three-quarters of major food crops in the U.S. (e.g., corn, wheat, soybeans, oats), is fed to animals destined for slaughter, while about one *billion* poor people chronically suffer from malnutrition and its debilitating effects, with tens of thousands of them consequently dying each day, one every few seconds.

Maimonides, the great rabbi, physician, and scholar known as the Rambam, who wrote in his *Guide for the Perplexed* that the pain of people is the same as the pain of other animals, ruled that one must literally sell the clothes one is wearing, if necessary, to fulfill the *mitzvah* of lighting the menorah and celebrating the miracle (Hil. Chanukah 4:12). Uniting physical needs and spiritual needs is vitally important for the body, the mind, and the spirit. In the joyous process of celebrating our festival of freedom and light, other beings shouldn't have to be enslaved and killed by our tyranny over them. No one should ever have to die on our account.

Chanukah represents the victory of the idealistic and courageous few over the seemingly invincible power and dominant values of the surrounding society. We learn through both our religious studies and history that might does not make right, even if it sometimes rules the moment. Therefore, quality is more important than quantity; and spirituality is more vital than materialism, though each is necessary. "Not by might and not by power, but by spirit," says Zechariah 4:6, part of the prophetic reading for Shabbat Chanukah. Today, vegetarians are relatively few in number, though growing, and billions of captive factory farm animals are powerless to defend themselves, but

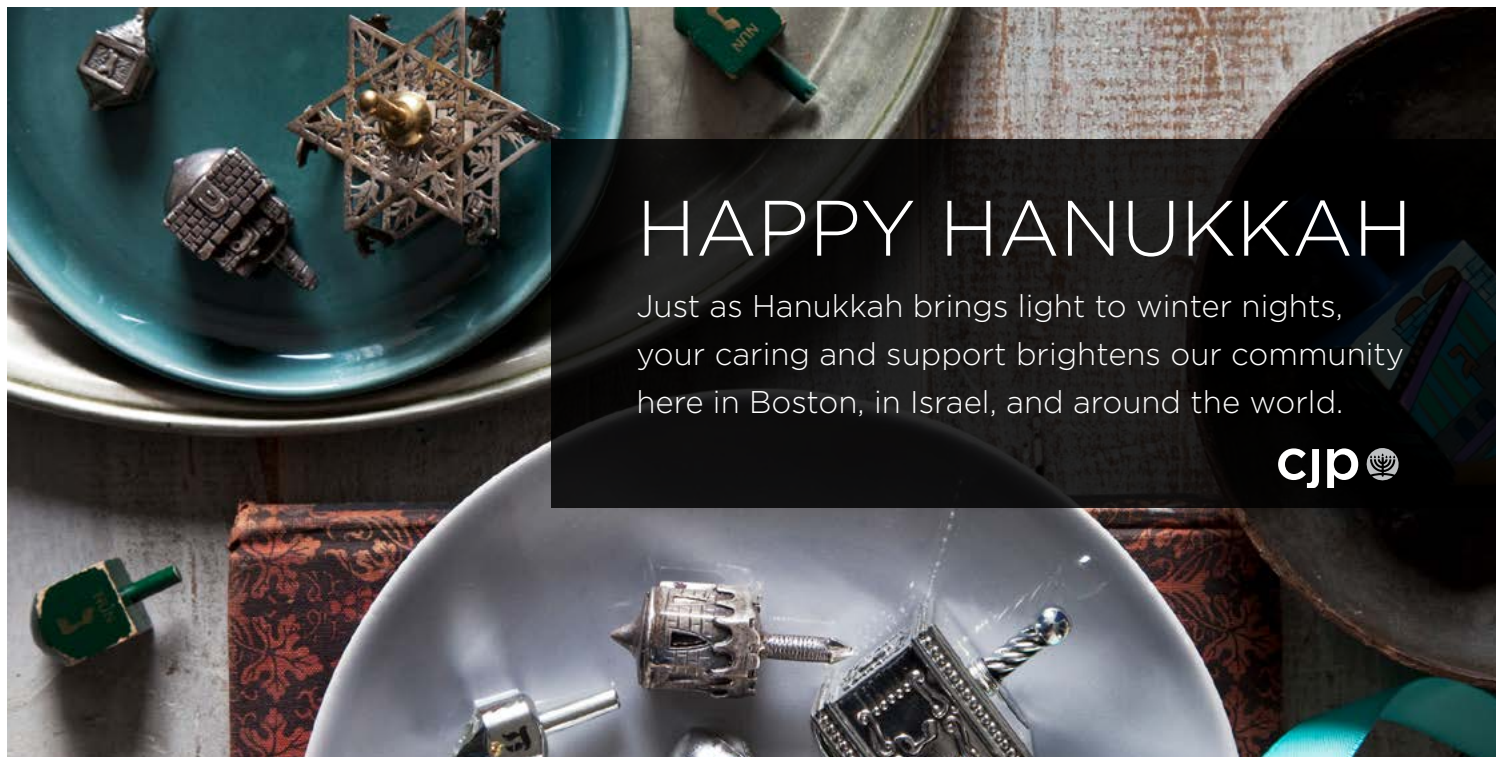


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Another Miracle of Chanukah

the highest ideals and spirit of Judaism are on their side.

Still believing in brute force, materialism, and greed, the world presently wastes a staggering and nearly unimaginable \$1 trillion on total military might annually (over half of that amount is by the U.S. alone), while half the world's population barely survives on \$2 a day or less and, as noted, some don't even survive. Security does not come from superior physical forces or from authoritarian political conditions, as the Chanukah story and contemporary events remind us. Collective security lies in a just and sustainable society, what Martin Luther King, Jr. described as "positive peace," just as personal security lies in a healthy and sustainable lifestyle. These are deeply and intimately related.

The Jewish anti-imperialist insurgency, led by the Macabees, was sparked when a pig was killed and Rabbi Eleazar and other Jews were ordered to eat it. Those who refused, including nonagenarian Rabbi Eleazar, were summarily killed. According to the Book of Macabees, some Macabees lived on plant foods - to "avoid being polluted" - when they hid in caves and in the mountains to escape capture. Further, the major foods associated with Chanukah, *latkes* (potato pancakes) and *sufganiyot* (jelly donuts), are vegetarian foods - as is chocolate *gelt!* - and the vegetable oils that are used in their preparation are a reminder of the pure vegetable oil (olive) used in the lighting of the Temple's Menorah.

The miracle of the oil brings the use of fuel and other resources into focus. One day's oil was able to last for eight days in the Temple, a miracle of resource conservation. Conservation and energy-efficiency are sacred acts and vegetarianism allows resources to go much further, since far less oil, water, land, topsoil, chemicals, labor, and other agricultural resources are required for plant-based diets than for animal-centered diets, while far less waste, pollution, and greenhouse gases are produced. For example, it can require up to 78 calories of non-renewable fossil fuel for each calorie of protein obtained from

factory-farmed beef, whether kosher or otherwise, but only two calories of fossil fuel to produce a calorie of protein from soybeans.

Reducing our use of oil by shifting away from the mass production and consumption of meat - thereby making supplies last longer, freeing us from our dangerous dependence on oil as well as oily authoritarian governments, and diminishing the availability of petro-dollar funds for terrorists and others - would surely be a fitting way to celebrate the miracles of Chanukah. By conserving oil, commemorating how one's day's worth of oil lasted for eight, and by reducing our dependence on it, we can create what Rabbi Arthur Waskow of the Shalom Center calls a "green menorah" and a green Chanukah. In this way, we support ethical lifestyles and holy communities on this festival and throughout the year.

In addition to resource conservation and economic efficiency, a switch toward vegetarianism would greatly benefit the health of individuals, the condition of our environment, and would sharply reduce the suffering and death of billions of animals. Further, the social, psychological, and spiritual benefits should not be underestimated. Many people who switch to a vegetarian diet report feeling physically, emotionally, and spiritually better. And more and more Jews and others are doing just that!

Chanukah also represents the triumph of idealistic non-conformity. Like the Hebrew prophets, the Macabees fought for their inner beliefs, rather than conforming to external pressure. They were willing to proudly exclaim: this we believe, this we stand for, this we are willing to struggle for. Like the great Prophets and the celebrated Macabees, vegetarians represent this type of progressive non-conformity by an inspired minority. At a time when most people, especially in wealthier countries, think of animal products as the main part of their meals, vegetarians are resisting and insisting that there is a better, healthier, more compassionate, more environmentally sustainable, and ethical choice, one that better fits with our religious values and philosophical beliefs.



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Another Miracle of Chanukah

Jewish sages compared candles to our souls and the light to the Torah (Proverbs 20:27), noting that the fire of a candle always strives to go upward. In this way, we kindle souls with the ethical light of our tradition. Candles are lit for each of the eight nights of Chanukah, symbolizing a turning from darkness to light, from despair to hope, from oppression to miracles. According to the prophet Isaiah, the role of Jews is to be a "light unto the nations" (Isaiah 42:6). "Light is sown for the righteous" (Psalm 97:11) and, as our sages have said, it only takes a little light to dispel much darkness. Vegetarian activists are like the *shamesh*, the servant candle, which helps to spread light without itself being diminished. We do not lose anything by helping ourselves and others; indeed, we gain in righteousness. Vegetarianism can be an effective way of adding light and hope to the darkness of a world still suffering with factory farms and slaughterhouses - and their attendant negative consequences - as well as with other systems and symbols of violence and oppression.

The word Chanukah means dedication, while the Hebrew root of the word means education. Each year, we should re-educate ourselves about the horrible realities of factory farming and slaughterhouses, as well as re-dedicate and beautify our inner temples. We can do this by practicing the powerful Jewish teachings and highest values of Judaism, as another way to "proclaim the miracle" of Chanukah and

Jewish renewal. These sacred values and holy deeds (*mitzvot*) include compassion for others, including animals (*tsa'ar ba'alei chayim*), preserving one's health (*pekuach nefesh*), conservation of resources (*bal tashchit*), proper spiritual intention (*kavanah*), righteousness and charity (*tzedakah*), peace and justice (*shalom v'tzedek*), being partners in creation (*shomrei adamah*), healing our world (*tikun olam*), and increasing in matters of holiness (*ma'alim bakodesh v'ayn moridim*, going from strength to strength, just as Hillel successfully argued that we should light the menorah for the eight days in ascending order).q

Chanukah commemorates the deliverance of the Jews from the Syrian-Greeks. In our time, vegetarianism can be a step toward deliverance of society from various modern plagues and tragedies, including global warming, world hunger, deforestation, air and water pollution, species extinction, resource depletion, heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes, obesity, rising health care costs, and lost productivity, among others.

One way to achieve the wonderful aspirations of Judaism is by switching to a vegetarian diet. A shift toward vegetarianism can also be a major factor in the rededication and renewal of Judaism, as it would further demonstrate that Jewish values are not only relevant, but essential to everyday personal life and global survival.

The letters on a diaspora dreidel are an acronym for *nes gadol hayah sham*, a great miracle happened there. May the celebration of this joyous holiday inspire another miracle within each of us.

May we all have a happy, healthy, and miraculous Chanukah!

For more information, please visit the Jewish Vegetarians of North America website at www.JewishVeg.org and The Vegetarian Mitzvah site at www.brook.com/jveg.

Daniel Brook, Ph.D., teaches sociology and political science. He maintains The Vegetarian Mitzvah, is a member of the Advisory Committee of Jewish Vegetarians of North America, and can be contacted via brook@brook.com.

Richard H. Schwartz, Ph.D. is the president emeritus of the Jewish Vegetarians of North America and the author of Judaism and Vegetarianism, and Judaism and Global Survival. He can be contacted via President@JewishVeg.org.



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From Parkland to Pittsburgh



By *Tamar Lilienthal*

The Jewish community is stunned. We are confused, we are angry, and we are struggling to cope with a tragedy that was a personal attack on our people.

Unfortunately, for me, these feelings are all too familiar. A mere nine months ago, 17 lives were lost in my hometown as a result of gun violence. Granted, the attack was not an anti-Semitic one, but the feelings I had were very much the same ones that our Jewish community is having now. How could this happen to my “people,” the residents of Parkland? How could G-d allow such tragedy in our world? And most importantly, what am I going to do now to make sure this doesn’t happen again?

I still don’t know why G-d allows tragedies of this nature to happen. And my guess is that, unfortunately, I’ll likely spend my entire life without knowing the answer to this question.

What I do know, however, is the importance of taking action in the aftermath of tragedy. While I’m definitely no authority on exactly what one should do, I think my personal experience coping with the shooting at Stoneman Douglas has given me some insight into what is most important at a time like this.

Firstly, society often has a misconception that those affected by gun violence, in hate crimes or otherwise, don’t want it turning “political.” That is simply false. On the contrary, those affected by gun violence usually want there to be conversation about what needs to change. They want to take action so that what happened to them does not happen to others.

So in the weeks and months following the attack at Tree of Life Synagogue, don’t shy away from engaging in the greater political conversation. So much in our country needs to change, from gun legislation to the culture of hate that affects both Jews and other minorities, and the first step in bringing about that change is being willing to recognize that there are problems.

Aside from speaking up, another important thing to recognize in the aftermath of tragedies like these is how crucial it is to get out and vote. After the shooting in Parkland, students from Stoneman Douglas went on a nationwide tour to encourage and register people to vote, and crowds of thousands came out to support them in every town they visited!

Unfortunately, it often takes tragedies like these to make people realize how important it is to elect leaders that will make change -- but once they take it to heart, the difference it can make is incredible. While midterm elections may have just passed, civic engagement will continue to be important in every future election.

Finally, even if you are vocal about change and you commit to voting

in future elections, you may still feel like you want to do something that’ll help the community that was personally affected by the tragedy. While donating money or writing letters of support can be meaningful, by far the most important thing you can do is read up on the lives of the people that were lost. I know that in the aftermath of Douglas, I encouraged everyone I knew to learn as much as they could about the people who were killed. I felt that maybe, just maybe, our friends wouldn’t be gone forever if we kept their memories alive.

After the shooting in Parkland, one of the things that was most helpful for me was listening to the soundtrack of “Dear Evan Hansen”, the hit musical on Broadway. One of the songs, called “Disappear,” has a quote that I find particularly meaningful after tragedies like these:

“No one deserves to be forgotten.

No one deserves to fade away.

No one should come and go

And have no one know

He was ever even here.

No one deserves to disappear.”

We often get so wrapped up in the media that we neglect to realize that the people who perished were more than just a statistic or a news headline; they were human beings with hopes, dreams, and stories. Therefore, the least we can do is take the time to learn about who they were and what they stood for.

Since the attack in Pittsburgh, people have turned to me for words of comfort as someone who “knows what it feels like.” But even nine months later, I still have nothing to say that can be comforting. No words can cause the intense grief to magically subside. All I can say is that tragedies like these clearly prove to us that there’s so much work to be done in our world.

And as the Talmud says, “You are not obligated to finish the work, but neither are you free to desist from it.”

Lilienthal, originally from Florida, is currently studying at Midreshet Nishmat in Jerusalem. Next year, she will begin college at the University of Pennsylvania.

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In the Aftermath of Pittsburgh

By Robert Leikind

Like many of you, I have been struggling to make sense of the massacre at the Tree of Life Congregation. The day after, I went to minyan. There was not an empty seat in the room. We prayed and sang and I felt the permission I needed to let go and cry. In that moment it was helpful to be part of a community that I knew understood and shared my sorrow.

In the days that followed, we heard a lot about what happened, who the murderer was, why he did what he did, and what the event could mean for the upcoming midterm elections. What remains important, however, is that we not lose sight of the fact that the tragedy in Pittsburgh was not an anomaly. It was a product of an anti-Jewish tradition that reaches back into the distant past. Those of us who have been blessed to live and grow up in the United States in this time have been shielded from the worst elements of this tradition. As each of us know, however, there is no guarantee that the freedoms to which we have become accustomed will remain for our children and grandchildren. What happened in Pittsburgh was a stark reminder of this.

We face very real challenges today, but we also live in a privileged historical moment. Our country still adheres to the idea that we are all equal in the eyes of the law and are endowed with certain inalienable rights. This provides us with the opportunity, indeed the obligation, to do all in our power to ensure that these democratic virtues are not eroded by hate or other motivations.

We Jews share this interest with others, who face challenges that are both different and very similar. If there is a hope that comes from this very sad moment, it is that those who remain devoted to the liberal values that have shaped this country will work together - without regard to party, religion, race or ethnicity - to preserve and protect the precious virtues that have always been the wellspring of our nation's greatness.

This is exactly what happened on November 3. People across New England, throughout the United States and around the world, participated in AJC's #ShowUpForShabbat campaign by attending synagogue services. It was a show of solidarity and resolve in response to the massacre at the Tree of Life synagogue. Congregations in every state and in more than 75 countries opened their doors, and Jews and non-Jews alike joined hands to affirm the liberal ideals on which this country was founded. It was one more opportunity to shed a tear among friends who understood.

Robert Leikind is the Director of AJC New England.



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What has happened to our American Dream?

By Cindy Rowe

Three spoons and a prayer book. That is what's left from the perilous journey my family took across the ocean with their young children in 1912, escaping starvation and violence, looking towards what waited for them in America. To some of us, this is a familiar immigration story - our ancestors sacrificing everything, yearning for the "golden land of opportunity," in order to create a better life for future generations.

As we confront the current immigration crisis in this country, we must ask ourselves: what has happened to this American dream?

I barely recognize our country's immigration policy these days. We should all be disturbed by the federal administration's hostile actions towards immigrants and refugees. For a country that once prided itself on "welcoming the huddled masses, yearning to breathe free," our national discourse has devolved into labeling these same people as "gang members" and "rapists," while simultaneously tearing parents from their children at the border.

This Administration is sacrificing our morality for a false sense of security, putting forth shameful policy proposals, robbing people desperate to leave their countries for the promise of safety, freedom, and above all, basic human decency.

The worst part is: we've seen this before. We should know better than to succumb to this Administration's cynical game of using refugees and immigrants as scapegoats for all of our country's problems.

As if this anti-immigrant gas lighting weren't enough, the refugee admission ceiling has officially been set at no more than 30,000 people next year - less than a third of the usual level and one of the lowest in our country's history. And, in addition to denying refuge to people looking to escape arduous conditions,

the Trump Administration has also proposed a rule on "public charge" seeking to force immigrants to choose between following a path to citizenship or accessing assistance for basic human needs like healthcare, food and housing programs.



There is something we can do about this, and the time to act is now. JALSA is joining groups across the country in asking people to submit comments to the Federal Register to oppose this new rule on "public charge" and to stand up for a more welcoming immigration system. Please e-mail us at jalsaoffice@gmail.com to learn how you can submit a comment by December 10, 2018 to let our government know that you have an immigration story, and that this proposal does not align with our Jewish values of welcoming the stranger.

I am proud to be an American, and to live in a country which has been held up around the world as being a destination for those seeking refuge, providing a haven from lives of despair and poverty. While the White House seems ready to turn a deaf ear to the cry of immigrants, we all have a responsibility to do our part to stand up for the American dream.

Cindy Rowe is the Executive Director of Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action Impact (JALSA Impact), an organization dedicated to harnessing the power of the progressive Massachusetts Jewish community to restore checks and balances to America.



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A Balanced Hope



By Tucker Lieberman

Each of us needs hope for a better future. But not every complaint can be addressed, of course. Some losses are irreversible. We usually can't get back a lost marriage or job, nor restore our youthful health. And, as we age, some options narrow. I've never been a professional musician or athlete and, now, especially as I haven't started the work of picking up an instrument or sport, my chances of becoming one are slim. Some hopes feel misplaced, as if they simply set us up for disappointment.

Some hopes, however, keep us pointed in the direction of what we have to do. Most of us aspire to improve or at least maintain our health and relationships. We need our land to produce good food and to sustain us with clean air and water, and we want our neighborhoods to be safe for everyone. We seek knowledge and desire wisdom. We purify our hearts to have better intentions, and we learn how to make our good deeds more effective. We build opportunities for ourselves and the next generation. This demonstrates hope for the future. Hope makes it possible to acknowledge imperfection and to move forward, believing that things can get better and that we may have some role to play.

What is hope, as a feeling, a capacity, a commitment? There are as many different hopes as there are hoped-for changes, but we can generalize about it.

Hope is the recognition that a situation ought to improve, and the optimistic expectation that it will. Hope is uncertain and aspirational. It is compatible with the observation that people may need to take action, and that the better world may not "just happen" on its own. It's not a direct, sharp tool to get things done. It's an emotional strategy to feel a little more connected and engaged over the long term.

In my opinion, three virtues - trust, responsibility, and patience - constitute hope. These three virtues are described by Alan Morinis, founder of the Mussar Institute, in his book "Everyday Holiness: The Jewish Spiritual Path of Mussar."

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A Balanced Hope

I will explain how I see their relationship to hope:

Trust

By “trust” (*bitachon*), Morinis basically refers to theodicy - that is, our understanding of G-d’s goodness even as we face suffering and evil in this world. One way to reconcile G-d’s goodness with the existence of evil, he says, is to see that pain is necessary to prompt us to change, and that ongoing change is necessary for a real, meaningful life. Thus, the conflicts we endure are part of a larger plan. To trust, on this theological view explained by Morinis, is to believe that G-d has a plan. If we fixate on what feels wrong to us, it’s because we only see part of the tapestry.

I avoid theodicy because I don’t want to justify suffering and evil. I am, however, comfortable explaining a similar kind of trust that doesn’t refer to G-d.

In my view, there are multiple tapestries. Ecosystem tapestries are full of plants and animals that may not consciously see themselves working together as a whole. Human tapestries, too, are full of plans and networking, conscious and unconscious, intentional and accidental. Some people make bad plans, while others make good plans to foil them.

When I trust, I feel that I have a place in these plans. The word *bitachon* refers to where we lean. I was born on this planet, I’ve landed where I have, and I am plugged in. I have a right to be here. I’m supposed to function within the system but also to rebel against it a little. I’m entitled to feel sadness, anger, and pain. Like everyone else, I’m positioned to live this way. To trust is simply to acknowledge my position among interlocking people and environments, to accept that there is a way to find greater contentment within this system, and to assume that there is also a way to tweak or revolutionize the system. I trust that my context gives motivation and meaning to everything I do. I trust that there are new possibilities.

Responsibility

Morinis points out that the word “responsibility” (*achrayut*) may be rooted in either “other” (*acher*) or “after” (*achar*). Responsibility, then, is either how we show concern for others’ welfare, or it’s how we behave when we understand that every action has an aftereffect. We have a meaningful context - we trust in that, as stated earlier - and it’s always full of tension that spurs us to want change. Responsibility means that we care about exactly what we are trying to achieve. We take deliberate action.

Patience

In both Hebrew and English, “patience” (*savlanut*) implies that we suffer while we wait. Patience is about the pain of not getting immediate results. Sometimes change is slow and it takes a while to arrive at an important goal. When we are attentive to the suffering of ourselves and others, we need patience to bear it calmly.

Living Hopefully

Virtues are called *middot*, “measures,” which to me suggests that virtues work best in moderation. You want enough of a virtue that it weighs something, but you also want to feel its boundaries.

With too much trust, and not enough responsibility or patience, hope can be unrealistic, false, or fanatical.

With too much responsibility, missing the magic of trust and patience, hope is all grunt work.

With too much patience, and lacking the effort of trust and responsibility, hope might be merely a painful feeling that appears as a roadblock.

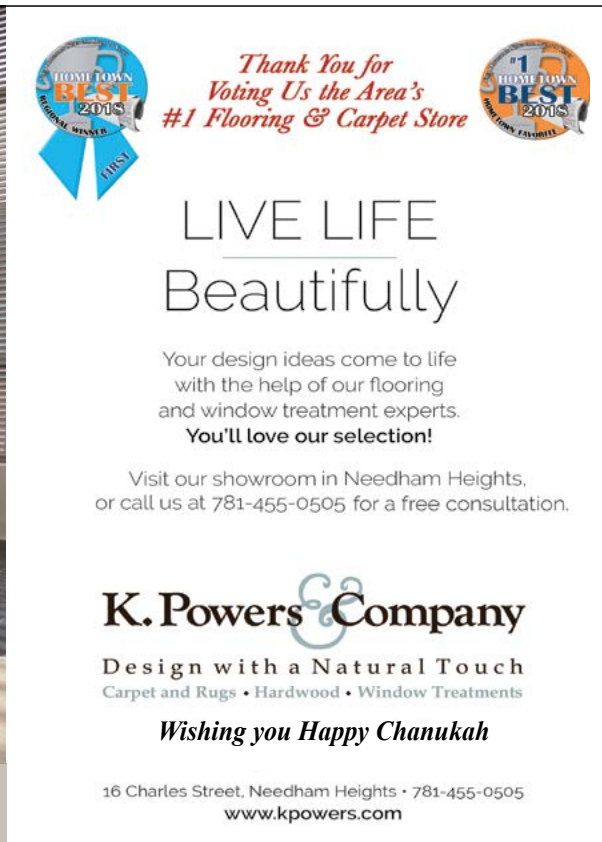
I think, then, that any hope can be imbalanced in how we feel it and act upon it. We can balance our approach, and we shouldn’t be afraid to hope. When we trust our contexts and networks, accept responsibility for our deeds, and patiently await outcomes, we are living hopefully.

Tucker Lieberman is the author of Painting Dragons, about gender in fiction. His essay “Hearing Beneath the Surface” is in the anthology “Balancing on the Mechitza.” Visit www.tuckerlieberman.com.



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What a Democratic-Controlled House of Representatives can do to Prevent the Continuity of a Palestinian Arab Dictatorial Regime

By David Bedein

A Democratic controlled House of Representatives can play a crucial role in preventing the continuity of a Palestinian Arab regime devoid of peace education and which instead...

1. Places Palestinian Arabs under totalitarian rule,
2. Runs schools based on indoctrination to liberate all of Palestine by force of arms,
3. Awards cash and honor to anyone who will murder a Jew,
4. Advocates the right of return by force of arms,
5. Continues to confine Arab refugees from 1948 to the indignity of refugee camps,
6. Refuses to allow 1 UNRWA refugee camps to be rehabilitated,
7. Places the death penalty upon any Arab who sells property to a Jew, and
8. Allows for an economy to exist without transparency on public funds,

There is a groundswell of Palestinian public opinion which we can nurture as an alternative, with an UNRWA Reform Initiative which comprises the following operative principles:

Cancel the UNRWA war curriculum, based on Jihad, martyrdom and the "right of return by force of arms," which have no place in UN education, with its theme "Peace Begins Here."

Cease paramilitary training in all UNRWA schools. It is an absurdity that UNRWA, a UN agency with a purported commitment to "peace education," allows such arms training on its premises.

Insist that UNRWA dismiss employees affiliated with Hamas in accordance with laws on the books in western nations that forbid aid to any agency that employs members of a terrorist organization.

Introduce UNHCR standards to UNRWA to advance the resettlement of 4th and 5th-generation refugees from the 1948 war. These people have spent some seven decades relegated to refugee status. Current UNRWA policy is that any refugee resettlement would interfere with the "right of return" to pre-1948 Arab localities. By adopting the political stance of Palestinian maximalists, UNRWA flouts its own commitment to the welfare and future of Palestinian refugees.

Demand an audit of donor funds that emanate from 68 nations. This would address widespread documented reports of wasted resources, duplication of services, and an undesired flow of cash to the Gaza-based terror groups that have controlled UNRWA operations there for the past 18 years.

There is no doubt in my mind that the new Democratic majority of the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee will support such an initiative.

David Bedein is the Director of the Center for Near East Policy Research and Israel Resource News Agency.

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