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Magazine

Passover / Spring 2019 EDITION 36

**10TH ANNIVERSARY
EDITION**



**Opinion
Community Events
Exclusive Articles**



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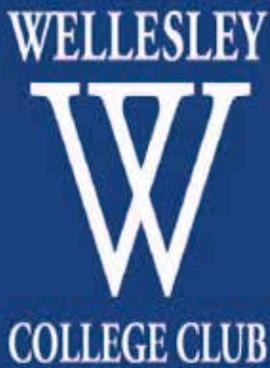
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Adams Street Shul

"Bearing Witness: The Story of the Nentershausen Synagogue." A Jewish Heritage Centre event presented by Stephen Denker at the Adams Street Shul in Newton, **May 16 at 8 p.m.** For more information and to reserve your free tickets, please visit <https://my.americanancestors.org/single/eventDetail.aspx?p=1076> or contact David Jacobson at: 617-630-0226, ext. 2 or president@adamsstreet.org.

B'nai Shalom 40th Anniversary

Sunday, **May 19 – 11:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.** Congregation B'nai Shalom is thanking the Central Mass. community with a Festival Day, the concluding event of our 40th Anniversary Celebration! This free event is open to everyone, and will feature noted entertainer Ellen Allard, the Shir Joy Chorus, the Point 'n Swing Big Band, and the grand finale, featuring the fast-rising Indy rock band oldsoul. There will be food trucks (including a Kosher truck), children's activities and entertainers, and fun for the whole family. Congregation B'nai Shalom is at 117 East Main St. (Route 30), Westborough.



Tot Shabbat in Canton

Temple B'nai Tikvah, 1301 Washington St., Canton, will hold a Tot Shabbat on **May 3**. The event begins at 9:30 a.m. and is free and open to the public. All children between the ages of 18 months to 4 years old, accompanied by an adult, are welcome to attend. There will be games, stories, snacks and more. For further information, please call the Temple office at 781-828-5250.

YACHAD Events

May 1 and June 5 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the YACHAD Community Center, 384 Harvard Ave., Brookline. For individuals ages 16-25. Come join an awesome social group in an inclusive environment. Hang out with old friends and make new ones. Some activities include scavenger hunts, art programs, and more. This is a free event, and a healthy dinner will also be provided. Walk-ins are welcome, but it is encouraged to RSVP online at yachad.org/newengland, or contact Ilana at kruger@ou.org or 617-209-6799 ext. 4.

On **May 19 from 7-9 p.m.** at Temple Reyim, 1860 Washington St. Auburndale, join YACHAD for a social event for individuals ages 25 and up. There will be lots of fun, snacks and games. Cost is only \$3. You can RSVP at yachad.org/newengland or contact Caryn at schillerc@ou.org or 617-209-6799 ext. 102.

Temple Emanuel, Andover

A Yom HaShoah Commemoration and Remembrance of the Holocaust will be observed on **Sunday, May 5, at 1 p.m.** at Temple Emanuel, 7 Haggetts Pond Road, Andover. This event is free and open to the public. Richard Cohen, President of the Southern Poverty Law Center, will speak about teaching tolerance, fighting hate and seeking justice to make the world a better place today and tomorrow. We will honor the past to shape the future of our community with a candle lighting and dedication. For information, please call 978-470-1356, email info@templemanuel.net or visit www.templemanuel.net.



Happy Passover

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Happy Passover

Shalom Magazine 2019
Published by Farber Marketing Inc.
Editor & Publisher: Shirley Nigri Farber
Marketing Director: Scott A. Farber
Copy Editor: Susie Davidson



It is with great pride and gratitude that I present to you the 10th anniversary edition of *Shalom Magazine*. When I look back to 2009, when I started this publication, I can see that thank G-d, we have achieved our initial goal of uniting the Jewish communities dispersed around the state of Massachusetts. There are a variety of events and initiatives taking place in different towns, and sometimes Jewish people wander around without knowing of their existence. People in the suburbs feel isolated from some of the major Jewish activities. I hoped that the publication could serve as a way to inform and invite all to participate.

I'm grateful for all the people who join me and my husband Scott in this enterprise. They include writers who share their knowledge in the form of articles, advertisers who for many years have provided the funds to make this publication available in large quantities free of charge, and Jewish organizations that support us with funds and content. Last but not least, thanks go out to my dear friend, journalist Susie Davidson, who ensures that there are no grammatical errors in the magazine.

I regard *Shalom Magazine* as an equalizer in the community: A vehicle that can reach, at the same time, rich and poor, Orthodox and Reform, left and right, people living near a synagogue or far away, to bring Judaism even to the unconnected and unaffiliated. The power of the print media is that we reach farther than we can imagine. We never know who will pick up the magazine at a store. We are accessible and available, and we don't disappear on the internet.

When a rabbi gives a lecture, he looks at his congregants, and he knows his audience. When we publish a magazine, distribute it at public places and place it online, we reach further because the printed word can be read again and again, and it can be shared today and again, next month.

This Passover, when we remember how we were slaves in Egypt, we share our history from generation to generation. By reading the Hagaddah, traditions are passed orally and in print. I hope we can continue to use this particular media outlet to reach out to as many Jews as possible and fulfill the prophecy: "for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the L-rd as the waters cover the sea" (*Isaiah 11:9*).

May all our readers have a happy and Kosher Passover!

Shirley Nigri Farber - Publisher

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- AJC New England
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- David Bedein - Israel
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Jewish Climate Change Conference



*Keynote speaker Madeline Hirshland
(photo: Nicci Meadow)*

At a crucial historical moment, when youth and other concerned people around the world are arising to protect our planet, an estimated 250 attendees, presenters, and vendors filled the 2nd Jewish Climate Change Conference, “The Time Is Short, The Task Is Great,” on March 24 at Temple Reyim in Newton.

The Jewish Climate Action Network (JCAN) partnered with Beantown Jewish Gardens, the Synagogue Council of Massachusetts, Limmud-Boston and Temple Reyim for

the event. Funded in part by a grant from the New England Grassroots Environmental Fund, the joint effort created what keynote speaker Madeline Hirschland, founder and chair of Solarize Indiana, called a “hopeful and joyful community.”

The conference's scope was comprehensive and sessions included: Conversations Within Communities, Coping with Climate Change, Eco-Food Making, Eco-Systems, Education, Finances, Food and Waste, Kids and Teens, Path for the Next 12 Years, Sustainable Synagogues, and Systemic Change: Advocacy. Economic and ecological justice were the focus throughout.

The evening wrapped up with a panel and an excellent vegan dinner cooked on the spot by Beantown Jewish Gardens volunteers. Comments were universally positive, with attendees emphasizing the intense learning opportunities they encountered, along with the inspiration they received to make change locally and nationally.

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PURIM UNITY PARTY

More than 500 people from the Greater Boston area participated in the YJP (Young Jewish Professionals) Purim Unity Party at The Grant in Seaport Boston on March 20. The black tie event included a Megillah reading, themed photo stations, kosher hors d'ouvres, and a dessert bar.



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ADL "Nation of Immigrants" Seder



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Cardinal Seán O'Malley, Robert Trestan, Joann Egerman, and Esta Gordon Epstein



Participants of all ages read from the Haggadah

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) 12th annual "A Nation of Immigrants" Community Seder took place on March 24 at UMass Boston. This year's Seder focused on strength in diversity and served as an opportunity to inspire people to advocate for meaningful immigration reform, including the Safe Communities Act, Higher Education Equity Act, and the Genocide Education Act. Among notable participants were Cardinal Seán O'Malley, MIRA Coalition Executive Director Eva Milona, and Cambridge Mayor Marc McGovern. Over 400 people attended the event organized in conjunction with ADL's local community partners.

The Anti-Defamation League was founded in 1913 to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all. Today it is the world's leading organization combating anti-Semitism.



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Jonathan Dorfman, President

Robert Leikind, Director

AJC Diplomats Seder



AJC New England Seder Concludes with "Next Year in Jerusalem"

On Sunday, March 31, more than 400 people joined the New England office of the American Jewish Committee (AJC) and diplomats representing 26 countries from around the world to celebrate the universal values of freedom, democracy, and human rights at the AJC New England 20th Anniversary Diplomats Seder at the JFK Library.

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

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

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

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

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YACHAD

Understanding your Oneinforty risk of having a BRCA gene mutation

On March 14, Oneinforty hosted its Spring 2019 symposium at Temple Emanuel of Newton. Panelists at the "Knowledge is Empowering: Understanding the Jewish-Cancer Connection" symposium discussed the significantly higher risk among Ashkenazi Jews of having a BRCA gene mutation and developing hereditary cancer.

Moderated by Oneinforty founder Lauren Corduck, the expert panel included Dana-Farber's Director of the Center for Cancer Genetics and Prevention, Dr. Judy Garber, Brigham and Women's obstetrician Dr. Randi D. Leigh, and social worker Marcia Lewin-Berlin. Panelists discussed genetic counseling, and the importance of testing for BRCA gene mutations. After the panel,

Bob Cooperstein (Lauren's father) and Susan Feinberg shared their "I am Oneinforty" stories. Audience members were able to ask questions and interact with panelists.

Oneinforty is a nonprofit organization founded by Lauren Corduck, a 48-year-old ovarian cancer survivor. When Lauren was 45, she sought genetic testing at the encouragement of a friend. She found out she was BRCA positive, and was counseled to have surgery because of her heightened risk of ovarian cancer. But it was too late. Lauren was diagnosed with late-stage ovarian cancer after having an MRI to find the cause of severe back pain. Even though there was a history of breast cancer in her family (her paternal grandmother died of breast cancer), a genetic test had never been recommended by a physician. Her father is also BRCA positive; he was tested after Lauren was tested. Given her family history of breast cancer and their Ashkenazi Jewish heritage, Lauren should have been referred to a genetic counselor and screened for the BRCA gene mutations years ago.

That's why Lauren is now on a mission to help others avoid a similar situation. Having just one grandparent of Ashkenazi descent



Lauren Corduck and Bob Cooperstein

photo: Sarah Bastille for MGH Cancer Center

puts one at higher risk. When she became aware of her BRCA positive status, she had no idea about the heightened risk of those of Ashkenazi descent. And she is not alone. Now, her organization is focused on raising awareness of the one-in-forty risk to Ashkenazi Jews of inheriting BRCA gene mutations.

Having a BRCA gene mutation significantly raises one's risk of developing hereditary male and female breast, ovarian, prostate and other cancers that in many cases can be prevented or detected early. The general public risk is about one in 400 - but for those of Ashkenazi descent, it is one in 40. Both men and women can carry the gene mutation and pass it on to their children.

The next symposium takes place Sunday, May 19 from 10 am-noon at Temple Reyim in Newton. Register to attend here: [https://www.eventbrite.com/e/knowledge-is-empowering-understanding-](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/knowledge-is-empowering-understanding-the-jewish-cancer-connection-tickets-56458374518)

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To learn more about Oneinforty, please visit <http://oneinforty.org>.

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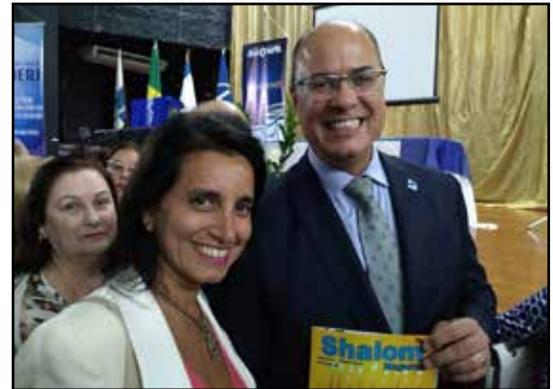
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On March 25, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with U.S. President Donald Trump at the White House, where he signed a proclamation recognizing Israel's sovereignty in the Golan Heights.



Shalom Magazine publisher and journalist Shirley Nigri Farber met with the Governor of Rio de Janeiro Wilson Witzel at the Likud Brazil event at the Hebraica Club-Rio, where he and his team shared their experiences from their recent trip to Israel. Farber invited the governor to come to Boston in the future, to meet with its large area Brazilian community.

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The Historic Walnut Street Synagogue of Chelsea

By Tom Barth

Just across the Tobin Bridge from Boston, literally next to Route 1 southbound in Chelsea, lies a living Jewish historic landmark.

The Walnut Street Synagogue, home of Congregation Agudas Sholom, has been serving the community for 110 years at the corner of Walnut and Fourth Streets.

Jews from Eastern Europe began to arrive in Chelsea in the late 1800s to escape from pogroms. They began to meet for prayer in private homes starting in 1887. The first group evolved into Congregation Ohabei Shalom, which later merged with Congregations Agudas Achim and Beth Hamidrash Hagadol to form Congregation Agudas Sholom in the first decade of the 1900s. Their nearly completed synagogue was consumed by the Great Fire of 1908.

The present building was built at the same site in 1909 and, with a seating capacity of 1,109 in the sanctuary on the second and third floors when it opened, was thought to be the largest synagogue in New England.

The first floor still houses two chapels, one for daily *minyans* and one for Shabbat services, and a kitchen. The second floor houses men's seating, the *bimah*, and the carved wooden ark. The third floor houses the women's gallery, with seating nearly equal to that in the men's section.

The Chelsea Jewish community opened a *cheder* (school), built a *mikvah* (ritual bath), established a Chevra Kadisha (burial society) and a Free Loan Society, and formed 18 synagogues by the early 20th century. The density of Jews per square mile was considered to be the second highest in America outside of New York City. The

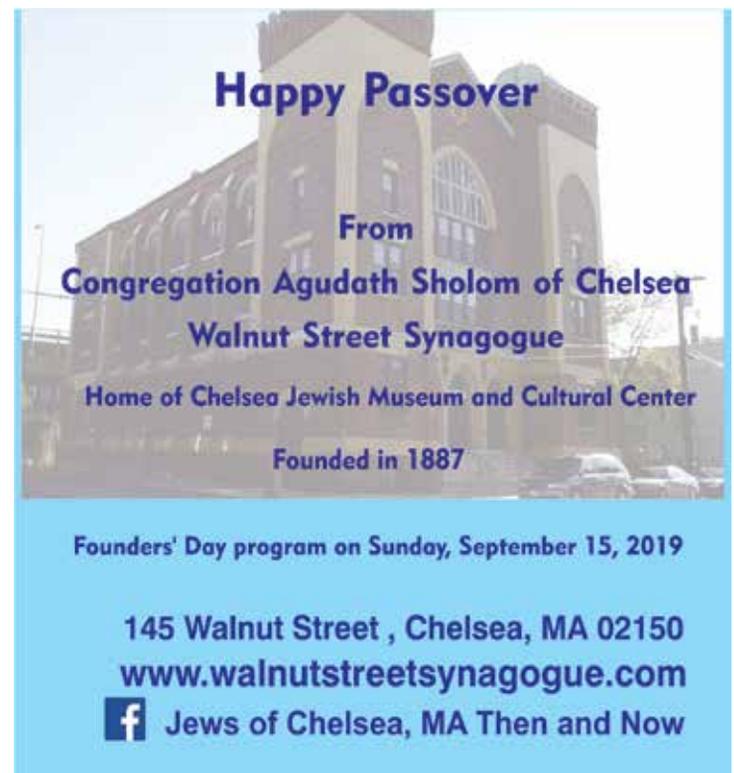
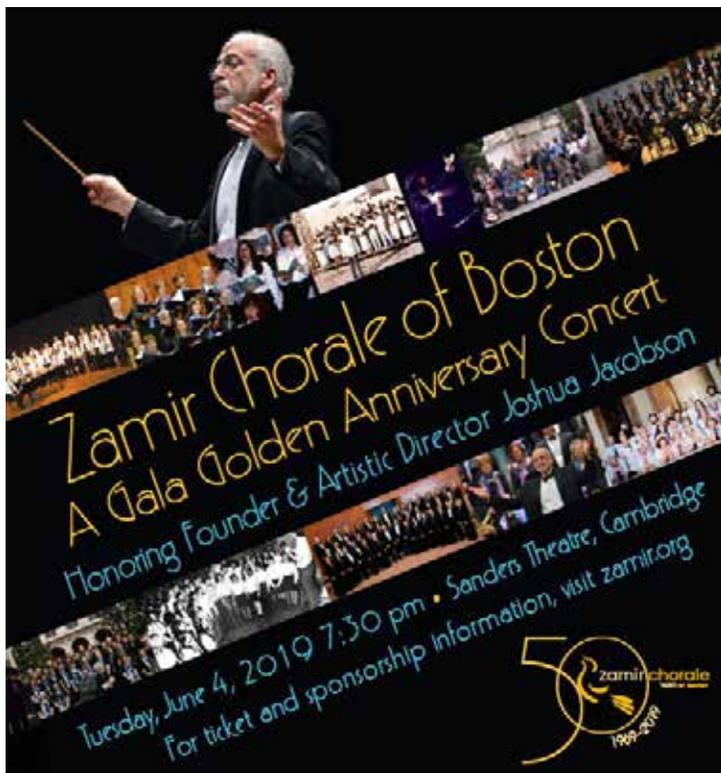


Walnut Street Synagogue is the oldest remaining synagogue and one of only two left in Chelsea.

The Walnut Street Synagogue was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1993.

Looking forward, the Chelsea Jewish Museum and Cultural Center at the Walnut Street Synagogue will house the community's artifacts, including items from synagogues that have closed. The facility will have exhibits and host cultural programs open to the entire community that will reflect its long immigrant history.

Descendants of Chelsea Jewish pioneers will be honored with a Founders' Day program on Sunday, September 15. Details will be provided on the synagogue website www.walnutstreetsynagogue.com and Facebook page. A Facebook group, "Jews of Chelsea, MA Then and Now," has been created to enable former and current Chelsea Jews and their families and friends to post memories, stories, and photos.





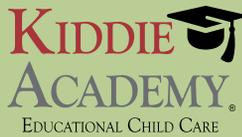
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JCC Greater Boston

Over 500 people attended JCC Greater Boston's annual winter fundraising event, JCC@333, on March 6, including Governor Charlie Baker, Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito, the president and CEO of JCC Greater Boston, Mark Sokoll, and WinnCompanies founder and principal Arthur Winn. The evening raised more than \$750,000 for JCC programs.

Winn received the Norman B. Leventhal Award from Paula Sidman, a former board chair of JCC Greater Boston and Leventhal's daughter, for his family's longtime involvement with the JCC Greater Boston. "Thirty years ago, I received a phone call from the developer and philanthropist Mr. Norman B. Leventhal," Winn reportedly said during his speech. "He asked me if I would donate \$25,000 to help create a new organization called the JCC. It seemed like a million dollars at the time, but you just couldn't say no to Mr. Leventhal. I am happy to have been there at the beginning of the JCC's first 30 years, and the Winn family is proud to kick off the JCC's next 30 years."



Lori Sidman, JCC Greater Boston Board Chair; Arthur M. Winn, Normal B. Leventhal Community Leadership Award 2019 recipient; Mark Sokoll, President and CEO of JCC Greater Boston; Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito; and Governor Charlie Baker.

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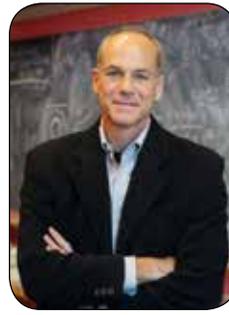
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Marcelo Gleiser, theoretical physicist, cosmologist, and a leading proponent of the view that science, philosophy, and spirituality are complementary expressions of humanity's need to embrace mystery and the unknown, is the 2019 Templeton Prize Laureate. Gleiser, 60, the Appleton Professor of Natural Philosophy and a professor of physics and astronomy at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, has earned international acclaim through his books, TV documentaries, and conferences that present science as a spiritual quest to understand the origins of the universe and of life on Earth.

A native of Brazil, Gleiser becomes the first Latin American to be awarded the Templeton Prize. Marcelo Gleiser was born in Rio de Janeiro to an influential family in Rio's Jewish community, and received a conservative Hebrew school education.

(Photo: Dartmouth College/Eli Burakian)



Leonard Bryant Photography

Weston and Wellesley residents Ishay Grinberg, David Yogel, Eric Silverman, and Rabbi Moshe Bleich director of the Weston-Wellsley Chabad, at the FIDF Charity tournament at Trump International Golf Course in Palm Beach, FL in February

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HiBuR – Connecting Boston and Haifa Teens

By Shoni Aronovich

When the folks at Congregation Beth El in Sudbury and the Hugim School in Haifa came up with a name for their exchange program, HiBuR,* they did not know how on target they were. Beginning in 2007 and running every year since, the Sudbury synagogue and the Haifa public high school have been exchanging groups of 10th graders, with the Israelis visiting Boston in the fall and the Americans traveling to Haifa over February break.

“Twelve years ago we decided to find a way to overcome the barriers of after-school liberal synagogue school structure,” explains David Strauss, a lay leader at Beth El and one of the architects of HiBuR, “and make it possible for Boston and Haifa teens to connect on a personal level to explore the diaspora, Israel, and Jewish peoplehood through each-other's eyes. As the child of a Holocaust survivor, I could not be more psyched about the impact HiBuR has on these rising generations.”

One of the most impactful aspects of the program is the emphasis on fostering sustainable relationships for the American and Israeli teens. Beginning with parallel local workshops, the teens spend a fall weekend together in New York, followed by a week of home hospitality in Massachusetts, and then one in Israel in February, culminating with a shared Shabbat in Jerusalem. The time the teens spend together not only fosters sustainable relationships, but also provides them with a unique perspective.

“When you travel to any place,” reflects Sofia, a 10th grader from Beth El who recently returned from Israel, “there is always some level of removal from the culture, as you are looking at it through the lens of being an American. However, HiBuR is a uniquely immersive experience. Living with an Israeli family for a week and experiencing

their day-to-day not only gave me the opportunity to get to know a wonderful person and friend, but it also widened my perspective of the global Jewish community and the ways in which we see the world differently, but also the ways in which we are all united.”

Over the past several years, HiBuR has evolved from a single-congregation program to a regional collaborative, currently including seven synagogues from Boston's Metrowest area - Congregation Beth El, Beth Elohim, B'nai Torah, Beth Sholom, Kerem Shalom, Or Atid and Temple Sinai. As a result of this collaboration, the local teens and their families not only connect with Israeli peers, but have also expanded their social circles at home, creating a more vibrant local Jewish community.

Due to its special community-oriented nature, HiBuR has gained a unique place in the local landscape of Israel exchange programs, many

of them supported by Boston's CJP.

“HiBuR is a model that we at CJP are looking at with pride and keen interest,” said Marla Olsberg, who manages CJP's Boston Haifa Connection, School to School. “We are witnessing a diverse group of area synagogues successfully working together with a shared goal of serving the teens in all their communities, by means of strengthening connections with Haifa teens as well as with each other. Following this HiBuR model enables CJP to continue to think out of the box with other aspects of building a stronger Boston area Jewish community.”

** HiBuR means connection in Hebrew, and stands for Haifa-Boston Relationship. To learn more about the program and how to participate, visit www.hibur.org.*

Shoni Aronovich is the Director of Teen Education and Engagement at Congregation Beth El, and the Coordinator of the HiBuR Program. Please email him at hiburboston@gmail.com.



American HiBuR teens on the Carmel mountain

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Latin Jewish Clergy

On February 13, Temple Emanuel of Newton hosted “Latin Jewish Clergy : An American Conversation.” The evening, with Rabbi Sonia Saltzman, Rabbi Claudia Kreiman, Rabbi Michael Fel and Cantor Elias Rosemberg, was moderated by Dalia Wassner, Ph.D. Director of the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute Project on Latin America. The event was co-sponsored by the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute Project on Latin American Jewish & Gender Studies.

Each participant shared his/her background and experiences growing up in either Latin America or in a Spanish-speaking Jewish community, and explained how their Latin American identities influenced their role in leading their congregations here in Massachusetts and throughout the wider community. After the panel, they took questions from the audience.



Rabbi Michael Fel, Rabbi Sonia Saltzman, Dalia Wassner, Rabbi Claudia Kreiman, and Cantor Elias Rosemberg

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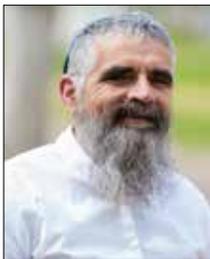
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A Passover Prayer for Our Times



By Rabbi Yuval Cherlow

One of the most prominent aspects of the Passover Seder is the call for us to feel as if it were we who are experiencing the Exodus.

The sages taught that it is not enough just to recall what we experienced as a nation millennia ago, but that we also must also strive to make it as if we ourselves were there.

Admittedly this can be a challenge when we recognize that many, if not most of us, live in an ultra-modern world defined by comforts, mass communication and the concept of slavery as an ideal that we did away with many years ago. But the reality of the Jewish experience is that we cannot live in our own worlds, and we are asked to empathize with the pain and challenges of others.

In that sense, Pesach gives us an important opportunity to open our hearts and minds and recognize the pain and lacking of others -- and perhaps in so doing we can better relate to what our forefathers and mothers went through all those centuries ago.

A very simple look at the headlines on any given day provides us the unfortunate reminder that a great deal of pain exists among peoples who are refugees, not so unlike what we were upon leaving Egypt. Tragically in recent weeks, we saw how refugees are being targeted in places like New Zealand, where they thought they could have found peace, but were instead viciously reminded that evil pervades even the most idyllic corners of the earth.

Several years ago, I took it upon myself to try and transmit this lesson into a tangible prayer which I drafted specifically on behalf of refugees from the Syrian crisis.

Today, of course that crisis has still not been resolved, and while it all too often escapes our attention in favor of more pressing crises, we are reminded of how millions of people around the world long to return to the comforts and familiarity of their homes.

As Jews, a people who strive to serve as a light unto the nations, and a nation whose collective history beseeches us to act with compassion and tolerance to others, I call upon all who share that understanding to insert this prayer into your seders.

Even more, allow it to be a teaching moment to our younger generations that humanity need not be divided by ethnic, religious or even political boundaries. Even while we think differently, act differently and certainly pray differently, as human brothers and sisters we can all face the same fate of being a stranger in a land that is not ours.

Master of the universe, who makes peace on high,

Though we are not accustomed to creating new formal prayers, we can no longer stand aside to look at the slaughter taking place in Your world and fail to pray. We know that both sides in this war are guilty of wanton bloodshed, and we are unable to keep silent when so many who are beyond the circle of conflict have fallen victim.

Oh L-rd, we beseech You in prayer to arouse in the killers their basic humanity and evoke mercy in their hearts. Lead them to recognize that we are all created in Your image and that there are limits even to human cruelty. May You bring to pass what is written in Your Torah: "He who sheds the blood of man, by man his blood shall be shed, for in G-d's image was man created."

Grant us the wisdom to know how to act in this hour of distress, when the dark face of humanity's evil inclination is once again fully exposed and we are unsure of how to stand against it. Enable us to act with all our energies to prevent bloodshed in Your world, above all in the Holy Land and its environs, as it is written in Your Torah: "You shall not pollute the land where you are, for blood pollutes the land, and the land will not expiate the bloodshed upon it, but with the blood of he that shed it."

May G-d who makes peace on high, make peace upon us and upon all Israel, and let us say amen.

Rabbi Yuval Cherlow is the Director of the Tzohar Center for Jewish Ethics and a Founder of the Tzohar Rabbinical Organization in Israel.

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Simcha Showcase 2019



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Simcha Showcase 2019



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The Simcha Showcase 2019 event took place on March 3 at Temple Emanuel of Newton, and featured a variety of bar mitzvah/wedding vendors such as kosher caterers, decorators, DJs and photographers.



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The True Meaning of Freedom



By Sandra Lilienthal, Ed.D.

Ask a Jewish child, who has been exposed to Jewish stories and Jewish holidays, “What do we celebrate on Pesach?”

In all likelihood, the child will open a big smile and answer: “The fact that we are no longer slaves. We are free!” As adults, filled with pride that our next generation has learned the lesson well, we excitedly answer - “right!”

As far as the children are concerned, I would leave it at that. But for the adults, I will challenge this idea. Yes, there is no question that we are no longer slaves to an Egyptian Pharaoh. There are no taskmasters oppressing us with forced labor (Exodus 1:11), and we are not expected to gather the straw for making bricks (Exodus 5:7). And yet - are we really free?

That which enslaves us today is very different from what enslaved us in the past. It is not forced upon us from the outside; we force it upon ourselves. The amazing technologies that are available to us today, which have made life so much easier on many counts, have also enslaved us to a level we have not experienced before. And worst, many times we are totally unaware of this.

The Merriam Webster dictionary offers us a few meanings of being free, among which are the following: “enjoying personal freedom: not subject to the control or domination of another,” and “not determined by anything beyond its own nature or being.” When we think of our youth today, glued to YouTube channels, videogames and all sorts of apps, we must also wonder if they are in fact free. When we are home, eating dinner with our family, and our cell phone sits next to us in case we get an important phone call, are we free? When we are getting ready for bed and a work-related email comes in through our watches and we rush to answer it, are we free? When for 7 days a week, almost 24 hours a day, we are expected to be “on call,” are we really free?

Every year at the Seder, when we read the passage “*B’chol dor vador chayav adam lirot et atzmo k’ilu hu yatza mimitzrayim*” - “In all generations it is the duty of man to consider himself as if he had come forth from Egypt” - I think about how difficult it is to put ourselves in the place of those slaves who were freed from Pharaoh’s tyranny. But there is a different possible translation: “In every generation, every one of us is obligated to regard ourselves as though we had gone through *Mitzrayim*.”

You see, here the word *Mitzrayim* is not translated as Egypt. There is no doubt that *Mitzrayim* refers to Egypt on a *p’shat* (literal) sense. However, the Hebrew language is constructed on *shorashim*, roots. The Zohar, the Jewish mystical text, says that the word *Mitzrayim* is derived from *m’tzarim* - *mi* (from) + *tzar* (narrow, tight)^[1]. On a deeper level, what the Haggadah is trying to tell us is that in every generation, on Pesach we are supposed to break the shackles of that which constrains us, things which lay heavily on our chest or shoulders which do not allow us to be really free.

Any form of addiction enslaves. When we are unable to stop a certain behavior, when we feel compelled to do something without being able to stop ourselves, we have become slaves. When we do not even notice, when we are not mindful of our behaviors, we are slaves: slaves to cigarettes, to food, to drugs, to alcohol, to technology. If we have a hard time putting away our technological gadgets other than when we are asleep, we are 21st Century slaves, just slightly different from the Egyptian Pharaoh’s slaves.

I am not at all suggesting that on Seder night we all throw out our devices. I am however, suggesting that as we celebrate the holiday of freedom, we become mindful of what we can do to free ourselves every now and then. Traditional Judaism has a mechanism for that – Shabbat and holidays. Traditional Jewish observance requires us to stop at least once a week, on Shabbat, for 25 hours, and take a step back from the mundane, the ordinary, the everyday routine. Once a week we experience true freedom - there is nothing that I must do that day,

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The TRUE MEANING of FREEDOM

and otherwise, everything can wait. It is both humbling and freeing as we become aware that the world does not fall apart simply because we were absent and unable to answer a call, a message, or an email.

Some of you might be familiar with “Unplugged,” an initiative taken by several cities that asks people to leave their technological devices home for a few hours and go out to meet with friends and have fun together. Others may have heard of “Shabbat Unplugged,” a project that called for Jews all around the country to experience the feeling of Shabbat by slowing down and “easing up on the frantic pace and hyper-connectivity that governs our daily lives.”

Technology itself is not the problem. Back in the 1960s, when some Jews felt technology could lead young Jews on the wrong path, the Lubavitcher Rebbe stated that everything - including technology - was created by G-d to help us better participate in His creation. Said Rabbi Schneerson: “Our sages have said: ‘All that G-d created was created for His honor’ This applies also to all the scientific discoveries of recent years - their purpose is to add honor to G-d by using them for holiness, Torah and mitzvot....”

Technology is intrinsically good, as it allows us to achieve so much more than we could before it was available. The problem is when we use it in a way that is not beneficial to our own selves and to those around us, including our family and friends.

What I am suggesting for this year, at the Pesach table, is that we introduce the conversation about being slaves to technology, which prevents us from fostering deep connections with family members

and friends, from truly being able to enjoy the world around us. I am suggesting that we resolve to free ourselves through mindfulness of the things that narrow our ability to experience freedom in its most fundamental form. I am proposing that we choose to stop, breathe, and “smell the flowers” for a few hours a week, in whichever ways speak to each one of us. I am hoping that one day in the not-too-distant future, our children will have a hard time understanding what it once meant to

be slaves of technology, as much as we have a hard time understanding what it meant to be a slave in *Mitzrayim*.

Chag Sameach - may your Pesach celebrations this year bring you many opportunities to experience freedom together with your loved ones!

^[1]Some might remember the famous song: *Kol haOlam kulo, gesher tzar me'od* (the whole world is a narrow bridge).

Sandra Lilienthal received her Master's in Jewish Studies and her Doctorate in Jewish Education from Gratz College. She has weekly classes for adult learners throughout the South Florida, and is a frequent

speaker at Jewish education conferences, synagogues and other Jewish organizations in North America. www.sandralilienthal.com.

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Jewish Media Summit, Jerusalem

Text and photos: Shirley Nigri Farber

This past November, along with 150 journalists and bloggers from 30 countries, I participated in the International Jewish Media Summit 2018. The conference, which occurs every two years and is sponsored by the Israeli Government Press Office, gathers members of the Jewish media from around the world.

This year's conference included the "New Media," where bloggers and Instagramers, participating for the first time, added a unique perspective. I also noticed that American journalists from the more established media were not the overwhelming majority, as in past years. There were many first-time attendees from Europe and the former Soviet Union, as well as those affiliated with Orthodox-leaning websites and online media.

It appeared to me that most of the Jewish media today is nonprofit, and often reliant upon one major sponsor or organization.

I went to Israel because I wanted to discuss issues that Diaspora communities are facing. I was the only journalist from New England, and also the only Brazilian. At a time when American Jews are divided in their support for Israel, and liberal Jews feel alienated by the Netanyahu administration and its close relationship to President Trump, there was a lot to talk about.

I believe in the power of people with similar interests getting together to exchange ideas, express their differences, bring to light what they are experiencing in their communities, and hopefully, come up with initiatives on how we can all work together to fight anti-Semitism and the constant demonization of Israel around the world, as well as connect the Diaspora community to Israel.

But the tone of the summit was set from the beginning with a MAGA-style red hat with the conference logo given to participants, and well-received remarks from Ambassador Michael Oren at the gala opening at Zedekiah's Cave, where he celebrated the Trump

administration as representing the "friendliest U.S.-Israel relationship since 1948."

The four-day conference included a series of lectures and debates held at the Mishkenot Sha'ananim Conference Center with Israeli politicians and journalists such as Shareen Haskel (Likud), Matti Friedman and Caroline Flick, on topics ranging from "the modern face of anti-Semitism" to the "what is the Israeli government doing for the Diaspora."

During the summit, we were entertained by artists and presentations.

They included a musical performance by Voca People and American stand-up comedian Avi Liberman, a beautiful sound and light show at the Tower of David Museum, cultural tours, short movies at Ma'aleh Film School, and meetings with local artists and high-tech entrepreneurs. We also were treated to lavish meals between activities.

On the last day of the summit we were received by President Reuven Rivlin at the President's Residence, where he discussed his view of the new four tribes of Israel, as

he divided the population into four equal, 25 percent segments of the population: Arabs (Muslims and Catholics), *Charedi* (ultra-Orthodox Jews), *Dati Leumi* (Religious Zionists, also known as Modern Orthodox Jews) and *Chiloni* (Secular Jews). As he described each group, he explained how the government needs to take into consideration their singular educational system, be sensitive to their cultural diversity, and at the same time engage them in the workforce and increase their representation to make sure they share responsibility in Israeli society.

That would have been a good opportunity to discuss the new Nation-State Law. But Rivlin concluded by stressing the importance of Israelis learning about Jews in the Diaspora, whom he described as a fifth tribe.



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Jewish Media Summit, Jerusalem

From there we went to the Knesset, the Israeli Parliament, where we had a tour of the building while sessions were going on. There, to our surprise, we had a private meeting with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who took some questions from foreign journalists, while avoiding the subject of the corruption charges he faces.

For me, the most interesting part of the summit was meeting people who work in similar fields in Jewish media. I was already familiar with the work of some of them on Facebook and Instagram, such as Allison Joseph from *Jew in the City*, Gabriel Boxer from *Kosher Guru*, and Micah Soffer from *Collive.com*. It was interesting to learn about others, and their communities and media based in Hong Kong, Turkey, Italy, Ukraine, South Africa and Mexico.

I am thankful that the Israeli government is willing to spend time and money gathering Jewish journalists from around the world, but at the end, when I had permission to give my opinion, I did not pass on the opportunity. I believe the conference could be more productive if we had a designated time to exchange ideas among participants and if we could interact with the Israeli media, who could be in turn learning about the Diaspora and relaying our issues to Israelis, who sometimes ignore both our connection to their homeland and how we Jews live outside the Holy Land.

For me, it is important to be heard by members of the Israeli government, because the gap between international Jews is getting wider every day, and we cannot afford to miss an opportunity to give people a voice and potentially create bridges between Israelis and Jews around the world.

Readers who follow me on Facebook had the opportunity to see live videos of the places I toured, and also had a chance to communicate with me and to ask questions while I was in Israel. Videos and photos of my trip and the conference are available at www.facebook.com/ShalomMagazine.



FRIENDS IN ISRAEL

For me, traveling is not just about visiting places, but it is also about spending time with friends and meeting new people, and having the opportunity to learn about the place and its society by exchanging ideas with residents. Thank G-d I have a few good friends in Israel from whom I can learn firsthand about the issues that Israelis are facing, from a different perspective than what I receive from the news. Some of my friends are journalists, college teachers, and doctors. Some are Orthodox, some are not religious at all, some were born in Israel, and some made Aliyah (immigrated).

As one can imagine, there is no consensus on any issue and one thing that Israelis love to do is to sit down and discuss politics over coffee.

To get to know the country, sometimes we need to walk around the towns, so that we can talk to strangers and quietly observe buildings and people - just as I enjoyed sitting at the corner of Jaffa Road and King George savoring a chocolate rugelach and admiring residents passing by with their diverse looks and busy lives.

As I reflect on Israel and Passover, I see that we left Egypt as slaves and became a people once we got to the land, the home of the Jewish people for generations, where we are not strangers or temporary residents.

When I observe the names of the streets in Israel, I see Judaism and history in each sign. In Jerusalem, a small street bears my mother's family name, Ben Chattah. The streets named Hillel and Shamai run parallel, as these rabbis

did in their famous halachic discussions, and people who lived at different times in history like Dizengoff and Queen Esther can finally meet.

This Passover Seder, when you end the Haggadah with the song "*Le Shanah Aba beyerushalayim*," do say it with all intentions to visit the land of the Jewish people.



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Accommodations In Israel



Florentin House



Lilly and Bloom Hotel



21st Floor Hotel

After the conference I stayed in Israel for a few more days. Here are my suggestions for accommodations in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv:

The **21st Floor Hotel**, 34 Ben Yehuda St., Jerusalem (www.21floorhotel.com) is located in the heart of the city. The hotel offers 14 well decorated apartments with all amenities, a full kitchen and dining room. The accommodations are great for families, especially if they wish to bring their own food for Shabbat, the day when most restaurants are closed.

Most incredible is the breathtaking view of the Old City from the living room window. The hotel is perfect for *Shomer Shabbat* guests, offering candles and a hot plate at no extra charge, Shabbat elevator, and Shabbat keys. I was able to walk to Machane Yehuda and the Western Wall, enjoy the evening on Ben Yehuda, and then go back to relax in the jacuzzi and the comfortable bedroom on the second floor of my apartment. The hotel offered a breakfast voucher to be used at three local restaurants. I thought the best was Cafe Rimon, where I had a great all-you-can-eat brunch on Friday. The hotel staff is friendly and helpful, they can arrange for local tours and meals.

Lily & Bloom Hotel, 48 Lilienblum St., Tel Aviv, (www.lilyandbloom.com) is a beautiful Bauhaus-style boutique hotel in the heart of the city, within walking distance to Shuk HaCarmel and the beach. My room was modern, clean and quiet. The traditional

Israeli buffet breakfast was plentiful and delicious. During the day, I walked to the artistic neighborhood of Neve Tzedek, and at night, to restaurants around Rothschild Boulevard.

The **Florentin House**, 6 Florentin St., Tel Aviv (www.florentinhouse.com) offers a variety of options for any kind of budget and traveler, from shared rooms to private, to a large penthouse. I stayed at a large minimalist decor suite with a private porch. The staff was friendly and knowledgeable, they speak English and know the area well. Florentin is a residential neighborhood with a hipster vibe, where locals ride bikes and walk to small stores and cafes. The hotel offered a voucher to be used at local restaurants for breakfast, giving me the opportunity to explore the area. The weather was nice enough to walk to Jaffa Port and get my feet wet in the Mediterranean Sea.

I enjoyed the shared rooftop kitchen where I could heat up a meal that I brought at Shuk HaCarmel, grab a coffee, and meet other travelers. There I met a young French girl who was doing an Ulpan (Hebrew course) at a kibbutz. When I asked her the name of the kibbutz, she thought I would not know. But by coincidence, it was the same kibbutz, Sde Eliahu where at the age of 17 I did my Ulpan. It was only one example of why I love meeting people and learning about different cultures and countries. (S.F.)

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Inspo: Expo Fair

The 2nd Annual Inspo:Expo Brookline Action Fair took place on January 21 at Kehillath Israel in Brookline. The event was organized by Hadassah Margolis in collaboration with Brookline's MLK Celebration Committee and the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Relations. Guests had the opportunity to meet activists, learn about their social action projects, and take part in fun, hands-on activities. Presenters included the Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action, Jewish Family & Children's Service, New England Yachad, Shalom Magazine, Welcome Blanket (Craftivism for Immigration Rights), Yad Chessed, and Giving the Glam.



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What divorce teaches about marriage?

By Rabbi Manis Friedman

Why does G-d tell you how to get divorced, if He believes in marriage? Not only does He believe in marriage, He believes that you should be married, and He wants you to be married to the person you are married to.

Why, then, does He allow you to get divorced? Not only allows it, but tells you how to do it? As with all G-d's instructions in the Torah, getting divorced is a mitzvah, a divine commandment. In fact, His instructions on divorce are very explicit. But why?

Because, having said what His instructions for marriage are, G-d doesn't abandon you when you get in trouble.

Because He is merciful and compassionate, kind and considerate, He gives you a second set of instructions, in case you can't follow the first set.

That's like a cookbook that tells you what to do if you ruin the recipe. Two of my children were once following the instructions on a package of cookie mix. One of them read the instructions aloud, while the other prepared the mix. The child who was reading said, "Now you're supposed to stir the dough fifty times." The other one exclaimed, "But I'm already up to a hundred! What do we do now?"

So the first child said, "I don't know. I'll go back and see what it says to do." He checked the box, but the instructions didn't say anything

about stirring the dough too many times. The two of them came to me and asked what they should do. "Should we throw it out? Should we start all over? The instructions don't tell us what to do if we mess up."

G-d isn't like that. That's not how Torah - His set of instructions - is written. He tells you what to do if you ruin the recipe.

It's as though G-d says to you, "This is the person I have selected for you. This is the person I want you to be married to. You can't? It hurts too much? Then don't. Leave. But when you do, please shut the door behind you."

So He not only tells us we may get divorced, He tells us how. "Here is the divine commandment for how to get in, and here is another divine commandment for how to get out."

G-d talks to us that way because He's married to us.

Like everything else that exists in this world, marriage is a reflection of what exists in the spiritual world. There is an absolute marriage that exists between G-d and us.

Marriage requires that something which you take seriously and strictly upon yourself, you are very lenient and accommodating about with your partner. G-d is married to us, and that He takes very seriously. He is committed to the relationship. Therefore, He is lenient and accommodating when we don't always live up to His expectations.

G-d says to us: "You messed up? Then try again. You blew it? Then here is what you have to do. You forgot? Then next time, try to remember. You forgot a second time? Try a third time." That's how we know that He's committed to the marriage.

Sometimes G-d does even better than that. He asks us what our intentions were. For instance, He tells us not to mix meat and milk. What happens if we do? "Well," He says, "it depends on how much milk there was, and how much meat there was. And did you do it on purpose? Or was it an accident? If it was an accident, this is how you fix it. If it was on purpose, try not to let it happen again."

G-d expects you to be married, and to the person He has chosen for you. But He is compassionate and understanding when you tell Him that it's just too difficult.



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What divorce teaches about marriage?

Maybe He intended for you to get married and then get out; maybe the laws for divorce are your “escape clause.” No.

G-d intends for you to stay married. But if you can't, if it's too difficult for you, He understands, and He will help you out.

Does that mean your marriage was a mistake? You took a gamble, you lost, now admit it and get out? You made a mistake, so G-d is telling you how to fix it?

Wrong again.

Your marriage wasn't a mistake. It was intended since the beginning of time. When G-d created your soul, six thousand years ago, He created your “intended” along with you.

Saying that you married the wrong person is like saying you gave birth to the wrong baby. Could you have somebody else's baby? A woman once said something like that to me. “You have how many children?” she asked, incredulously. I don't remember how many we had at that time, maybe ten or twelve.

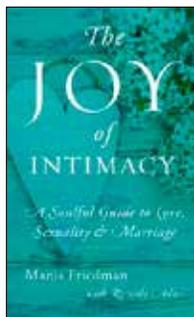
“Don't you know there are some people who can't have children?” She was indignant. It was as if she were saying, “Give somebody else a break. Share a little. Don't have so many kids; let other people have a few.” It doesn't happen like that. You don't give birth to someone else's children. The children that you have were meant to be yours.

As Einstein said, “G-d doesn't play dice with the universe.” If G-d doesn't play dice with atoms or molecules, then He doesn't play dice with hearts or minds or souls.

You are married to the person you are intended to be married to. G-d arranged it. He set it up; He predestined it from the beginning. In other words, His mind is made up that that's the way He wants it.

You don't want it? Fine. Since He is married to you, He says, “Whatever you want.”

Will it spoil “some vast eternal plan,” as Tevye asks in Fiddler on the Roof? The answer is yes. Yes, if you get divorced, you will spoil some vast eternal plan - G-d's plan. But will He let you? Will He help



you? Yes, He will let you, and He will help you.

The reason that G-d allows divorce, and commands divorce, is because by doing so, He is teaching you how to be married.

So even though G-d has rules, even though He has laws, even though He has divine commandments, when you sin, He tells you: “You messed up? Try again. You made a mistake and you admit it? Don't worry about it; you'll do better next time. You did it ten times already? Ask for forgiveness, and I'll forgive you ten times.”

That's exactly how you should be married - by treating your spouse the way G-d treats you. With that much mercy and compassion, that much kindness and consideration.

Your wife did it to you again? Forgive her again. She did it ten times? Forgive her ten times.

Be as committed to making this relationship last as G-d has been committed to making His relationship with you last. The moral is, by offering to help you get divorced, G-d is helping you stay married for all time. The way He has stayed married to you.

Rabbi Manis Friedman, a noted Chassidic philosopher, author and lecturer, is dean of Bais Chana Women's Institute of Jewish Studies.

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What the Trump Middle East Plan of the Century Needs Most: PEACE EDUCATION

By David Bedein

US President Donald Trump passionately works for renewal of peace talks between Israel and Palestinian Authority. In that context, Trump has released his “deal of the century,” to occur after the Israeli elections on April 9.

What can we expect from the Trump “Deal of the Century?”

In that “deal,” the Palestinian Authority, run by the Palestine Liberation Organization, will not be replaced and will continue to function.

That means that PLO policies persist.

The Trump plan does not change the status of 5 million descendants of Arab refugees from the 1948 war who live in 59 “temporary” UNRWA refugee camps, where they have been living for the past 70 years under the illusion of the “right of return” to villages lost in 1948, even if they no longer exist.

The Trump plan does not introduce a peace education program to replace the new PA war curriculum in all PA schools, which espouse a “right of return by force of arms” program in all PA and UNRWA schools.

The Trump plan does not veto the unprecedented law on the books of the Palestinian Authority, which provides a handsome gratuity to anyone who murders a Jew, and to the family of anyone who kills a Jew.

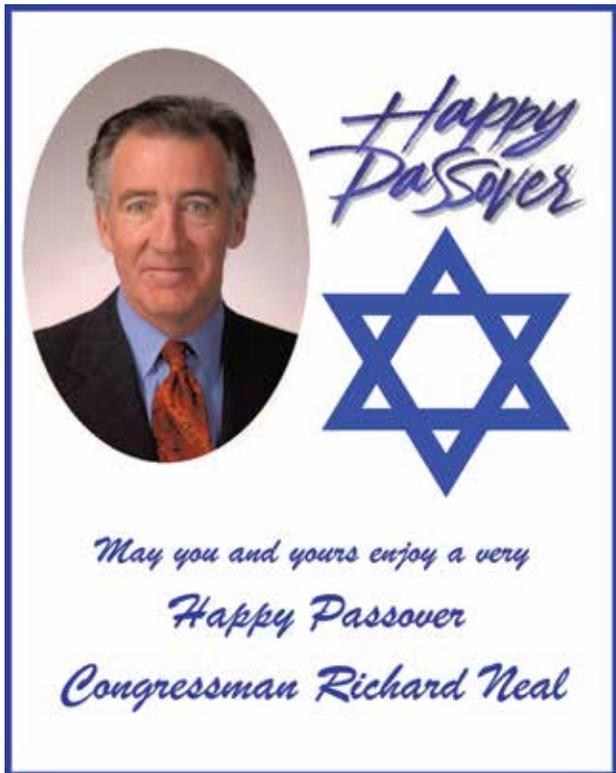
Trump’s senior Middle East adviser, son-in-law Jared Kushner, told Sky News in March that the Trump plan does call for a united Palestinian leadership and promotes ‘broad economic impact’ for the Palestinian Authority, which will also benefit the Israeli business community.

Yet the mistake of the 25-year-long Middle East peace process was that little attention was paid to the necessary legislation and education for peace from the Palestinian Authority and the PLO, which remains a terrorist organization.

The Trump plan, however, does provide economic incentives. There can be only one response to the notion that “economics is the answer” which is that Israel was not founded as a “nation of profits.” It was instead founded as the homeland of the Jewish people.

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

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ARRESTED BY THE KGB IN RUSSIA

By Howard Kaplan

In Casablanca, in February 2015, I watched Jonathan Rhys Meyers and Sir John Hurt film scenes for the adaptation of my spy novel, *The Damascus Cover*. I thought back to how, 44 years earlier, the KGB threatened what they would do to me if I ever wrote about my arrest in the Soviet Union - which launched me on my career as a writer.

When I was 22, I walked along a memorized route from the Hotel Metropole, where I was staying, through nearby Red Square and soon, on a narrow street adjacent to the square, approached an apartment door. Suddenly, from behind, two men grabbed my arms from both sides; they said nothing. I was scared, did not know who they were or where I was being taken. I stayed silent thinking that on a quiet street in the USSR, I had no good alternatives and, whether I fought or complied, they could do with me what they wanted. They led me to the back of the building, inside a rear entrance, and down some dark steps. I let myself be taken into an artist's studio. Around a table, the first thing I saw was that several of the men sitting there had silver Stars of David on their lapels. I was with the leaders of both the Democratic and Jewish dissident movements. A translator explained I had purposely been given the wrong address and watched to see if the KGB were following me.

The next day, after showing my passport to the KGB guard outside the Dutch Embassy, I entered the building and handed the Ambassador a manuscript. All unpublished manuscripts were considered property of the Communist state, so emigrants were required to leave all writings behind. We wrote notes and before I left, he burned them. His last missive said: "Be careful, this is not James Bond." I was on a 14-day independent tour to a number of cities; a different Intourist guide met my plane at each stop and then drove me to the airport for my next internal flight which I boarded without accompaniment. On the tenth day, I met with Hebrew teachers in a Kharkov apartment in the Ukraine. That evening, about 11 p.m., one Hebrew teacher walked me to the trolley that would take me back to my hotel. As we turned the corner, a wall of men leaped from the shadows. Quickly, a uniformed officer grabbed my arm, twisted it behind my back, and rammed me against the building. My companion was pummeled.

Separated from him at KGB headquarters, I was forcibly seated at the end of a long table. Two plainclothesmen entered. The older-middle-aged, barrel-chested, with white thinning hair - was the interrogator. His lean, blond companion was 20 years his junior. I guessed they held the ranks of colonel and captain, respectively, in the KGB. They sat across from me. Within seconds, four uniformed men accompanied the manager of my hotel into the room to translate.

The sparring began. I was brash, naively fearless, felt that my passport protected me, and it soon became clear they knew nothing about the manuscript transfer. How did I meet these men? What did they tell me? Who sent me? I rebutted: "Is it illegal to talk to Soviet citizens?" The colonel: "No, but it is illegal to consort with hooligans." Nervous, I asked to use the bathroom. It was after 1:00 a.m. The colonel said I could use the bathroom in my hotel room and we would resume tomorrow in the hotel manager's office.

We continued for two days; they made me write out each answer in longhand. I could use facilities when I wanted and food was brought. More than anything, they wanted to know who had sent me. I gave them a name and described my father who I could easily describe again, even if exhausted days later, when they inevitably again demanded his description. I explained that my handler had approached me

outside a travel agency and I had no way of contacting him, though he would be meeting my scheduled flight from Moscow to Heathrow in two days. My sense was that if the KGB wanted to level an espionage charge, consorting with hooligans and anything else they felt like piling on would be sufficient. I was unimportant and counted on their greater desire to identify who had sent me.

I was flown to Moscow, escorts on both sides of me on the commercial flight, and met at the airport by another team, one of whom spoke perfect British and the other, similar American. They said they were Intourist travel guides.

For another two days, I was interrogated outside the airport in a small hotel without a restaurant and marched for each meal through Passport Control and into the departure lounge, then back again, the message clear. The morning of my scheduled flight, a prosecutor arrived in my hotel room. In a small ceremony, I was officially expelled from the USSR.

In the departure lounge this final time, one of my interrogators took me aside. "Everybody has been very polite to you here, no? Nobody has harmed or struck you." I agreed. "Good," he said sternly. "Then I will not expect to see any newspaper articles or stories written about your experiences in the Soviet Union. If I do, the

KGB can find you anywhere in the world and next time we will not be so humanistic. Do you understand?"

I nodded, defiance hot inside me.

And as I cleared customs at London Airport, I saw two men following me. They were later found naked, tied to trees in Epping Forest.

Howard Kaplan is a native of Los Angeles and has lived in Israel and traveled extensively through Lebanon, Syria and Egypt. At the age of 21, he was sent on a mission into the Soviet Union to smuggle a dissident's manuscript on microfilm to London. More about the author at <http://howardkaplanauthor.com/>



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“G-d” is Black

By Rabbi Yosef Glassman, MD

I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as El Shaddai, but I did not make Myself known to them by My name, Hashem. (Exodus 6:2)

Who is “G-d?” The term “G-d?” is spent, overused and has lost its meaning. In fact, the term “G-d?” causes many to avoid the topic of religion entirely. This is a likely result of both ancient and modern cultures seeing the role of “G-d?” in human terms, but also having put a face to the concept, creating an even more optically oppressive challenge to ration. The anthropomorphic, floating enterprise quickly becomes a cartoon non-starter to the intellect.

Enter science and Einstein’s unified field theory. Basically, the theory says that one overriding physical force unifies and guides the four main physical forces in the universe: a strong force, weak force, electromagnetism and gravity. And, just like it is both rationally and religiously passé to believe that the sun rules over the moon, is likewise so to think that the electromagnetic force rules over gravity. Each individual power affects the other, but neither exerts full impact or control.

The unified organizing force is the same infinite force that formed the universe ex nihilo, bringing a finite dense grain of energetic light into existence, only to shatter it into six directions from the center. From this center point emerged not only all physical space, but also the beginning of time.

But that small finite grain of newly condensed energetic light, after an initial extraordinarily rapid expansion, cooled and formed the physical universe that we know today. Our physical reality is thus derived from the original, fractured light energy, and thus the iconic statement emerged: $E=mc^2$. In other words, physical existence is derived from pure energy, and at their core, humans are fractured light.

Yet this light-based atomic existence, including Milky Ways, planets, humans and stars, is less than 5 percent of overall reality. Greater than 95 percent of the universe is made of what physics calls ‘dark matter’ and ‘dark energy,’ neither of which is understood. This tiny physical light universe, far from slowing down, is currently expanding through the dark matter and dark energy, more and more rapidly every day.

And the original, unseen, infinitely unifying force, which split the this original atomic light energy into multiplicities, is still actively involved in every detail of that split to this day. Thus, the universe is both split by and connected to the infinite darkness simultaneously. Welcome to the mystery of physical time and space.

There is no clear scientific name for this one, originating force, however. Most scientists are fairly confident, however, that the invisible bodyless creative force exists. And, not only has this unseen unifier created all physical nature, but it continues to flash physical reality onto the screen of darkness. Some physicists even posit that the earth and entire universe is likened to a hologram, literally. And, while humans happily try to manipulate atoms and their four physical forces throughout the week, the unifying force still exerts more control over them than we ever can.

In fact, every physical object is governed by this one force phenomenon, not the least of which is the human body. The brain particularly is not exempt of that organizing creative control. The physical function of the human’s jelly-like brain - made of water, protein, sugar and salt - is highly regulated by the infinite unifying force, via the four sub-forces.

The scientifically honest reader knows that if the gravitational pull of the moon can move vast ocean tides, it must also be moving the miniature boxed-in human brain.

Gravity and her three friends not only mold the functionality of the brain, but also maintain the brain’s contour and suspend it under the *calvarium*, in the best case scenario. It is scientifically clear that if the four forces were to be mathematically skewed by even the most minute quantity or disconnected in any way, each would act discordantly, unchecked, and the physical brain would be left lifeless - never mind the entire universe. The unifying force is the key in keeping these four forces in check and balance. Indeed, neurotransmitter production, brain position and water absorption are thus entirely dependent on the one unifying force which is masked in its atomic nature.

Enter thought. Add ethereal independent human thought to this already complex physical equation. Thought, intelligence and choi-



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“G-d” is Black

ce are all prized, unseen possessions and distinctions of the human being. Yet their physical nature is scientifically unclear, if they are at all physical.

Surely, thoughts require the physical neurotransmitters traversing neurosynaptic junctions, jumping from nerve to nerve conduit, to be turned into physical action. But not even the most devout scientist believes that the origin of thoughts is simply a reservoir of premature neurochemical emissions. Rather, thoughts must have an origin in a higher organizational consciousness, beyond the atomic brain. If, indeed, a human would consist of only physicality, devoid of original ethereal thought, ideas and free choice, he would be nothing more than a thumb-nosed salt bag, bathed in neurotransmitters.

Even the most devout secular scientist would have a difficult time arguing that independent thought is confined to the realm of the finite skull, which shares atomic structures with both popcorn and peanuts. That is to say that the essence of an ‘idea’ or ‘free choice’ remains suspended above the physicality of nature, while forced to traverse it.

But what is the source and nature of an ‘idea’ or a ‘thought?’ Is it influenced and changed by the physical forces described above, given that it is doomed to pass through them? Or, if a thought is indeed independent of the finite physical light-energy, is human ‘choice’ derived from the original unseen infinite creative force? Many questions are asked and left unanswered in order to raise the complexity of ideas and free choice in their interplay between the physical and the ethereal, or spiritual. Can one be totally independent of each other?

Enter our magical world. Indeed, physicality and unseen thought are deeply interconnected. Bridges from the world of choice of and the physical world are constantly being built and destroyed by the human being. Humans actuate and break decisions all week long in this delicate dynamic. The combination of finite seen and infinite unseen worlds is experienced in our world of action; the world of action blends infinite choice within the confines of finite physicality.

When a human engages in pure independent thought or choice, the original infinite blackness that lies beyond time and space is accessed.

It is this moment where the human resembles the original colorless thought that existed prior to physicality, the conceptualization of a dark infinity prior to the creation of infinite light. It was this original infinite thought that formed the light, that took an idea and turned it into reality - that took a choice and created the universe, turning pure quiet darkness into loud explosive light, by injecting it into pure darkness.

Enter Torah. The Torah brought that concept into practice on earth. Kabbalah, Torah’s deeper teachings, tells us that the colorless black void is indeed the original creative force, which consciously emanates all of creation, using a newly formed infinite light as a tool. This fresh tool of infinite light is highly filtered, dispersing the light into a multitude of colors that we experience daily. The Infinite Oneness, however, actively turns black to white on a second-by-second basis, so that our reality becomes palpable.

The Infinite colorless blackness injected the white laser, beaming from its original concentrated finite point of light. Yet the Infinite Creator, ultimately devoid of color, is described as not simply clear, but literally ‘black’ in Judaism. This makes sense in the space-time continuum where clear appears black, while the subsequent creation - white light - contains all other colors of the rainbow.

That is to say that the origin of all spiritual worlds is entirely black, without color, and the physical world is composed of entirely white, containing a range of visible color. Yet the very highest aspect of the unifying Creator of all universes is ultimately a quiet blackness. And not only the Infinite unifying Creator is black, as Kabbalah teaches, but is feminine at the core, not in the physical aspect, rather the spiritual one.

As the great Kabbalist Rabbi Moshe Cordovero, otherwise known as the Ramak, writes in his book *The Garden of Pomegranates*, “[The Infinite Creator] is called darkness and blackness after His final aspect, the aspect of His femininity, which is a black void.”

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

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Jewish Publishing in America



By Dr. Rebecca Housel

The power of the written word is evidenced everywhere you look. Whole countries exist as a result of writing down the very idea of them. For example, the Constitution of the United States is 232 years old this September. Oh yes, words have power. But the written word has even more power when it is published. Without publishers, we writers could scribble away all we wanted, but our words only matter

because a publisher will print them on a page - digital or otherwise - offering a universal platform to interested readers. The relationship between writers and publishers has a long history. Jewish publishing has a long history as well. Things like the *Dead Sea Scrolls* have helped to not only preserve Jewish culture, but an overarching Jewish voice as well as our place in world history. In 2019, *Shalom Magazine* is celebrating a decade of giving Jews a voice through publishing. In honor of that impressive number, I wanted to talk about the history of Jewish publishing, and how it has helped Jews all over the world stay connected through the written word.

The Jewish Publication Society (JPS) was founded in the United States in 1845 in the very same city where the Constitution would be written 42 years later. But it was more than 40 years after that when JPS was re-founded, appropriately, in Philadelphia, where it all began. Thanks to what is the oldest nonprofit Jewish publisher in the Western World, Jewish soldiers during World War I went to war armed with siddurim from JPS, who had just completed a translation of the Bible in 1917. JPS would again take its place in world history by giving Jewish authors a voice as Nazism threatened Jewish life. After World

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Jewish Publishing in America

War II, Jewish-American authors published their celebratory words through JPS when Israel won their independence in 1948.

In 2012, JPS forged a partnership with University of Nebraska Press (UNP). In a total twist of fate, my essay, "750 Words About Cancer," was included in the anthology, *Bodies of Truth*, co-edited by award-winning author and editor, Dinty W. Moore; the book was published in January 2019 by UNP. I feel even more proud to be included knowing UNP helped preserve not just Jewish voices, but Jewish publishing. UNP and JPS signed a seven-year contract that ends this year. While JPS has covered American Jewish publishing, Giuntina in Italy has published over 700 books and began a massive translation project, sponsored by the Italian government, of the Babylonian Talmud in 2018.

Shalom Editor, Shirley Farber, dreamt of creating a Jewish magazine for the first time in 1998 while producing a Jewish radio program in Brazil. After moving to the States, and years of experience through the creation of Bate Papo Magazine, Shirley and her husband went to work getting advertisers for *Shalom* - more than half of whom are not Jewish. Thanks to people like Shirley Farber, Boston-based American Jews have a print resource to not only read, but to use as a platform to discuss things like anti-Semitism, American Jewry and the need for Israel's existence as integral to the future survival of the Jewish people. Part of that survival includes supporting Jewish publishers and the books and magazines they produce for readers of all faiths from any country.

The written word is part of how human beings repair the world. By standing as witnesses and using our collective voices, we insure that no one has to endure the same persecution the Jewish people have endured for millennia. Words have power, but without a platform provided by a publisher, it is difficult for any words to have a meaningful impact. I'm proud to have been a regular writer for *Shalom*

Magazine for the last decade. When my Jewish grandmother passed away in 2009, I wanted to give back to the Jewish community she so loved - that's when I first connected with Shirley. My essays for *Shalom Magazine* have addressed everything from Jewish influences on pop culture through video games, film and comics - including a quote from the late Stan Lee before he died last year - to the history of anti-Semitism and the role of the Catholic Church in helping Hitler rise to power. I want to thank Shirley Farber and her family, as well as all those who write, edit, and advertise for and with *Shalom Magazine*, and of course, a hearty helping of gratitude to *Shalom's* readers - many of whom have reached out to me over the years. You all are making positive contributions to the history of Jewish publishing in America. And, that's something to be proud of.

Dr. Rebecca Housel is an international best-selling author with books sold in nine languages and 90 countries; her blog on RebeccaHousel.com has over 3-million readers from 148 countries. You can read her Survive Anything column for Psychology Today here: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/survive-anything>



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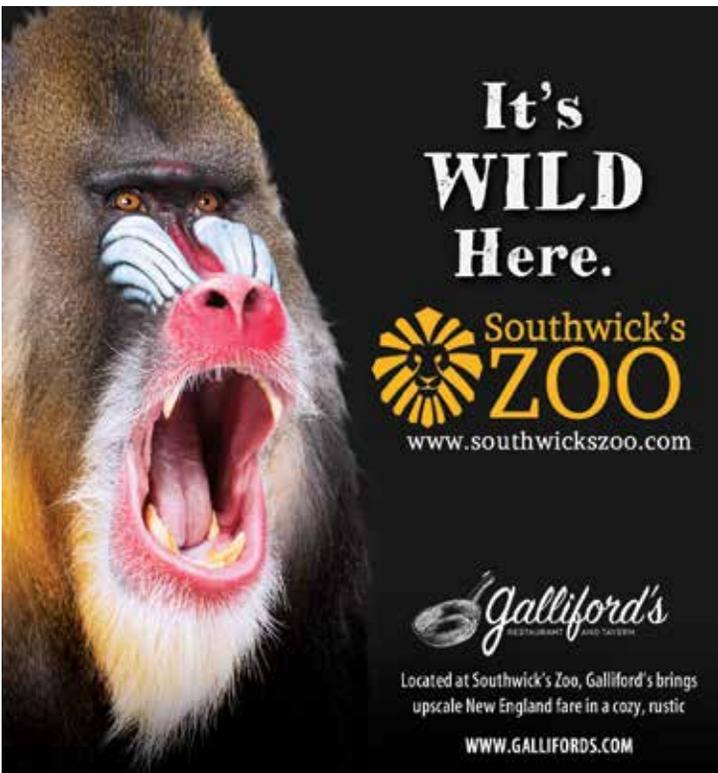
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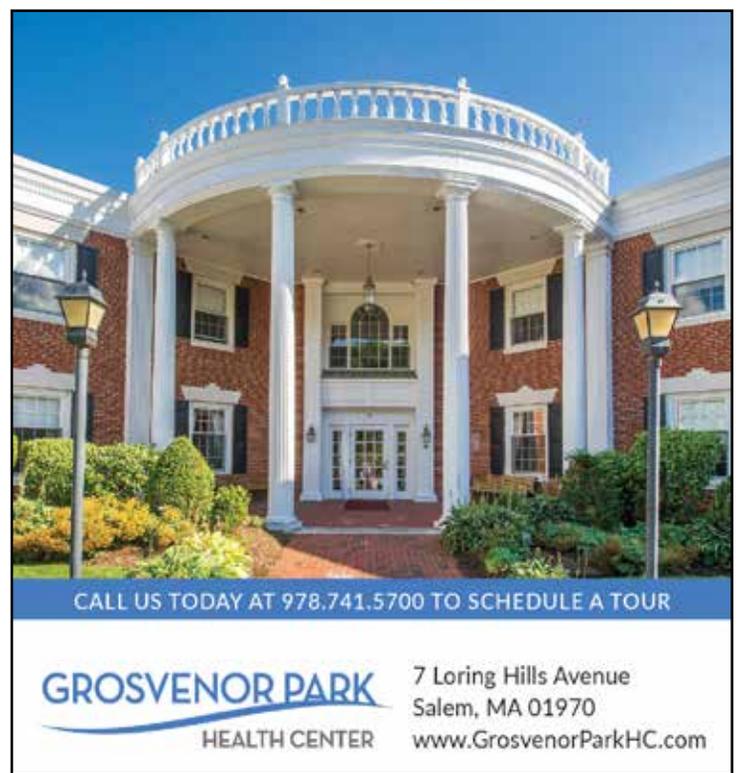
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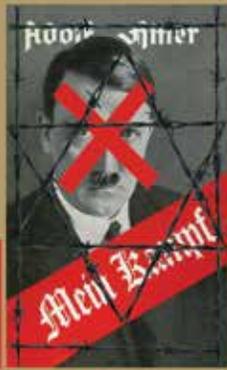
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Hitler's Mein Kampf: Prelude to the Holocaust

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

The Holocaust, or Shoah, a moral tragedy, evolved from a confluence of forces during the Third Reich. The Nazi Party rose to power, latent European anti-Semitism became blatant, and German citizens turned a blind eye first to persecution, then to extermination of the Jewish community throughout Europe.

The inhumane plan to eliminate 11 million Jews that became the focus of the January, 1942 Wannsee Conference had only been partially achieved by the time of the collapse of the Third Reich in May of 1945. An analysis of principal anti-Semitic sources of Hitler's genocidal plan, both in his early street life in Vienna between 1908 and 1913, and in his writing of *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle) in 1925, provides greater insight into the origins of this attempted destruction of the Jews. It soon becomes apparent that during this period, Hitler drew upon the deep-seated anti-Semitic atmosphere of German nationalist society to further his own perspective.

Although sentenced to five years' imprisonment for high treason after the failed Beer Hall Putsch of November, 1923, Hitler only served nine months in the Landsberg prison. Ironically, his punishment became an opportunity for him to formalize his ideology of a utopian blueprint for a purified Germany stripped of the threat of the foreign race of Jews, his arch-enemies.

Hitler's autobiography, laced with theories of political struggle against the "Bolshevist Jews," lays the groundwork for the Holocaust, building upon his central argument: "It will take a struggle. In view of the fact that the first task is not the creation of a folkish state conception, but above all the elimination of the existing Jewish one."

Throughout *Mein Kampf*, Hitler developed a platform for the National Socialist Party based on race (anti-Semitism), social Darwinism (Eugenics), and expansionism (Lebensraum). His distorted view that the healthy body, the Aryan race, faced contamination from the parasitic Jews and had to be cleansed, alludes to the Final Solution to the Jewish Question, which he presents in the second volume of *Mein Kampf*: "If at the beginning of the war and during the war, 12 or 15 thousand of these Hebrew corrupters of the people had been held under poison gas, as happened to hundreds of thousands of our very best German workers in the field, the sacrifice of millions at the front would not have been in vain."

By spreading these seminal ideas through the publication of *Mein Kampf*, Hitler created the foundation for Aryan supremacy. A 2016 annotated edition of his work by the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich and Berlin clearly reveals Hitler's bitter hatred of the Jews. His rise to power in 1933, the passing of multiple laws against the Jews, and the collaboration of hundreds of thousands of Germans led to the horrors of the Holocaust.

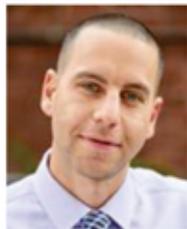
Hitler's extreme ideological and racial views, first formalized in *Mein Kampf* as the misguided principles of the Third Reich, will be the focus of a Boston College conference on April 25-26.

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.



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Nights in Jaffa are always quite magical

By Steve Schuster

It's been quite an honor to be a part of *Shalom Magazine's* ten years in publication, both as a contributing writer and photographer. I love to write about Israel, perhaps sometimes in ways that transcend the prevailing (and troubling) rhetoric. For this 10th anniversary issue, I'm pleased to relate a few highlights from my mid-March trip.

Nights in Jaffa are always quite magical. But in particular tonight, Tel Aviv's ancient port city is simply enchanting. It's Erev Purim and the narrow streets are filled with costumed children and adults. It feels kind of like Manhattan on Halloween, but with those distinct and indelible characteristics of Israel and Israelis. Walking the streets, I order a za'atar pita from the iconic cylindrical glass display cases at Aboulafia Bakery, just up the road from the early 20th century Ottoman Clock Tower, catching as I walk on, a glimpse of the nearly full moon peeking out from behind a minaret.

The moon is not the first impressive light I've seen this past week in Tel Aviv. Last Thursday night I was in my 4th-floor Airbnb apartment just 100 meters or so from the Jaffa Flea Market (*Shuk HaPishpushim*) when the sirens began. Activated in Tel Aviv for the first time since the last war with Gaza in 2014, these pre-election sirens were no drill. I'm embarrassed to say that I froze in place, standing at the sliding glass door that led out to my *mirpeset* (balcony porch). From that vantage point looking toward the sea, I saw the arcs of the two incoming missiles fired (accidentally, it was suggested later) from Gaza. Then I saw another missile shoot into the sky, this one from Israel's famed Iron Dome (*kipat barzel*), smashing into and destroying one of the Iranian Fajr-5 rockets. The kinetic burst of fireworks and stinging boom of the mid-air impact echoed to absorption into the same stone walls that for five days successfully defended against Napoleon's 1799 Siege of Jaffa.



The whole thing was over, and the sirens wound down with the mournful moan of a dying man. All in all, it was probably a three-minute experience. Riffing on a well-known frustration for Israeli drivers, a joke made its way around the next days on social media channels: Two rockets were fired on Tel Aviv – one landed in an open field and the other is still looking for a parking space. True enough.

Several times over the past few days, I've been told that as fast as they can build skyscrapers, each will be 100 percent rented space. This includes no small number of shared working spaces, a 21st Century phenomenon that is a quintessentially Israeli invention, one of the many that has spread like wildfire on a global basis. With names like Mindspace, CoWork Bay, Be ALL, Urban Place, NBN, Labs Tel Aviv, CityHUB, Ayeka, Sarona Space, and of course WeWork, these co-working spaces are a vital part of the roaring engine that continues to produce Israel's world-changing technologies and services.

Speaking of which, it seems as if all of Israel is holding its breath over three things: 1) The nervously anticipated success of SpaceIL's moon lander, 2) The Eurovision Song Contest taking place in Tel Aviv in May, and 3) Israel's forthcoming elections in April. Along with the missiles, these three items have come up, both separately and all together over the course of many conversations, all week at business meetings, in restaurants and in every taxi in which I've ridden. It's a documented fact that every single Israeli taxi driver is a seasoned political policy expert.

It's my last night in Tel Aviv, and amazingly I just ate the first falafel of this trip. It did not disappoint. As I walk back home, the night air is filled with a mixture of the singular sounds of costumed children laughing and frolicking, backdropped by the muezzin's chant from one of Jaffa's mosques – an urban soundtrack that beats sirens any day. Chag sameach!

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Inconsistencies in Passover Eating

By Richard H. Schwartz, Ph.D.

Jews go to extraordinary lengths before and during the festival of Passover to observe commandments to commendably avoid some foods. However, they may also be ignoring and violating scriptural teachings that arguably forbid Jews to consume other foods.

On Passover Jews are prohibited from eating, owning, or benefiting from *chometz*, foods such as breads, cakes, and cereals, that are made from one of the five grains (wheat, barley, rye, spelt, and oats) that have fermented from contact with liquid. These prohibitions are based on several Torah verses and are treated with great seriousness by religious Jews.

Many Jews spend weeks before Passover cleaning their houses, cars, and other possessions to try to make sure that not even a drop of *chometz* will remain during the holiday. Because the Torah indicates a severe punishment for violating the *chometz* prohibitions, many Jewish communities have adopted additional stringencies to avoid inadvertent transgressions. For example, the practice among many Ashkenazi Jews is to not only refrain from products of the five grains, but also from *kitniyot*, other grains and legumes, including rice, corn, lentils and beans. While the origins of this practice are not clear, two common theories are that such items are sometimes made into products that resemble *chometz*, such as cornbread, or that these items were generally stored in sacks similar to these for the five prohibited grains and people were concerned that the sacks might have become contaminated with *chometz*.

To emphasize the importance of the prohibition, a special search for *chometz* is carried out on the night before Passover, and the *chometz* found is burned along with other *chometz* to be disposed of the next morning. Special prayers are recited for the search and the burning. Valuable *chometz* items may be kept in the home as long as they are locked away so that they will not be seen or used during Passover. *Chometz* is also often sold to a non-Jew before Passover to be bought back after the holiday, usually with the help of a rabbi.

So important are the *chometz* prohibitions that, while a common greeting on other Jewish festivals is “chag sameach” (may you have a joyous holiday), on Passover it is often “chag kasher v’sameach” (may you have a kosher and joyous holiday).

This article is not to argue against these prohibitions and additional stringencies, but to suggest that many foods that Jews eat on Passover, including meat, fish, dairy products and eggs, are also inconsistent with some basic Torah mandates.

1. While Judaism mandates that people should be very careful about preserving their health and their lives, numerous scientific studies have linked animal-based diets directly to heart disease, stroke, many forms of cancer, and other chronic degenerative diseases.

2. While Judaism forbids *tsa’ar ba’alei chayim*, inflicting unnecessary pain on animals, most farm animals - including those raised for kosher consumers - are raised on “factory farms” where they live in cramped, confined spaces and are often drugged, mutilated, and denied fresh air, sunlight, exercise, and any enjoyment of life - before they are slaughtered and eaten.

3. While Judaism teaches that “the earth is the Lord’s” (Psalm 24:1) and that we are to be G-d’s partners and co-workers in preserving the world, modern intensive livestock agriculture contributes substantially to climate change, soil erosion and depletion, air and water pollution, overuse of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, the destruction of tropical rain forests and other habitats, and other environmental damage.

4. While Judaism mandates *bal tashchit*, that we are not to waste or unnecessarily destroy anything of value, and that we are not to use more than is needed to accomplish a purpose, animal agriculture requires the wasteful use of grain, land, water, energy, and other resources.

5. While Judaism stresses that we are to assist the poor and share our bread with hungry people, over 70 percent of the grain grown in the United States is fed to animals destined for slaughter, while an estimated 20 million people worldwide die each year because of the adverse effects of hunger.

6. While Judaism stresses that we must seek and pursue peace and that violence results from unjust conditions, animal-centered diets, by using enormous amounts of valuable resources, help to perpetuate the widespread hunger and poverty that eventually lead to instability and war.

One could say “*dayenu*” (it would be enough) after any of the arguments above, because each one constitutes by itself a serious conflict between Jewish values and current practice that should impel Jews to seriously consider a plant-based diet. Combined, they make an urgently compelling case for the Jewish community to address these issues.

Can it be that G-d is concerned about us getting rid of every drop of *chometz* that we can, but does not care that our diets are having devastating effects on our health, animals, the environment, our use of resources, resulting in an increase of hungry people, and impacting the potential for peace and non-violence?

Perhaps it is time to apply these important teachings to our diets, thereby helping shift our precious, but imperiled, planet onto a sustainable path. Since Passover is the holiday of freedom, our Seders could be a great opportunity to free ourselves from eating habits that are so harmful to people, animals, and the planet.

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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Yom HaShoah event in Waltham

On Sunday, May 5 at 6:30 p.m. at Temple Beth Israel in Waltham, Shalom copy editor, journalist and author Susie Davidson will appear with Dachau liberator Ellsworth "Al" Rosen, who will provide a first-hand witness account of the liberation of the Dachau concentration camp.

It was Rosen's speech at the 2002 groundbreaking ceremony for the Liberators' Monument at the downtown New England Holocaust Memorial that inspired Davidson to collect and record the stories of local Holocaust survivors and WWII liberating soldiers.

Rosen is a co-founder of the national education organization Facing History and Ourselves. As an infantryman, he helped liberate the Dachau concentration camp, as well as a subcamp where Roma (Gypsy) inmates were housed.

Long active in his town of Brookline's political spectrum, he is a cofounder of the genocide awareness educational organization Facing History and Ourselves. Past career positions include Public Relations Director of the Hartford Jewish Federation, Assistant Director of the Associated Jewish Charities of Baltimore, Assistant Director of the Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston, and New England Director of the American Friends of the Hebrew University.

Rosen made a film about the Holocaust, and in his materials, details the astounding number of camps and subcamps in the Nazi system. Rosen strongly believes there are lessons to be learned from remembering, and emphatically feels that society must give no credence to deniers.

"Words of hate too often turn into deeds of hate, and we must constantly be on the alert to recognize that new Holocausts can still happen, as we have seen with Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and other modern genocides," he told an audience two years ago

at the U.S. Army Natick Soldier Systems Center.

"We are reminded of the fact that it was America's military forces who witnessed evidence of the Holocaust," the program booklet stated. "Commemorative observances are conducted cognizant of the fact that members of the nation's military must remember both the values that Americans stand for and the tyranny we stand against."

The U.S. Secretary of Defense has encouraged the national military service to conduct such annual commemorations.

She will note the resilience, the senses of humor, and the love of life that each one of these Holocaust survivors exhibited, despite all that they endured and the massive losses that they suffered, and the missions of first-hand witness liberators to relate their experiences so that the world would both remember, and learn.

Davidson is a journalist, author, editor, poet and filmmaker. She has written "The Music Man of Terezin: The Story of Rafael Schaechter as told by Edgar Krasa" (2012); "I Refused to Die: Stories of Boston-Area Holocaust Survivors and Soldiers who Liberated the Concentration Camps of World War II" (2005); and "Jewish Life in Postwar Germany" (2006).

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The Suicide of Nadav and Abihu



By Tucker Lieberman

In one of the Torah's most challenging stories, Aaron's sons, Nadav and Abihu, are instructed to sacrifice, and they do it incorrectly. They offer "unauthorized fire." Whatever that is, G-d didn't instruct it. In immediate response, "*fire came forth from before G-d, and it consumed them, so that they died before G-d.*" (Lev. 10:2, Parashat Shemini)

It seems imperative to understand what went wrong - after all, we don't want to repeat a fatal error - but no one knows. Maybe they attempted a disrespectful or arrogant innovation, or maybe they were just sloppy in upholding standards. Drunkenness has been a popular answer. There is a prior mention of them at a feast ("*they had a vision of the Divine, and they ate and drank,*" Ex. 24:11), and, after they die, G-d immediately forbids Aaron and his remaining sons to drink intoxicants in the holy space on pain of death (Lev. 10:8-9). Rashi's commentary affirms the possibility of their drunkenness.

But even if Nadav and Abihu committed this type of error, no one thinks that they deserved to die. If irreverence is a capital offense, then how many times over am I imperiled?

I have been thinking about this for a long time, as Shemini was the portion given to me when I was 13, and I recently published a memoir, "Bad Fire," engaging its imagery.

Only now, after finishing the memoir, does the full answer come to me: Nadav and Abihu committed suicide. I do not mean that they "should have known better" (that it was figuratively suicidal to disobey G-d), nor that it was a "suicide-by-cop" (a deliberate provocation of a lethal response). I mean, more simply, that they died by their own hands. Here, human transgression and divine anger are each other's shadows. Bad fire becomes worse fire. Aaron's sons were priests in training, ordered to kill an animal, but they killed themselves.

This interpretation makes sense out of what follows in the text. Moses orders their bodies brought outside the camp, and he warns Aaron not to ritually grieve: no tearing of clothes, no growing of hair.

(Lev. 10:5-6) This is, sadly, historically consistent with the treatment of people who commit suicide. (See, for example, the advice in the 16th Century Shulchan Arukh not to eulogize or mourn them; Yoreh De'ah 345:1).

If we understand that Aaron's sons killed themselves, what, then, should we make of the image of deadly fire coming from G-d? Doesn't that image suggest the contradictory idea that they did not die by their own hands? Yes, if we understand G-d as a separate being in physical space; no, if we understand G-d as a presence that people encounter within themselves.

The difference between external and internal is also ambiguous when G-d calls Moses from the burning bush. It's not a normal physical fire because it doesn't destroy the plant. Moses wants a closer look, but he is warned off. He's already as close as he can be.

Fiction often expresses such subtleties. Will Eaves' *Murmur*, a new release in the US this month, is narrated by a character based on Alan Turing, the English mathematician sentenced to chemical castration for his sexual relationship with another man. "I wish people who believe in God," the character says, "could believe in him a little less fervently - could see him as a metaphor for the boundedness of our physical existences and the problem of the mental, which is physical, too, but perhaps in a way we don't understand." Turing committed suicide.

The divine, in how we understand and experience it, is often internal. This makes it possible to see that the unauthorized sacrifice and deaths of Aaron's sons could be one and the same. They offered wrong fire to G-d. Fire from G-d's presence burned them up. They were the sacrifice. They were not punished for sacrifice with death; rather, they were punished for death with ignominy.

This becomes a story about how we react to people who are suicidal.

People who suffer emotionally are misunderstood in various ways. Sometimes they want relationships that don't meet common expectations. Sometimes their goals aren't apparent. They are accused of lacking virtue or disrespecting authority. Their self-destruction is downplayed as accidental because others prefer to frame it that way. Their memory itself is shunned.

Could we instead see Aaron's sons as novice prophets in a vulnerable moment? Could we see what they did without looking away? Could we not forget who they were?

Suicide is a secular reading of Nadav and Abihu's deaths, and it makes intuitive sense to me. It feels truthful. I am finally at peace with the story. I won't rationalize severe punishment for difference or error. Instead, I can feel compassion for people whose private mental experience diverges from everyone else's and whose death is a sudden, terrible mystery.

Tucker Lieberman is the author of "Bad Fire," a memoir of a brief mental illness. Visit <https://tuckerlieberman.com>.



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Efraim's miracle marriage story

By Rivka Levy

As a kid, Efraim Geltman lived the typical life of a Reform Jewish family in Lexington, attending the famed Reform "Temple Isaiah." After studying Creative Writing and Dance at Oberlin College, he undertook a four year apprenticeship with Paul Pitchford, the author of *Healing with Whole Foods*, and earned a vocational college degree in Asian Medicine.

By his early 30s, Efraim was an established holistic healer, but felt something big was missing from his life. This spurred him to start researching his Jewish roots, and his search led him to Israel and to Orthodox Judaism. Also, Efraim had gone out on literally hundreds of dates, but no one clicked, and the years continued to pass.

Two years ago, Efraim "came out" publically as a follower of a Breslov Rabbi in Jerusalem, Rabbi Eliezer Berland, who had become the target of a witch hunt spearheaded by a small group of Breslov chassidim in Meah Shearim, who made a number of false allegations against Rabbi Berland.

No one knew the real story, so Rabbi Berland was denounced publically in many quarters, particularly on social media -- and some of Efraim's closest friends were leading the attack.

Efraim was finding it very hard to meet the right woman, so he asked Rabbi Berland for some advice. Rabbi Berland told him, "You should move to Miami."

Initially, Efraim didn't take these instructions too seriously, but when Rosh Hashana 5779 rolled around, Rabbi Berland again told him very seriously, "You should move to Miami." On Succot 5779, Efraim saw Rabbi Berland again, and he said to him: "Why are you still here? You should be in Miami."

So in a gigantic leap of faith, Efraim packed up his life and flew to Miami. He had no idea who or what was meant to be there, although he knew that Miriam, one of the women he'd seriously dated in the

past, had recently also moved to Miami. Miriam is also a holistic mentor and coach with a large following on YouTube, particularly among Russian-speaking women. When he landed, the pair went out on another date, but nothing came of it and they decided to part ways permanently.

Which brings us up to the truly miraculous part of the story.

A few days after that fateful last date, Miriam experienced a dream-cum-vision, where she was walking in a field, and Rabbi Berland was walking next to her, and reassuring her about many of her doubts and fears about getting married. A little way off, there was a house in the forest that was filled with voices, banging and noises. When Miriam asked the rabbi what was going on, he responded that the sounds she could hear were

the souls of her and Efraim's children, who still couldn't come down to the world.

Miriam awoke, stunned, and contacted the owner of the ravberland.com website to ask him to verify directly with Rabbi Berland if the dream was true. She got the message back that the dream was true, and that Efraim was her soul-mate. Now, all she had to do was tell that to Efraim!

Again, the owner of the ravberland.com website stepped in to act as the go-between, and once Efraim heard everything that had happened, he met Miriam again, talked a lot of things through, and the pair got engaged on the spot.

Three days' later, the pair flew back to Israel, where they were married by Rabbi Berland in Jerusalem. Efraim and Miriam plan to move into their new home in the Holy City this April.

To learn more about Efraim's work, please visit jerusalemhealth.net.

Rivka Levy is a prolific author (10+ books and counting) and blogs on the spiritual dimension of Jewish life at www.rivkalevy.com.



The Passover story has bound the Jewish people together for thousands of years. Everyone connects to the story in their own way and brings unique seder traditions to the table. This diversity of Jewish life and practice are an essential part of what makes Greater Boston a vibrant, caring, and inclusive Jewish community. It enriches all of us, strengthening the fabric of the Jewish experience. CJP wishes you *Chag Sameach*, a joyous and meaningful Passover holiday.

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JALSA Annual Meeting

Join the Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action at our 2019 Annual Meeting: Living Our Values. On **Thursday, May 16 at 6 p.m.** at Temple Israel of Boston (477 Longwood Ave.), we will be welcoming our members, volunteers, and Boston's corporate, legal, and non-profit communities for an evening to celebrate our mission to pursue social, economic, environmental, and racial justice.

Honorees will include Pam Goodman, Director, Beacon Communities; the "Yes on 3" Campaign to protect transgender rights co-chairs Mason Dunn and Kasey Suffredini; former legislators and JALSA leaders Jay Kaufman, Byron Rushing, and Frank Smizik; and the memory of Marc Slotnick, z"l, member of the JALSA Advisory Committee. Tickets start at \$75. Sign up at www.jalsa.org.

Mah Jongg Tournament

May 5, 1-5 p.m. at Temple Beth Am, 300 Pleasant St., Framingham. Register for: Official Tournament NMJL Rules; 3 rounds (Four 15-minute games each); Cash prizes for high scorers. Register online by April 21 - Pay \$30 online OR by check. ALL must register at: <https://goo.gl/forms/mqrN7saorHxwxIq11>. Any questions, email tempbethammj@gmail.com or call Cynthia at 508-879-5596. Registration fee also includes coffee, tea, and light refreshments.

ADL Law & Education Day

ADL will hold the Essex County Law & Education Day: "Civil Discourse in the Courtroom and Community" on **May 16**. The featured keynote speaker will be the Honorable David A. Lowy, Associate Justice of Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court. The event will honor: Chief Mary Butler of the Salem Police Department and Jared Fulgoni, Amesbury Superintendent of Schools. RSVP at www.adl.org/lawanded2019.

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Bipartisanship and Civility at 2019 AIPAC Conference

By Steven Schimmel

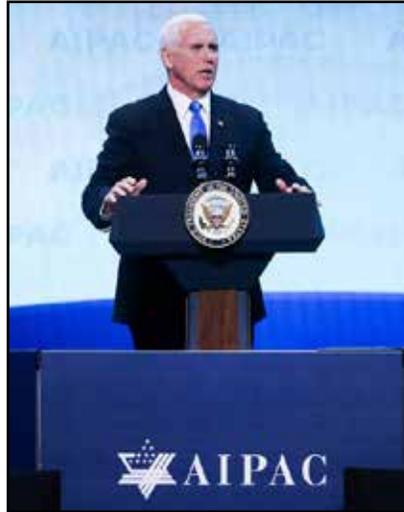
Sometime in the future there will no-doubt be a political-scientist researching the American-Israeli relationship during our tumultuous time. They will look for data and polls; maybe they will have access to an archive of Facebook and Twitter posts from 2019 in a vault in the Library of Congress. Maybe they will come across coverage of the 2019 AIPAC Policy Conference.

Surely whatever is important to the U.S.-Israel relationship must be mentioned there.

From my perspective, this hypothetical researcher would only end up having a rather difficult time making sense of it all. The big question, I feel, would concern why the news doesn't really seem to reflect what's happening in the U.S.-Israel community.

The major story going into AIPAC was the so-called "Jexodus" - an effort by President Trump to convince Jewish Democrats that they should leave their party and vote Republican. One might have expected "Jexodus" to be the key topic at AIPAC. And yet, only a few of the speakers made even thinly veiled references to "Jexodus." There were no shocking "aha" moments. Vice President Pence spent some time during his speech criticizing the Democratic Party, which certainly fits into the "Jexodus" playbook - but did anyone talk about it afterwards? I don't think so, it just didn't seem to be discussed.

I did hear a lot of friendly conversations between Republicans and Democrats at the conference. Maybe I even heard enough to think that Israel is still a bipartisan issue; we can hope. Some journalists may report that the AIPAC conference had plenty of partisan disagreements. They could read between the lines of the speeches to find attacks on the opposition party.



But for the average attendee, the feeling was actually pretty bipartisan and positive. The criticism that we heard came across as being, dare I say, reasonable. Other than in the few moments during the main stage speeches, partisanship wasn't talked about - and I'm pleased to write that.

Maybe it's a case of much ado about nothing, and I think that's a good thing. Politics is already dividing our communities, and we don't need so much extra attention on how we vote. "Jexodus" might make headlines, but from what I heard and saw at AIPAC it doesn't seem like it's really on many people's minds. I am not an expert and it's risky to make predictions, but the lack of chatter about "Jexodus" makes me think things will probably stay the same, if the crowd at AIPAC is any indication.

Steven Schimmel is Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts. The views and opinions expressed here do not reflect the views and opinions of the Jewish Federation or its members. Photo: Vice President Mike Pence (AIPAC)

This Passover, as we recall the story of our ancestors . . . Let's also write the next chapter. How will you assure Jewish tomorrows? Contact Leah at lshuldiner@jfcma.org for more information



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Upcoming events at 99-101 Newbury Street

May 8, 2019
7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
An Evening with Ambassador John Loeb, Jr.
The former U.S. Ambassador to Denmark discusses growing up in a prominent New York Jewish family and his career as a diplomat.

June 21, 2019
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
From Kreplach to Dim Sum: The History of Jews in China
Join us for a Shabbat dinner of Chinese food and an entertaining presentation on the history of Jews in China, from the 8th century to today.

The Best of Both Worlds: Passover Classics Meet the Keto Diet

What happens when a French-trained pastry chef and the author of four bestselling cookbooks meets the Keto diet, the no-carbs-allowed diet that's sweeping the nation?

Now throw in the Jewish holiday of Passover, replete with its ancient culinary traditions and the result is a mouthwatering fusion of the old, the new and the healthy.

For the uninitiated, the term “keto” comes from the fuel the body burns when blood sugar (glucose) is not available. This happens when you deprive your body of the carbs that break down into blood sugar so the body turns to fat as its fuel and enters the state of ketosis. It's there, keto devotees say, that they not only drop extra pounds, but are also energized and focused in new and unexpected ways.

So Keto, with its complete avoidance of carbs of any kind, could have been a tough challenge even to a pro like Paula Shoyer, author of *Healthy Jewish Kitchen* (Sterling Epicure). But if there is one challenge Shoyer thrives on, it's modernizing traditional dishes to pass on beloved traditions but in healthy new ways.

“Way too often people feel they have to choose between blowing their diet and emerging from the holidays feeling bloated or foregoing the traditional foods that are so important to pass on to the next generation,” says Shoyer, whose cooking classes and demonstrations and over 33 TV appearances have made her something of a household name. “Now they can have a kosher-for Passover meal that's both healthy and reflects the best of Jewish tradition.”

Keto Herb and Almond Crusted Brisket

You can use other nuts such as pistachios, walnuts or pecans for this recipe. Make sure to not completely purée the herb and nut mixture.

Serves 8 - 10

4 ½ - 5 pounds second cut brisket

2 tablespoons coconut oil, divided

1 tablespoon coconut flour, or more as needed if you have 2 pieces of meat

¾ cup whole almonds

1 cup Italian parsley leaves

leaves from 2 sprigs thyme

1/3 cup tarragon leaves

leaves from 4 stems fresh oregano

leaves from 4 stems rosemary

10 basil leaves

¼ teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon black pepper

juice of 1 ½ lemons

½ cup chicken stock or water

Preheat oven to 350°F. Heat coconut oil in a large frying pan over medium-high heat. Sprinkle coconut flour on both sides of the meat, shaking off excess, and brown in the pan until you see crispy parts on the meat, about 3 to 4 minutes per side. Remove meat to a roasting pan. If you have 2 pieces of meat, add another one to two teaspoons coconut oil to the pan before you brown the second piece and reduce heat a bit if the pan starts to get black.

Meanwhile, place the remaining coconut oil, almonds, parsley, thyme, tarragon, oregano, rosemary, basil, salt and pepper into the bowl of a food processor and process until the nuts are in small pieces. Place one third of the herb paste on one side of the brisket and place that side down back in a roasting. Pack the remaining herbs on top. Pour the lemon juice and water around the meat.

Cover with heavy duty foil. Bake for 1 hour.

Remove pan from oven, place meat on a cutting board and slice against the grain into 1/3-inch slices. Return the slices to the pan, overlapping each other, so that the herb crust peeks out. Cover and bake for another hour, or until the meat is fork tender.



Wishing you and your family a Happy Passover!

Chag kasher v'sameach

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TO DESTROY JERUSALEM by Howard Kaplan

Writers House Publishing House, , LA, Cal. 363 pages

Reviewed by David Bedein, Israel Resource News Agency

TO DESTROY JERUSALEM, Kaplan's fifth gripping Middle East thriller, is his longest and most ambitious to date. A historical novel set in 1990, the action races around the globe from Jerusalem, to Rio de Janeiro, to London, and then to war torn Beirut as the antagonists attempt to separately smuggle plutonium into Israel and have the operational physicist breach Israel's fortified northern border. How they manage both should keep Israeli security services up at night. They want to use this live nuclear weapon as a threat.

At the heart of the novel is the first intifada (the PLO uprising) which stretched from December 1987 to the Madrid Conference in 1991.

Kaplan takes us into the strike committees, their internal organizing, and the hearts and minds of the PLO terrorists. It is a hallmark of his writing to give us human characters on both sides of the war. While Kaplan's spies usually work as loners, the Israeli team this time assembled to thwart the plot, is an unusually rich group of Sabras (Israelis), South Africa, British and American *olim* (immigrants) with their facility in English, among them two fascinating women who have joined the Mossad for vastly disparate reasons.

Romance strikes and not unintentionally as Kaplan's spymaster, Shai Shaham, has women constantly on his mind in his spare time. By the way: Kaplan's spies are married folk with children struggling with these relationships as they are gone so often from home.

Interestingly, the novel too brings back a relationship Kaplan has in

two previous novels: BULLETS OF PALESTINE and THE SPY'S GAMBLE.

All three feature Shai's relationship with Ramzy Awwad, the Palestinian Liberation Organization intelligence officer and famous short story writer. Kaplan lets us know in the afterword, that Awwad is based on Ghassan Kanafani, the actual spokesperson for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) later killed by a Mossad hit team in a car bomb explosion in Beirut in retaliation for his part in the lethal Lod Airport massacre, when the PFLP "subcontracted" Japanese terrorists to murder passengers at baggage claim, killing 37 people and wounding more than 80 .

Kaplan moderates Kanafani's views into a more conciliatory Ramzy Awwad as a man famous among his people for his writings even more so than his terror.

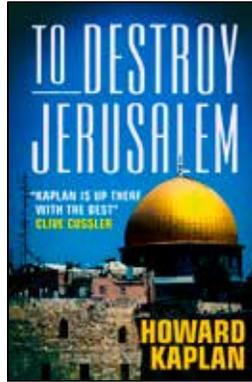
All three books , each of which this writer has reviewed, are 'stand alones' which mean that these separate stories can be read independently and in any order, though this one, time-wise, is slipped in between the other two.

THE SPY'S GAMBLE's fictional characters move through real events in Israel in 2016-2017 and reads often as the ink has barely dried from the page.

Kaplan's novel, THE DAMASCUS COVER has been adapted into Sir John Hurt's recent film starring Jonathan Rhys Meyers, Olivia Thirlby and the Israeli actors Aki Avni, Tsahi Halevy, Neta Riskin and Igal Naor. It is currently available on Hulu in the US and worldwide on Netflix.

In this impressive body of work TO DESTROY JERUSALEM rises to the top in its complexity, originality and the true cleverness of the plot.

Like his spies, Kaplan is at the top of his game.



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**Our Role in Increasing
Affordable Housing**

By Cindy Rowe and Bob Van Meter

In Deuteronomy 6:9, the Jewish people are instructed to inscribe a reminder of the Covenant on the doorposts of their homes. This most sacred of responsibilities, to hang a mezuzah, is tied to our dwelling place, which is central to our family and spiritual lives. But what is our obligation to ensure that people are afforded the opportunity of having a dwelling place?

Over the last decade, public consciousness of historic racial discrimination and its impact on housing patterns has grown here and across the country. At JALSA, we are embarking on an effort to examine the ways governmental policies, including zoning, redlining, and racially restrictive covenants, have affected housing choices for the African-American community.

The recent book *The Color of Law*, by Richard Rothstein, documents how housing discrimination was actively promoted by the U.S. government, and how housing policies created the conditions for the current wealth gap in our country. According to the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, communities of color in the Boston area have a median wealth of \$8, while white households have a median wealth of \$247,500. Much of this gap is due to unequal opportunities to purchase homes, and then to pass on the accumulated wealth to future generations.

Unfortunately, access to housing opportunities in many of the Boston region's most prosperous communities still remains elusive for African-American households. Oftentimes, suburban communities in Greater Boston have restrictive zoning ordinances which make it difficult, if not impossible, to develop multifamily housing. A recent research report by Boston University scholars, "Who Participates in Local Government," dramatically illustrated how overwhelmingly residents oppose development that would make their communities even slightly more inclusive.

To begin to resolve the problem of increased economic disparity, we must dive into the underlying causes of the racial wealth gap. And it is imperative that we begin to discuss ways to create increased housing opportunities in all of our communities as part of that solution.

The JALSA Affordable Housing Team plans to create a curriculum to share with congregations across the Commonwealth engaged in racial justice work. Ultimately, our goal is to activate more voices for fair housing and inclusive housing development by linking individuals to local initiatives and statewide legislative efforts to reform zoning laws.

We look forward to working together to create a more fair Commonwealth.

Cindy Rowe is the Executive Director of the Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action. Bob Van Meter, who is collaborating on this project, is the former Executive Director of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation Boston.

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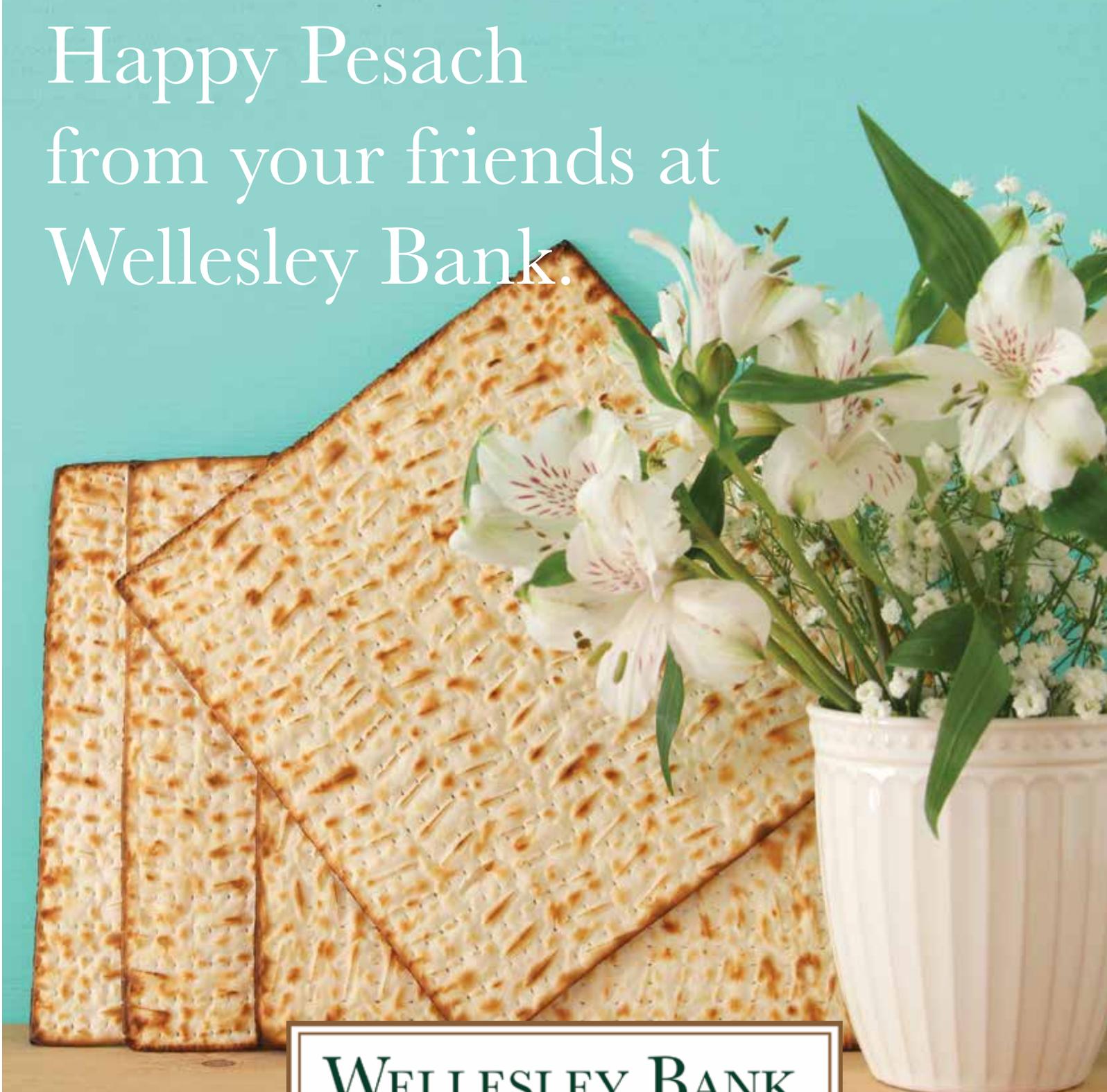
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