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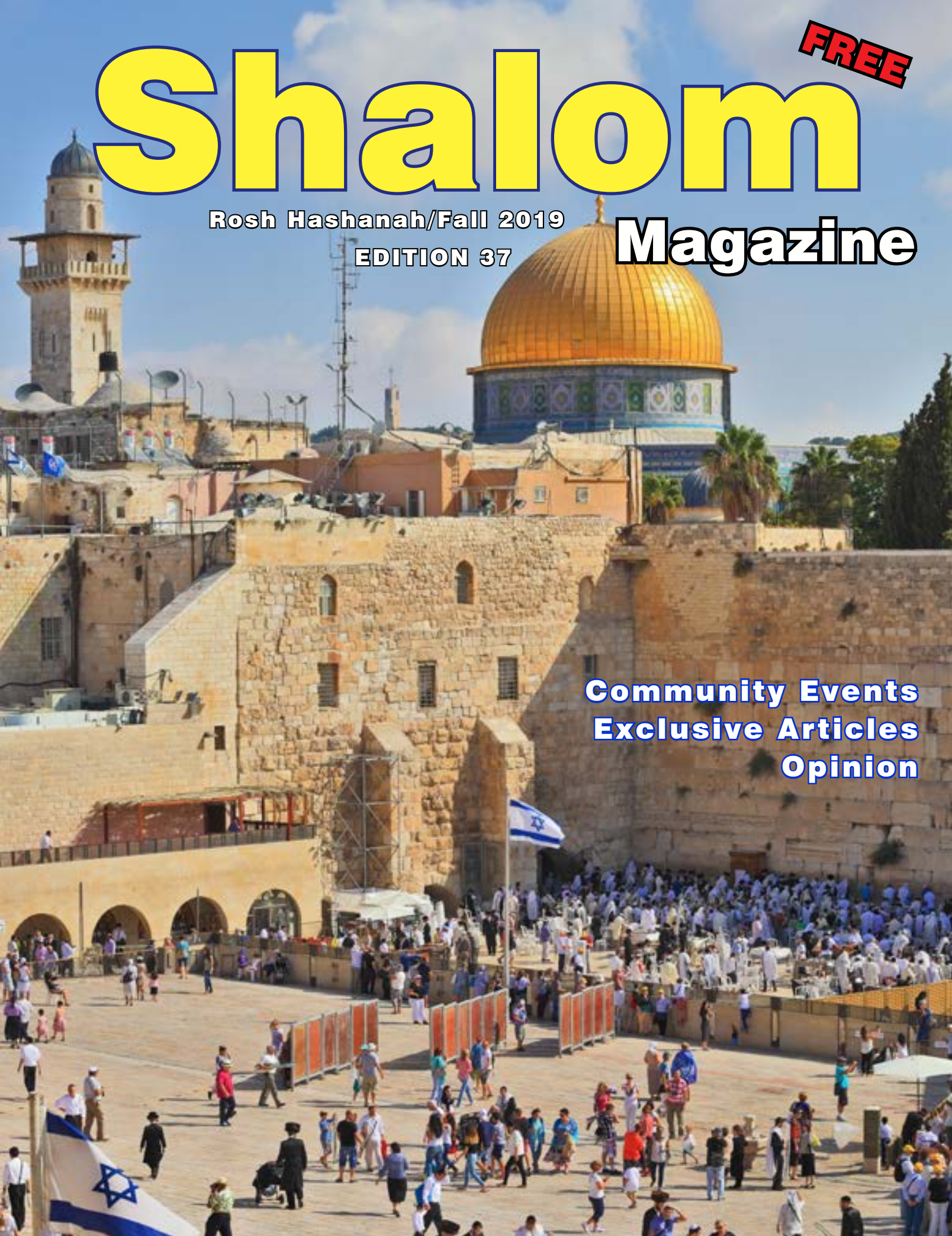
# Shalom

Rosh Hashanah/Fall 2019

EDITION 37

**Magazine**

**Community Events  
Exclusive Articles  
Opinion**





# Havurat Shalom

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- Chazzan David Hastings
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For Hebrew School, contact Dena O'Neil at [denasjoy@hotmail.com](mailto:denasjoy@hotmail.com)  
For Sisterhood, contact Gail Ellis at [gailellis49@comcast.net](mailto:gailellis49@comcast.net)

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## Events at Temple Emanuel, Newton

### October 20 at 9 a.m.

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### October 24 at 8 p.m.

Jared Firestone, 2022 Winter Olympic hopeful, will talk about how the *March of the Living* has impacted his life and led him to Israel and a Winter Olympic hopeful in Bobsledding. Twenty-nine year-old lawyer/real estate broker Firestone, a native of Hollywood, Florida, has been training for Israel's Skeleton National Team. Skeleton, a one-person version of the bobsled race, is an event where the competitor rides prone, head-first downhill on a sled, reaching up to 80 mph on a one-mile course. Currently the team includes three men and one woman. This event is sponsored by the New England March of the Living and Temple Emanuel.

More information at [www.templemanuel.com](http://www.templemanuel.com).



### Erev Rosh Hashanah:

Sunday Eve, Sept. 29

### Yom Kippur - Kol Nidre:

Tuesday Eve, Oct. 8

### Erev Sukkot:

Sunday Eve, Oct. 13

Yom Kippur, Wednesday, Oct. 9: Children's Service, 3 p.m.; Healing Service, 3:30 p.m.; Mincha, 4:30 p.m.; Neilah, 5:30 p.m.

## Wellesley-Weston Chabad

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## Temple Adath Sharon is open for High Holidays

Members of Temple Adath Sharon, an egalitarian conservative synagogue, have been homeless for the past 4 years. The congregation is pleased to announce they are now back in their spiritual home at 18 Harding St., Sharon. Rabbi Navah Levine will be leading services.

All are invited to worship and welcome in the New Year at Temple Adath Sharon by reserving your seat today. Details are available by contacting [templeadathsharon@hotmail.com](mailto:templeadathsharon@hotmail.com) or 781-784-2517.

## Temple Emanuel, Andover

Celebrate High Holiday Services open to the public at Temple Emanuel, 7 Haggetts Pond Rd., Andover.

Erev Rosh Hashanah, Sunday, Sept. 29, 7 p.m.; Rosh Hashanah Children's Service, Monday, Sept. 30, 3 p.m.; Second Day of Rosh Hashanah, Tuesday, Oct. 1, 10 a.m.; Kol Nidre, Tuesday, Oct. 8, 5:30 p.m.

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**Shalom Magazine 2019**  
**Published by Farber Marketing Inc.**  
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**Design:** Farber Marketing

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As we start the month of Elul, we enter a time in the Jewish calendar preceding Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. It is a period when we are invited to reflect on the year that just passed, and make commitments for the future.

Here at Shalom Magazine, we like to bring to our readers coverage of events and developments within our local community, as well as throughout the Jewish world.

Even though our members may hold many diverse viewpoints, it is important to bring them all to light and learn about each other. I believe that journalism, as well as Judaism, is about presenting the truth, and portraying both sides of all situations, so that we can have a civilized discussion.

In the Talmud, we read about our Sages having antagonistic opinions, and we see how it was possible for them to yet have a respectful exchange of ideas by understanding, and not ignoring the other side. Our Sages thought that it was relevant not only to have the debate orally, but to record it for future generations.

In journalism, especially when dealing with a multifaceted Jewish community, I believe it is important to showcase each congregation, each group of Jews getting together for a cause, and to report on their activities and engagements. It is not about presenting Judaism as a traditional and uniform expression but as a myriad of ideas, so that readers can come to their own conclusions, and perhaps choose to participate in whatever form they feel will connect them to G-d.

At the end of the day, we must focus on the future of the Jewish community, keeping in mind that while we fight for justice in the world, we need to protect the continuity of our people and the safety of Jews in the land of Israel. And we need to reaffirm our sincere commitment to fighting anti-Semitism, as we see it on the rise all over the world. We will always be stronger once we accept our differences.

I would like to thank all our advertisers and contributors who support our independent Jewish magazine. Shalom Magazine is also available at [www.issuu.com/shalomma](http://www.issuu.com/shalomma).

May we all, through our actions and prayers, deserve to be inscribed in The Book of Life with all our family and loved ones.

*Shirley Nigri Farber - Publisher*

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# Our People

Susie Davidson



*On Tisha B'av (Aug. 11), rabbis and Jewish community members gathered at JFK Federal Building in Boston to lament about our immigration system.*

*Simon Wolfe of Newton Temple Sinai holds a biblical sign at the JFK Building*



*On Friday, June 28, the Norfolk County Sheriff's Office graduated 13 new corrections officers. Sheriff Jerry McDermott swore the officers in during a ceremony in Quincy to mark their completion of the rigorous 10-week training academy. The new officers will staff the Norfolk County Jail and House of Correction in Dedham. Providing Invocation prayers was Rabbi Moshe Bleich of the Wellesley-Weston Chabad.*



*Members of Shaloh House Chabad of the South Shore were lead by Rabbi Mendel Gurkow on a visit to the Chabad headquarters in Crown Heights, Brooklyn.*



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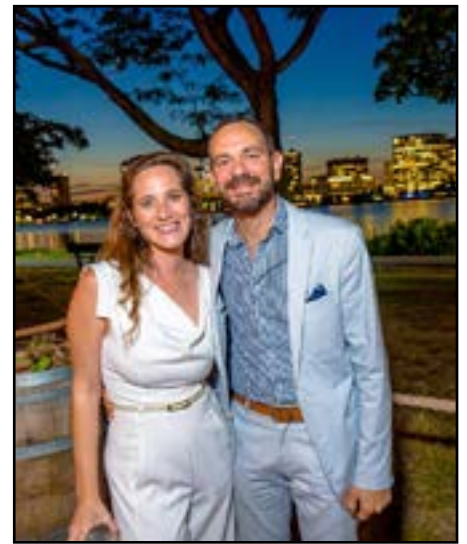
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*YJP (Young Jewish Professionals) Boston's Tu B'Av White Party took place on August 14 at the Owl's Nest on the Esplanade*



# White Party



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# Havurat Shalom, Merrimack Valley

Back in the 1960s, a group of intermarried couples latched onto the idea of starting a congregation that would accept them as Jews, but had an emphasis on what at the time was a movement towards “secular humanism.” These families wanted to have a moral education for their children and an opportunity to gather in prayer, using as their core many of the Jewish psalms and readings they had grown up with, but without an emphasis on Hebrew or lots of references to an all-powerful single deity.

They called themselves the “Andover Jewish Fellowship.” Growing to approximately sixty families by the early 1980s, the “AJF” was a co-op where members did everything. There was no rabbi, and parents ran the school and cobbled together payment for a few teachers. School was held in parents’ homes, as were religious observances - with the exception of the High Holy Days, which were held at the Jewish Community Center in Lawrence.

At this point in their history, however, the congregation was of two minds - half of the group was tired of doing everything themselves and wanted to be part of a synagogue where paid leadership took care of everything, a sextant cleaned up after them, etc. The other half of the congregation wanted more emphasis on the Hebrew language but, more importantly, wanted to maintain the volunteer nature of the group and bring more Jewish tradition and education into the prayers and observance.

The congregation split in half, with many families going to the synagogue in Haverhill and the others remaining together, forming Havurat Shalom - Friends of Peace. The school was maintained and expanded. Shabbat observances became monthly, we wrote our own Mahzor for the High Holy Days, and proceeded to try and find a rabbi who would be willing to guide us, but not lead us - while maintaining an all-volunteer lay-governing structure.

With the focus on acceptance of families who identified as Jews, regardless of matrilineal, patrilineal, or conversion origins, Havurat

Shalom expanded while remaining true to our Jewish nomadic roots - without a building. We saved up to buy a koshered Torah, received a donated ark, contracted with a local church to hold our services and school in their space, and partnered with a wonderful Reconstructionist Rabbi, Karen Landy, with whom we have been associated for more than fifteen years.

Our musical director, Elliot Jacobowitz, has assembled a four-piece band that offers musical accompaniment at all of our services. Our Hebrew School meets the needs of young families - offering once-per-week classes including Hebrew, Jewish social justice teaching and Judaica. With a modest annual dues of \$325/year that has not been increased in 11 years, the community thrives, with an additional following of several hundred people who annually attend our High Holy Day services - which have always been free and open to the public.

In the past three years, Havurat Shalom has made a commitment to being an open and welcoming community of faith, becoming the first Jewish congregation in the Merrimack Valley to become a member of Welcoming Faiths, which embraces the LGBTQiA community. In addition, we have adopted a statement of social justice and have become a composting group in an effort to care for our planet in the Jewish tradition of Tikkun Olam.

Havurat Shalom also offers a vibrant Sisterhood and a Tzedakah committee, in addition to providing a community Passover celebration. Although we had not realized it, the traditions we formed together as families mirrored the tenants of Reconstructionism, such that we try to understand and interpret the meaning our ancestors drew from scripture and traditions, and try to make them relevant to our membership. As a result, and in an effort to support the growth of this concept, we joined the Reconstructionist movement several years ago and proudly affiliate as a member congregation.

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# Family Matters

By Dr. Rebecca Housel



Trauma. The Jewish people have suffered more than their fair share. Recent TV shows like Amazon Prime's *Transparent* (2014-2017) addressed the idea of trauma being passed through DNA in the Jewish community, but it's still not widely acknowledged or even understood. As Jews all over the world get ready to celebrate Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, it's important to remember how trauma through persistent global anti-Semitism has affected both us and our families throughout the generations.

Tufts University released study results in 2018 about how early-life trauma in men was associated with a change in microRNAs delivered in sperm. MicroRNAs, or miRNAs, are gene regulators that control certain sets of DNA. MiRNA contributes to epigenetics - or the study of how a person's environment can actually change their DNA, and how those changes are then passed on to the next generation. Until relatively recently, miRNAs were thought to only come from the mother. But research at Tufts proves otherwise.

When miRNAs are reduced in sperm, it affects an embryo's brain development, passing on "stress behaviors" to the child. Changes in miRNA cause genetic alterations because they disrupt DNA sequencing. The Tufts study was led by Larry Feig, Ph. D., professor of Developmental, Molecular, and Chemical Biology at Tufts School of Medicine. Feig and his team found that men who suffered the most abuse/dysfunction early in their lives had up to a 300-fold reduction in miRNAs as compared to men who did not suffer abuse.

Feig points out in his study that things like familial trauma and dysfunction increase the risk of both physical and mental health issues in children. At least part of why abuse and trauma become intergenerational is likely because it is inherited through our very DNA. This should be of particular interest to those of us in the Jewish community, as nearly all Jewish Americans come from relatives who escaped the pogroms of Russia, Eastern Europe and Northern Euro-



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Best wishes for a sweet New Year from all your friends at New England Yachad!



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# Family Matters

pe, and/or the Holocaust. The need to flee from certain death, along with the reality of losing a majority of family members, being beaten, tortured, experimented on, separated from parents and family, put in a detention center or prison camp - these are all consistent traumas for Jewish survivors who later immigrated to America, but also, other countries all around the world.

World Mental Health Day is October 10th, one day after Yom Kippur. As we recommit to Judaism this new year, and the values that have made Jewish families so culturally formidable in the face of millennia's worth of hatred and persecution, we need to also commit to being proactive in terms of our mental health. If you see a doctor and dentist to check your physical body's health 2-4 times a year, you should also be checking in with a licensed, qualified psychologist or therapist just as often.

The stigma surrounding mental health issues persists - the irony being, the reason that stigma continues is because of disconnects in our mental health. For example, an April 2019 study released in *Journal of Anxiety Disorders (JAD)*, showed that inverse reasoning (or magical thinking) can eventually lead to the development of diagnoses like obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). OCD is not just about obsessively washing one's hands either - it's also marked by delusions or what's known as inferential confusion, thanks to an over-reliance on imagination instead of reality.

When you're being victimized through abuse, trauma and dysfunction, magical thinking becomes necessary to survive. You must believe an invisible force exists that can help you, or that a magical moment will somehow manifest aiding you in your escape, or, you'll lose hope. Every Jew who made it through the horrors of the Holocaust had to employ coping strategies like magical thinking and dissociation in order to survive. But it may have also later created a domino-effect of mental health issues within the Jewish community that are not openly talked about in relation to the shared trauma of all Jews.



The bottom line: There's now proof that abuse, trauma and dysfunction can alter our genes and be passed on by both our mother and our father. If we want to protect future generations, we need to address mental health matters now. Today. Make it part of your recommitment to Judaism, a culture that supports families through self-responsible action. That includes being proactive in mental health as well. Because, physical death is not the only thing that takes family away from us. Mental illness does, too. It's absurd to huddle together in temples across America to celebrate our unity when families within our own community have been torn apart by mental illness - right under our collective noses. All because we are so busy trying to fit in, trying to assimilate, trying to educate, earn, etc., that we have forgotten none of that matters without the people who matter most - our family.

You don't prioritize your family as much as you may think if you don't prioritize mental health, too.

This Rosh Hashana, when you sit down to dinner as a family, have an open discussion to raise awareness about the effects that come from patterns of trauma and abuse. Encourage family members to seek out mental health professionals, if for no other reason than as part of a preventative medical routine, like getting your teeth cleaned twice a year.

If you want to have a sweet new year, you have to be kind to yourself and others. Compassion over judgment. Kindness over cruelty. These are the things that keep families mentally healthy, strong, and ultimately, together.

*L'shana tova!*

**Dr. Rebecca Housel is a New York Times bestselling author and editor. Housel's website and blog, [RebeccaHousel.com](http://RebeccaHousel.com), is celebrating its 10th year and has 300+-million readers from 150 countries. Dr. Housel also authors, "Survive Anything," for *Psychology Today*: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/surviveanything>**

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# Can Procrastinating Be A Good Thing...?



*By Rabbi David Stav*

Here in Israel, there is a well-known phrase oft-spoken at this time of year - particularly in professional circles - *Acharei HaChagim* - after the holidays.

This phrase is typically a response when one person asks another when a specific project or initiative will be ready or come to fruition. And the predictable answer will always be...after the holidays.

The phrase, and the amount of times one hears it, has become a source of significant comic value in Israel with some saying that somewhere around mid-August until mid-October this statement can be relied upon as the ultimate excuse for procrastination.

The government bureaucracy is particularly ridiculed for implementing this approach, where critics say that this is simply another way of pushing off what needs to be done for the good of the people. The joke took on a whole other level recently when the country headed to yet ANOTHER round of national elections - a process which in essence has pushed off important decision making until we have a new Government in place.

But as Jews we know there is truth in every joke, so perhaps beyond the cynicism and humor attached to this phraseology, there is a deeper

lesson that we can take from it.

In this regard, it would be shallow of us to simply accept the phrase on its practical face value. It's not just that the preparations for the holidays preclude our abilities to get anything done. But rather I would argue that there is some deeper spiritual importance to this form of "religiously-themed procrastination."

The holidays that begin with Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and culminate in Sukkot are a reflection of our very being as a Jewish nation. We begin on Rosh Hashanah with the very recognition that God is the one who created our world and placed humanity within it. We then transition on Yom Kippur to a position where we accept responsibility for our actions - our deeds both good and bad - and ask God for forgiveness for that which we have done wrong. And finally on Sukkot we celebrate in a holiday that reminds us of the faith that we have as Jews and the qualities of life that Hashem has given us.

Within that whole period we are immersed in prayer and repentance, but also times of relaxation, enjoyment and family.

It is a time where we both set ourselves off from society but also work to connect to those who are closest with us.

In every sense, it is a time of self-introspection and a period where we find ourselves anew each and every year.

Such activity is critical in helping us become better people and better prepared to accept and confront the challenges of life.

So while certainly when we say "After the holidays," there is undoubtedly an element of being able to push off today what can be done tomorrow, there is deep value in addressing those challenges and opportunities only after we have undergone this period of self-evaluation and renewal.

May we all be blessed that this period be one that brings health, happiness and new year of success, productivity and all that we wish for - for ourselves and our families.

*Rabbi David Stav is the Chief Rabbi of the City of Shoham, founder and chairman of the Tzohar Rabbinical Organization in Israel.*



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# Judaism and Mental Illness



By Sandra Lilienthal, Ed.D.

In the last few years, we have unfortunately been exposed to hundreds of tragedies related to mental illness in our country. I will not dwell on dry numbers, but suffice it to say that in 2016, the number of suicides in the U.S. was more than double the number of suicides in 1981, with a clear increase year by year, according to the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics. And according to a 2014 Harvard University study, on average one mass shooting happened every 200 days in the first decade of the 21st century. Between 2011 and 2014, this number equaled one mass shooting every 64 days. And in the first weekend of August alone, two incidents left over 30 people dead. Whether it is mass shootings or a scary rise in suicide rates, it is clear that we are not addressing one of the fundamental issues in the modern world - mental illness.

Less than a year ago, I was asked to speak at a synagogue in South Florida about Jewish perspectives on mental illness. As Jews, we should always go back to our sources, which in almost every case can help us gain perspective. Judaism does have an opinion on everything (have you ever heard of a Jew that does not have an opinion?). But it is much more than just having opinions - we have

the accumulated wisdom of hundreds of generations that came before us, and the foundational values that informed these generations and should inform ours as well.

Unlike members of some past generations and many people in our generation, our basic text, the Bible, has never shied away from telling it as it is. Our patriarchs and matriarchs and our leaders, kings, and rabbis, are all human beings. Yes, they possess incredible talents; yet, they also have human flaws. They suffer the same problems we suffer. We should not be surprised at this because, after all, we are told from the very beginning of the Torah that we are all created *b'tzelem Elokim* - in the image of G-d. So what does Judaism say about mental illness?

Many biblical characters suffered from some form of mental anguish, from King Saul to King David, to the prophet Elijah, Jonah, Job and Jeremiah. We do not have the space here to go into all the details, but the first Jewish king, Saul, is portrayed as a man prone to depression, which was many times alleviated by David's music (I Samuel 16). King Saul ends up committing suicide to avoid being captured by the Philistines. In Psalm 38, David speaks about his burden being too heavy to bear, and a few chapters later, in Psalm 42, David asks: "Why are you downcast, my soul? Why so disturbed within me?"

Elijah, the prophet, being weary and afraid, asks G-d to take his life because he "has had enough" (I Kings 19). Jonah asks G-d to "take away his life, for it is better to die than to live" (Jonah 4). Job complains that he has "no peace, no quietness, no rest, just turmoil" (Job 3), and that he is overwhelmed by terror (Job 30). Jeremiah wrestles with loneliness and insecurity and curses the day he was born (Jeremiah 20).

As we move from the Bible to Rabbinic sources, the topic of mental illness is not dropped. To the contrary, different terms are used in Rabbinic discussions to refer to mental illness: *marah shechorah* (literally black bile) is used to refer to melancholy or depression; *teiruf daat* (literally the tearing of one's knowledge) refers to a temporary state of mental distress. The word *shoteh* is translated as a mentally ill person, who cannot be a witness, nor is he obligated to performing

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## Judaism and Mental Illness

all of the commandments. And the Talmud (Chaguigah 3b) discusses what renders someone “mentally ill.”

Maimonides, in his Mishneh Torah, affirms that contracts, sales or purchases involving a mentally incapable or emotionally unstable individual are not binding, and that this person requires a guardian just like minors require guardians. Furthermore, he specifies that even though there are some outer obvious signs of mental illness, such as someone breaking things or walking around naked, sometimes mental illness is present even if the person seems to be intellectually able.

Whether we are ready to admit it or not, mental illness is part of the life of many families. Given the numbers offered by the National Alliance on mental illness, it is hard to imagine that any one of us has not been somehow involved with a relative suffering from mental illness.

According to NAMI, one in five adults experience some form of mental illness. 1 percent of American adults live with schizophrenia; 2.6 percent live with bipolar disorder; 6.9 percent live with major depression; and 18.1 percent (42 million American adults) live with anxiety disorders. These are sobering numbers. But even more disturbing is the fact that 60 percent of those adults with mental illness do not receive mental health services.

The Jewish community is no different from the average American community when it comes to mental illness. What should we do? Judaism has a quite simple and straight-to-the-point answer when it comes to our responsibility as a community. There is a mitzvah, a commandment, that supersedes almost any other commandment: *pikuach nefesh*, the saving of a life. Mental illness is also known as *mahalat hanefesh*, an illness of the soul, which is parallel to *mahalat haguf*, illness of the body. Just as we have an obligation to take care of physical health when one is sick or at risk of becoming ill, so too must we take care of mental health when one is ill or at risk of becoming sick. The Rabbis use the term *sakanot nefesh* - the threat to life and they state that mental illness can be a threat to one’s life or to the life of others.

Modern Jewish commentators have consistently reminded us that someone who suffers from depression must take medication that will allow him to be happy, and that a woman with postpartum depression has an obligation to pursue activities that will bring her happiness. With that said, as mentioned by Maimonides, sometimes people are able to go through life carrying the burden of their mental troubles inside.

And here, I think, is another important Jewish lesson: we cannot assume that mental illness is always obvious. We must be prepared to really see the other, to listen to the other, to recognize that just because someone is able to function within society, if that person is suffering from depression, excessive anger, or any other mental illness, we - yes WE - have an obligation to do something.

We are forbidden to neglect one’s mental health, according to Rabbi Shmuel Auerbach, who clearly states we have an obligation to seek professional help in case of mental illnesses. We must stop being in denial. Parents, adult children, educators, friends, neighbors and rabbis all need to be aware that mental illness will not go away simply because we choose to ignore it. No one would choose not to treat a broken leg in the hope that it will heal itself. Treating mental illness should be no different.

I end with a reminder that when we say the age-old *Mi Sheberach L'cholim* in synagogues, praying for a *refuah shlemah*, a complete healing for those who are ill, we use the words *refuat hanefesh v'refuat haguf* - healing of body and of spirit. In the year 5780 which is about to begin, may we do more than pray. May we be granted the wisdom to recognize mental illness in our midst, the courage to address it, and the determination to treat it with the same respect we treat physical illness. And may we, through our actions, guided by our Jewish values, help the millions of people who struggle daily to be healed.

*Shana Tovah u'Metukah!*

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



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# Never Again Is Now

*By Rabbi Susan Abramson*

In this holy season of introspection and reflection, I have a confession. Though I have read about, taught, written and preached about the Holocaust over my entire life and career, it has only been this past year that it has come into focus for me. Only now do I feel like I can begin to understand the many layers of this atrocity.

Having been born about a decade after the Holocaust ended, I grew up in its shadow. To this day, I am haunted by the newsreels we watched in religious school of Nazis goose stepping in military parades saluting their crazy-eyed führer, bodies piled up in parks or mass graves, emaciated inmates wearing identical striped rags peering lifelessly from behind the barbed wire of concentration camps. I remember encountering people with numbers tattooed on their arms. I devoured Elie Wiesel's books as each one was published.

I listened. I learned. I joined in the communal chorus of Never Again. I rejoiced that the State of Israel had become a safe haven for many survivors.

Almost every year since becoming the rabbi of Temple Shalom Emeth in 1984, I have had Holocaust survivors come and speak about their story during our Interfaith Yom Hashoah/Holocaust Memorial Service. Every year I would marvel at the incredible stories of survival, of how every one of them cheated death numerous times. I would look around the congregation, look into the eyes of our synagogue members and guests, and feel gratified by their emotional response.

But I never felt a personal connection.

I never quite understood or connected with the enormity, the pain, the suffering and the devastation of the Holocaust. Even though it had happened to my people, to my own family, it was too remote. I couldn't imagine it happening here in America.

Then I began to see the horrific images of the immigrant internment camps in our country. Pictures of people crowded together behind chain link fences, children sleeping on cold, hard concrete floors under

thin silver sheets, videos of children crying for their parents, people being herded like cattle. Rallies of other people shouting "send them back," cheering for the hate-filled remarks of our national leaders. As I watched these images, it was as if a curtain lifted, or a fuzzy distant image came into focus. I finally understood.

I will never forget last year when I led a Jericho Walk at the Burlington ICE office, witnessing seven men and one woman being shuffled out of the building and into sheriff's van, their hands and feet shackled. They stared at us stone-faced as we yelled our support, until ICE officers came charging at us, telling us to move away.

All the stories I heard growing up, of citizens joining the Nazi party, not caring about the repercussions of their government's policies, is now real and relevant in a way it never was before.

Over the past three decades I would ask my religious school students what they would do if they were Jews living in Germany as the Holocaust began. I would ask what they might do if they were not Jewish living at that time. They would look at me like I had two heads and often say they could not know. I admit that though I asked the question, I did not know myself.

Now I know. Never again is now. I recently read a meme on the Never Again Action Facebook page: "Whatever you are doing now is what you would have done during the Holocaust." Now I see the power a charismatic leader has to lead large multitudes of people down the rabbit hole of hate, racism and xenophobia.

After I recently finished leading a rally, a reporter asked me why I was organizing and leading so many demonstrations. I couldn't understand why she kept asking me why. To me it was now obvious. We have learned nothing from the Holocaust if we stand by now and watch our government inflict cruelty and harm on those who are the most vulnerable. We cannot allow the policies of this administration to go unchallenged. We know what happens when people do not stand up to hate. We know what happens when national leaders stereotype us and other groups and threaten us if we don't toe the line.

This Rosh Hashanah, when I hear the sounds of the shofar, it will symbolize a rallying cry for us to come together as a Jewish army of freedom fighters. Lives are at stake. Our values are at stake. Now is the time to stand up for our most important commandments: Love your neighbor as yourself. Do not oppress the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

The words of the prophet Isaiah we will hear on Yom Kippur must resound in our ears as a call to action: Our fast means nothing if it does not motivate us to break the chains of oppression. Never again is now.

*Susan Abramson, the rabbi of Temple Shalom Emeth in Burlington, is the longest-serving female rabbi in New England, author of the Rabbi Rocketpower series of Jewish holiday books for children and the host of Spiritually Speaking YouTube channel. (In the picture, she is the one on the far left)*





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## Temple Beth Sholom, Hull



Rabbi David Grossman became the spiritual and religious leader of Temple Beth Sholom on July 1. For the prior two years he was the Rabbi of Temple B'Nai Tikvah in Canton, the congregation resulting from the merger of Temple Beth Am of Randolph and Temple Beth Abraham of Canton. Previously, he served the Temple Beth Am community, first as Cantor (8 years) and Rabbi (5 years).

Rabbi Grossman is no stranger to the Jewish Community of Hull, having led Shabbat services at our sister shul, Temple Israel of Nantasket, during summers from 1980 to 2010. He is also a member of the South Shore Men of Harmony men's a cappella group, which has performed at numerous civic functions in Hull and adjacent towns.

Rabbi Grossman attended Maimonides School under the tutelage of Rabbi Joseph Soleveitchek and studied privately to be a cantor under renowned Cantors Gregor Shelkan and Moshe Semigran, A"H. Later in life, he attained his Conservative Smicha from Rabbi Steven Blane in New York.

When Rabbi Grossman was asked what he brings to his congregants, he replied: "my love of Judaism, my enthusiasm for Torah-based study and practice, my knowledge of Torah and davening, and my commitment to care for the community at every life state."

Rabbi Grossman is a member of the Hingham Hull Religious Leaders Association and was also the founder of the Canton Inter-Faith Clergy Committee.

Rabbi Grossman resides in Canton with his wife Diane. They have five children and eight grandchildren.

*Shana Tovah*

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## The Secret to Greatness

By Sivan Rahav-Meir



What makes someone great, really great? Many commentators say that the answer to this question is hidden in the following verses from this week's Portion (Ekev): *"For the LORD your God, He is God of gods, and Lord of lords, the great God, the mighty, and the awesome, who regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward. He doth execute justice for the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and dress."*

The beginning sounds very dramatic. Notice the adjectives and titles: "G-d of gods", "L-rd of lords", "the great", "the mighty", "the awesome". Right after such words, we would have expected to read descriptions of great miracles, of changing the laws of nature, of something that is above nature. But instead, we go down, and then further down, and find G-d occupying Himself with dress and bread for the orphan, for the convert and for the widow. We find Him listening, loving and caring, helping the weak in society. There were nations that believed that G-d is so exalted that he is detached from the mundane world, He does not care about you and about what you do, it is too small for Him, He is above that. But the Torah teaches us here the exact opposite principle: being the greatest means paying attention to the smallest of things.

(published on Aug. 21, reproduced with permission)

*Sivan Rahav-Meir is a mother of five. She works for Israel TV news, writes a column for Yediot Aharonot newspaper, and hosts a weekly radio show on Galei Zahal (Army Radio). Her lectures are attended by hundreds and is broadcast throughout the world. She recently moved from Jerusalem to New York as World Mizrachi sheliach (emissary). To learn more, visit [www.sivanrahavmeir.com](http://www.sivanrahavmeir.com).*

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## The Vows We Make

**Rabbi Jonathan Hausman**

The opening prayer of Yom Kippur is the Kol Nidre "annulment of vows" recited at sundown of Yom Kippur eve.

The Kol Nidrei service consists of the opening of the Ark and taking out the Torah scrolls, reciting the Kol Nidrei and returning the Torah scrolls to the Ark.

Kol Nidrei, the prayer which ushers in the holy day of Yom Kippur, is perhaps the most famous one in Jewish liturgy. Ironically, it is not really a prayer at all, but rather a statement. A statement that deals with promises, vows and other sorts of verbal commitments commonly made over the course of the year. The Torah places strict demands on keeping one's word, and not fulfilling a vow is considered a serious misdeed.

Kol Nidre, which means "all vows," nullifies the binding nature of such promises in advance. One declares all future vows and promises invalid, by declaring that all vows are "absolved, remitted, cancelled, declared null and void, not in force of in effect."

One way of defining our being human is that we are the only creature who makes promises. However, it is also all too characteristic of us that we fail to deliver on our promises - to ourselves and others. In

doing so, we fail at the thing that defines our humanity. We are overextended, having promised far more than we ever can deliver. By saying Kol Nidre, we declare moral bankruptcy; in order to go on, we must wipe the slate clean and start over.

Vows are a legitimate spur to self-improvement. We vow X in the hope that by achieving it we will make ourselves better. To fence ourselves in against failure, we also invoke curses "in the event that we fail" - if I fail in such a simple matter, then I am a rotten, no-good, underachieving slob, etc.

Being imperfect, we inevitably fail in many of our aspirations. Look at what I said I would accomplish, and look how little I actually accomplished! Then, being Jewish) guilt sets in. If I couldn't accomplish X, then I am indeed a rotten, no-good, underachieving slob.

Yom Kippur comes to help us achieve forgiveness - from G-d and from our punishing superegos. We need to be reconciled to our finitude, which means to our imperfections, which means to the inevitability that only a small portion of our vows will get fulfilled. We need to release ourselves from both the vows and the attendant curses, to wipe the slate fully clean so we can start the next year anew.

We can even draw an analogy between our voluntary vows and promises and the mitzvot. Our taking on the mitzvot at Sinai was also a form of making promises to G-d. To be sure, the content of those promises was more prescribed than freely chosen (though as a theological liberal I would hesitate to draw an absolute black-and-white contrast here).

Nevertheless, we are bound by one as by the other, and we fail at the one as we fail at the other. Failure in discharging our external obligations leads us to confess and ask for forgiveness. Failure in discharging our freely-chosen vows leads us to say Kol Nidrei. In the one case as in the other, we aim through Yom Kippur to face up to our failures, acknowledge them, wipe the slate clean and start over.

**Jonathan Hausman is the rabbi at Ahavath Torah Congregation, Stoughton.**

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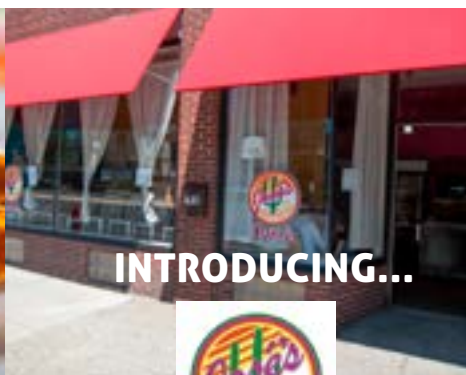
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# AHAVATH TORAH CONGREGATION TO MARK 100 years



Ahavath Torah Congregation (ATC) in Stoughton has stood the test of time. This year, the Stoughton synagogue marks one hundred years since its founding. It began by holding services in private homes, as did many Jewish shuls did in this country. The roots of Ahavath Torah began as the Hebrew Benevolent Society in the mid-19th century. Fred Lipsky, who emigrated from England, was instrumental in the early years as worshippers met in the Old Stoughton House on Railroad Avenue. They also worshipped at 84 Pearl St. and Forrester's Hall, with the congregation officially celebrating its founding Oct. 19, 1919. Russian and Lithuanian Jews, who had been worshipping at separate services, decided to unite and moved into 12 Porter St. on Sept. 5, 1930. The 25-membership synagogue was named Habeth Torah. Rabbi Henry Gerson, who moved here from Latvia in 1922, was the pivotal Jewish leader in the community, serving from 1926-1969. He died in 1970. The Porter Street synagogue was sold to the San Salvador Knights of Columbus, and the community moved into the Pearl Street building around 1938.

After World War II, when Jews began moving out of Boston for the suburbs, the synagogue membership began to grow. On June 14, 1969, 72 families moved into the new Central Street location, with the Torah scrolls being carried from the old synagogue in a joyous simcha, or celebration. This date marked the official opening of the Central Street building for religious use by the Congregation.

The founding members purchased and dedicated their first synagogue on Porter Street in Stoughton. One can only imagine the hard work, grit, and commitment it took for the group to gather the funds needed to form their house of worship.

The religious leadership has been stable, with only five rabbis serving at the Central Street location since 1926. The current Rabbi, Jonathan Hausman, began serving in 1996. The 23rd anniversary of his arrival was recently marked during a general board meeting, when president of the synagogue Bob Bornstein wheeled out a surprise anniversary cake to the social hall.

"The fact that Ahavath Torah Congregation celebrates its 100th anniversary speaks mightily to the Jewish community's deep roots in this community," Hausman said. "Our members have been active in town government and governance, community activities, communal celebrations and tragedies. It is with a sense of deepest pride that we call

ATC the oldest continuously active synagogue on the South Shore."

Ahavath Torah Congregation does not rest on its history nor its laurels. It is relevant to the greater Stoughton community, both Jewish and gentile. It serves as host to a weekly program for seniors through a cooperative agreement with the local Striar Jewish Community Center. It also shares its space with The Life Center Church, in a rare partnership of a synagogue and church.

As this shul marks its hundredth year, its rabbi, president, lay leadership and members all look ahead to the next hundred years of faith and service to its community. Planning committees are hard at work planning for the synagogue's upcoming 100th anniversary gala. Just last year, an apple tree was planted by a congregant so that congregants would be able to pick fruit off the tree for Rosh Hashanah. That tree was watered and tended carefully. In August, it bore fruit. As Bob Bornstein noted, ATC, like that tree, thrives through teamwork, faith, and the commitment of a dedicated congregation.

Ahavath Torah Congregation is located at 1179 Central Street, Stoughton, MA. For more information, call the office at 781-344-8733, contact the synagogue at [office@atorah.org](mailto:office@atorah.org), visit [www.atorah.org](http://www.atorah.org), or follow it on Facebook.

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For more information, visit [www.ajc.org/lft](http://www.ajc.org/lft) or contact Eva Jungreis at [jungreise@ajc.org](mailto:jungreise@ajc.org) or by phone at (617) 457-8700.

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# Finding Your Field

**By Rabbi Jessica Lowenthal**

“Thank goodness the High Holidays are late!” I found myself saying this a number of times this year. With beginning a new pulpit in August, there has been lots to do in order to transition myself and the congregation, none of which includes working on the High Holidays.

Whenever someone asks how things are going, I respond that everything is going well,

and thank goodness the Holidays are late!

But of course, the High Holidays are not late at all - they are the same time each year! Living on the Western calendar, we often forget that the Hebrew calendar isn't just an app on our phones that tells us when Shabbat candle lighting is, or what day we need to request time off from work in order to go to synagogue. It is a cyclical accounting of holy time, with deep meaning and logic.

Rosh Hashanah often feels like it just pops up, suddenly and without warning. If one walks into the High Holidays completely unprepared, it can be overwhelming. These services and the liturgy remind us of our faults, our mistakes, even our trauma. It can be a wall of despair - and walls do not lead to growth. They lead to more walls, blocking off parts of ourselves in order to hide from difficult emotions.

In reality, we have an entire month, Elul, whose sole focus is giving us a framework to prepare for the New Year. There are many rituals within this month that are designed to elicit contemplation and honesty before encountering Rosh Hashanah. If we take the month of Elul to slowly but surely look into ourselves, look back at our behavior over

the year, we do not encounter a wall. Rather, we find ourselves in a field of tall grass that we can gently move aside.

The Chasidic tradition drives this gentle interpretation home with a verse from Song of Songs; I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine - Ani L'dodi, V'dodi Li - spelling out Elul in Hebrew. Aside from the acronym, the verse itself is an important directive for how we can view this month of introspection and preparation. Each person can be in a loving relationship with G-d; but it is a two way street. In order to experience G-d, to experience a connection to something larger than yourself, you have to be open to that closeness. That can be hard and frightening, but it can be incredibly powerful and freeing as well.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of Chabad, says that “the King is in the field” during Elul, waiting for us to come and find Them. As we push aside that tall grass and move into the center of the field, we come closer to G-d - to that relationship with the world that connects us to all things. We also come closer to ourselves - to the truth we need to discover for the coming year to be one of growth rather than stagnation.

The Hebrew calendar is not just a timetable; rather it is a guide to living a meaningful life.

It gives us opportunities each year to lovingly

assess ourselves and our actions, and make corrections without being overly critical. Use the calendar the way it was intended - take time before Rosh Hashanah to look inward. Find a field, feel the grass in your fingers as you walk through it. Who knows what you will encounter as you continue on your journey.

**Rabbi Jessica Lowenthal was ordained in June 2019 from Hebrew College. She now serves as the Rabbi at Temple Beth Shalom in Melrose. She grew up in Framingham and now lives with her husband, two sons, and dog in Dedham.**



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## Wellesley trial lawyer becomes a Rabbi

*By Rabbi Shmuel Helinski, Esq.*

I write as a trial lawyer of 20 years. As a Jewish boy who grew up in Northern New England among very little Jewish community, I spent several decades of my life in an environment where religion was not a priority, much less a focus. Despite this, I was raised by my wonderful mother who instilled in her children a deep faith in G-d. My mother taught us Jewish faith from a Revere-based Russian Jew.

As I aged, I sought a career within which I could help others. What deeper conviction does a Jewish soul have but to bring kindness into this world, and to draw down G-dliness to the world? So, I sought to help others in court. But after years of practice, it became apparent to me that trial practice was not going to fulfill my interests as I had hoped, and it was ultimately through spending many High Holidays with Rabbi Moshe Bleich of the Wellesley-Weston Chabad that I found a childhood sense reinvigorated.

Legal practice and Torah are quite similar in nature. In legal practice, we take laws that have been enacted by government and try to apply facts of a particular case to those laws.

In volumes of past cases (called "precedent"), a decision is made by judges by applying the law to a certain set of facts, and lawyers likewise advocate based on the similarity of a current case to past decisions. Torah consists of the written Torah - the Five Books of Moses. Then, we have the oral Torah, a series of writings of how one is to apply life circumstances to the written Torah. Treatises of past rabbis set forth how one should apply certain life circumstances to the commandments of G-d.

Further, centuries upon centuries of writings of Torah scholars sometimes hold differing views of how one should interpret Torah. Much like law practice, a present-day rabbi will often have multiple specialties depending on one's focus and studies.

Members of the Jewish community consult with a present-day rabbi on a host of different real-life issues. For example, a person who



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## Wellesley trial lawyer becomes a Rabbi

keeps kosher maintains a separate set of knives in their home, one set for meat and one set for milk products. A person keeping kosher may use a meat knife to cut an onion and then place the cut onion as a topping on a pizza. But biblically under the laws of kashrut, one is not supposed to cook meat and milk together.

Here, where one is strict, the “spicy” nature of an onion and the sharp nature of the knife may, in certain circumstances, impart a “meaty” taste from the knife into the cheese through the onion on the pizza. When the person realizes what they have done, a rabbi is often consulted. Can the issue be fixed? Is the food ruined? The answer will depend on a host of different answers to a host of different questions, and from which viewpoints of which past rabbis a particular Rabbi follows today. Thus, different Rabbis may have different answers.

Like law, the difference in the answer may come down to very specific details - such as whether the onion was diced or sliced, whether the pizza has already been cooked, and when the knife was last used with meat. There is a great similarity in an analysis regarding the details of a legal issue and the details of a Torah issue. Quite often, a Rabbi will consult with another who is perhaps more knowledgeable in a particular area.

As one may see, a rabbi is not always the person leading a congregation. Because of the similarity between civil law and Torah, I felt that I wanted to go beyond just Torah study, and I wanted to be someone who could give opinions on such issues from the position of an actual rabbi. As such, I searched for a way that I could obtain rabbinical certification without having to move to New York or to enroll in a college program. I found a credible online Yeshiva program led by Rabbi Nachman Willhelm, and it was through my work with Rabbi Bleich and my tireless studies over about four years that I received my rabbinical ordination (*Smichah*) in June of 2019.



Now I understand not only what an incredible thing it means to be Jewish, but also *loshon hakodesh* (the holy language), and endless resources that have enabled me to understand my roots, my connection to Hashem (G-d). Over the years, I have worked on some of the most challenging cases in the Commonwealth as trial lawyer, and now I find myself in the unique position of being able to listen and to understand one’s world and to see one’s situation not only from my life and legal experiences, but also now from a spiritual perspective as well.

In July I traveled to our true origins, Jerusalem. There I found a deep meaning to my spirituality and a deep understanding of Jewish life.

In this month of renewal, the rejuvenation of Rosh Hashanah and our “return” to G-d, only good things can happen. There is well-known word, *kavanah* (intention). In so many ways, our prayers, our

good deeds and all that we do spiritually and practically, not just for ourselves, but also for those we love, our family, our friends and even complete strangers are wholly affected by the true and complete belief of our thoughts and actions, in our hearts and in our minds, of what we do.

As someone who has experienced real challenges and true loss in my life, I can confidently say that Judaism - and my connection to our Creator - has helped me through them all, and continues to do so every year, every day, every moment.

If there is ever a time that you wish to talk, vent, hear advice from an unorthodox grounded person or spend a Shabbat or another time with me studying Torah or just talking, please do not hesitate to look me up. My ears are always open. I wish you and your loved ones a *Shana Tovah Umetukah*, a good and sweet year.

**Stanley (Schmuel) Helinski, Esq. is a Boston trial lawyer who received his rabbinical ordination from Yeshiva at Machon L'Horah. He lives in Wellesley.**



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***Security concerns***

*By Steven Schimmel*

As every Jewish person knows, Rosh Hashanah is the time to recall the past year, and to set in motion plans for the coming year. For the organizations that oversee our Jewish communities, it's not just about personal and spiritual renewal, it's about announcing priorities and projects for the year ahead.

What should the Jewish communal world focus on? That's a pretty important question, and it could be answered in a thousand different ways. With this in mind, I have spent a lot of time over the past 12 months taking a close look at the situation we are facing in our communities.

I've spoken with our regional leadership, and with other leaders from around the country. I have read many of the syndicated columns in major national Jewish publications. I've closely followed briefings from liberal and conservative think-tanks - and I am more concerned than ever. There are once-in-a-lifetime challenges, existential threats, global terror networks seeking our destruction, fewer Jewish children being born, and declining interest in Jewish life, just to name some of the challenges we face. Fundamentally, these are major issues, but without a doubt, security is now at the top of the list.

Security emerged this year as the primary concern in the American Jewish community and in Jewish communities all over the world. The attack on the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh and the all-too-numerous other shootings and anti-Semitic incidents of the past year shocked us and stirred community leaders into action. In response to these horrible events, communities have held high-level security trainings, and arranged security assessments for congregations. Jewish organizations are working more closely with local and federal law-enforcement, and Jewish Federations have secured funding for security upgrades at Jewish institutions.

Over this coming year, I suspect that communities will be laser-focused on security - upgrading security features at congregations and JCCs, working even more closely with law enforcement, and doing more to build security-related relationships. Communities are also

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## Security concerns

holding trainings to ensure that more Jewish institutions have trained staff and the necessary resources to secure their facilities.

Surprisingly, I have also heard from a number of people who have expressed interest in obtaining firearms permits. That particular choice remains a less-talked about and seemingly controversial viewpoint, but it's notable that it is now on the radar for the first time in years. Hiring armed security guards for our institutions is also being talked about more often than in recent memory.

Whatever the course of action, the increased attention on security is vital for obvious reasons, but the other area of security needing more focus is working on combating anti-Semitism. It's easier today than at any other point in history to find anti-Semitic literature, videos, and conspiracy theories at one's fingertips. In ways that very closely resemble the indoctrination of jihadists (who also seek our destruction), studies have shown that individuals susceptible to absorbing this hate are doing so in greater and greater numbers. At the same time, historic global terror networks remain strong and dangerous.

All of this is greatly concerning. We can engage the non-Jewish community and teach them about Jewish life and about Israel, but we are obviously not the appropriate authorities to do law enforcement work. That is work better left to experts, but we must do all we can to ensure that the experts are closely watching. This requires us to be far more vocal about these concerns. Meetings with elected officials, more high-profile attention, and leveraging our relationships are more important today than ever before, and that is why communal organizations are more important today than they ever have been. The stakes are very high, and it's essential that we pay close attention to what is happening, and work toward fixing it.

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



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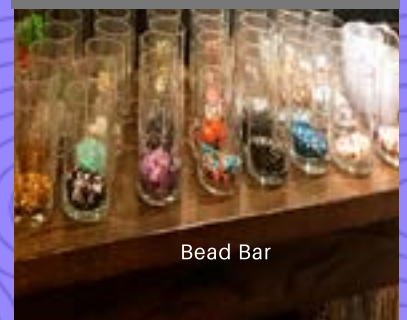
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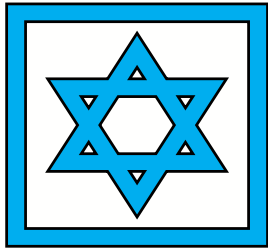
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## The only Sephardic Temple north of Boston

*By Joanne Pressman*

On a quiet side street near the Peabody-Salem line sits a small, nondescript building that is the home of Congregation Tifereth Israel, the synagogue that has been my religious home for my entire life.

Unless you are looking for the shul, you could drive right by without noticing it. But this synagogue has a history that goes back almost 100 years.

On February 15, 1922, our Congregation was begun by seven Jewish men who came to the United States from Turkey. Leon Eskenas, Nisim Eskenazi, Morris Gibely, Joseph Havian, Robert Hasday, David Leon, and Joseph Pernitchi were men who had a dream of a better life and religious freedom. Try to imagine what life may have been like at that time. Imagine, if you can, leaving your home and your loved ones - giving up everything that is known and familiar to you to travel a great distance to a foreign country.

When you get to this strange, new place, with nothing but what you were able to carry with you, you need to find a job and somewhere to live; to learn the language, and to save enough money to send for your family and then to sustain them. With all the problems involved in just providing food, clothing, and shelter, how many of us would give religion the priority and importance in our lives that they did in theirs?

These were men of great courage and vision. Nothing was handed to them or made easy for them; nor did they expect that it would be. They knew that something worth having was something worth working for.

They joined together to form a "Congregation" to worship in their own way; not a "Temple," not even a "synagogue," but a Congregation - a gathering of men and women who practiced religion in every facet of their daily existence. It did not matter that they had no building of their own to house this congregation. Their dedication and enthusiasm were not to a physical structure, but to a religious ideal.

They instilled in their children a strong connection to Sephardic traditions and tenets of Judaism. For nearly a century, we have

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retained these traditions and rituals and kept our synagogue alive. In every generation, there have been members who stepped forward and made the commitment to continue this legacy of caring and sharing. The family of Congregation Tifereth Israel is an extremely close-knit community whose members are always there for one another.

During our 97-year history, we have had only seven presidents; and the current president, Elliot Hershoff, is the first of Ashkenazi descent. One reason we are unique is that traditionally, our religious leadership comes from within our own membership, which currently is approaching 100 members - and there is no full or part-time professional religious leadership.

In every generation, there have been members who stepped forward and made the commitment to continue our legacy by maintaining the Sephardic traditions and rituals. As a granddaughter of both Joseph Havian and Joseph Pernitchi, I have been privileged to be our cantorial soloist since 1991, and to co-officiate in leading our High Holiday and monthly Shabbat services.

When you attend our services and listen to the centuries-old Sephardic melodies chanted exactly as they were so many years ago, you can close your eyes and feel yourself taken back to the time of our grandparents. Like many of our other members, I have made the commitment to continue what was started so long ago, and to continue its existence for our next generation.

While a large number of our members are descendants of our founders and related to each other, those new members that join us soon discover the warmth, the caring, and the camaraderie of being a part of our friendly congregation. Our heritage has lasted for over 90 years. I pray that we may continue to go from "Strength to Strength" for many, many more.

*Joanne Pressman is the cantorial soloist at Congregation Tifereth Israel.*



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**Elul:**

**time to make changes**

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

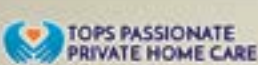
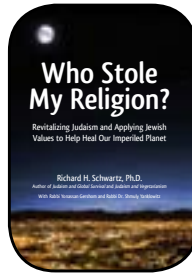
We are now in the Hebrew month of Elul. It provides an opportunity for heightened introspection, a chance to consider teshuva, changes in our lives, before the "Days of Awe," the days of judgment, the High Holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

The shofar is blown every morning (except on Shabbat) in synagogues during the month of Elul to awaken us from slumber, to remind us to consider where we are in our lives, and to urge

us to consider positive changes.

How should we respond to Elul today? How should we respond when we hear reports almost daily of severe, often record-breaking heat waves, droughts, wildfires, floods, and storms; when July 2019 was the hottest year since temperature records were kept in 1880; when all 18 years in this century are among the 19 hottest years recorded and 2014, 2015, and 2016 successively broke temperature records; when polar ice caps and glaciers are melting far faster than projections of climate experts; when climate scientists are warning that we could be close to an irreversible tipping point when climate change could spiral out of control with disastrous consequences unless major changes are soon made; when we appear to also be on the brink of major food, water, and energy scarcities; and when, despite all of the above, so many people are in denial, and almost all of us seem to be, in effect, "rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic as we approach a giant iceberg?"

It is well known that one is not to shout fire in a crowded theater - except if there actually is a fire, and, the many examples of severe



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# *Elul:* *time to make changes*

climate change indicate that the world is on fire today. Therefore, we should make it a priority to do all that we can to awaken the world to the dangers and the urgency of doing everything possible to shift our imperiled planet onto a sustainable path.

We should urge that *tikkun olam* (the healing and repair of the world) be a central focus in all aspects of Jewish life today. We should contact rabbis, Jewish educators, and other Jewish leaders and ask that they increase awareness of these threats, and how Jewish teachings can be applied to avert impending disasters.

We should write letters to editors, call talk shows, question politicians, and in every other way possible, stress that we can't continue the policies that have been so disastrous.

As president emeritus of Jewish Veg, formerly Jewish Vegetarians of North America, I want to stress that shifting toward a vegan diet is something that everyone can do right away. It would significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and would be consistent with Jewish teachings on preserving human health, treating animals with compassion, protecting the environment, conserving natural resources, and helping hungry people.

The afternoon service for Yom Kippur includes the book of Jonah, who was sent by G-d to Nineveh to urge the people to repent and change their evil ways, in order to avoid their destruction. Today the whole world is Nineveh, in danger of annihilation and in need of repentance and redemption. Each one of us must be a Jonah, with a mission to warn the world that it must turn from greed, injustice, and idolatry, so that we can avoid a looming global catastrophe.

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

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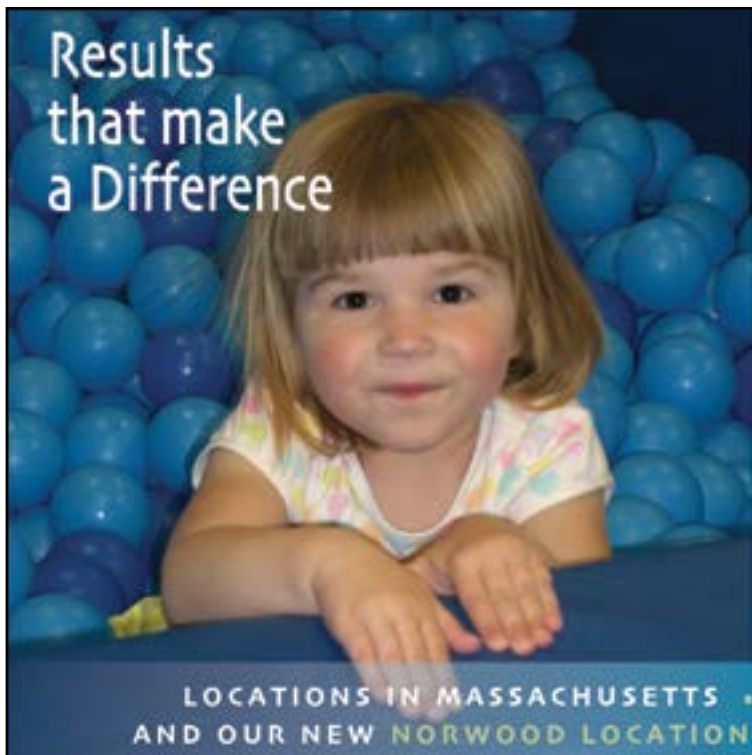


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## Kosher Vegetarian Certification

*By Shirley Nigri Farber*

I have recently noticed that a number of vegetarian restaurants around Massachusetts and Rhode Island are displaying kosher certification. I saw that they all had the Lighthouse symbol, a certification designated by Rabbi Barry Dolinger.

One of Shalom Magazine advertisers, Red Lentil, a vegetarian restaurant in Watertown has a number of Jews among its clientele. The owner had been telling me for some time that he would like to obtain kosher certification. Red Lentil is now certified by Lighthouse.

I decided to interview Rabbi Dolinger, who has been serving as rabbi of Congregation Beth Shalom, an Orthodox synagogue in Providence, since 2011. Dolinger founded the Lighthouse kosher certification as a nonprofit company, because he believed that many people wish to eat kosher and are conscious about the earth. But he does not feel that the cost of supervision should be applied to the establishment, who in turn, will pass the burden on to customers.

“We provide a service to the community and to the restaurant that wants to reach out to the Jewish community,” Dolinger said, explaining that the certification is given for free or at a lower cost to restaurants because is funded by the nonprofit. He relies on volunteers who visit the establishment and perform a spot check. He believes that this approach alters the stereotype of the rabbi asking for money in order to give a seal of approval that will, in the end, make kosher food more expensive.

Dolinger told me that eating kosher and vegetarian is a spiritual decision, as more and more people are concerned about the way animals are treated, the use of pesticides, deforestation, and climate change. Although the rabbi himself is not vegetarian and neither is the kosher kitchen at his synagogue, he believes that people are looking for a more spiritual and conscious approach to what they eat. He said that he tries as much as possible to avoid meat, and that the meat he is eats is raised and processed humanely. He is also concerned about the use of pesticides.

Regarding his congregation, contrary to many other congregations around the country that are closing or combining, he says he has seen a growth in attendees and participants. He explained that many are becoming Orthodox, moving to the area, attending Brown University, and also converting to Judaism.



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# Kosher Vegetarian Certification



I mentioned that people may care so much about the welfare of animals and vegetation, they might not realize how poor living conditions are for many low wage food workers.

He responded that he sees kosher certification as a whole. Before he gives his approval, he speaks to the workers to make sure they are treated fairly and the business is ethical. He partnered with an organization called *Tav Ayosher*, which bestows

certification on kosher restaurants that follow ethical business practices. *Tav Ayosher* has received some controversy, as their approach is sometimes viewed as an extra burden for establishments that already have rabbinical supervision.

“At over 10 places we visited, we did not give the certification because of the way workers were treated” Dolinger explained. He mentioned that other kashrut organizations in California and Washington, D.C. employ the same business model.

Dolinger admitted that his approach to kashrut certification receives criticism. In the first place, kosher agencies support themselves by charging the establishment. Then there is the fact that his supervision is not constant, and therefore seen as less stringent. He explains that he visits many of the places and has trained volunteers who are welcome to enter the kitchen at any time. He said the most important thing is to have a good relationship with the restaurant so his team can go inside the kitchen during operation.

He also said that some of the restaurants have cameras, so that supervision can be overseen remotely. “Some of the companies we work with choose to donate to our nonprofit, and some give in food items, as they see we help them reach out to the community,” the rabbi said.

For Dolinger, kosher food should be seen as a spiritual decision, with *kidush Hashem* (sanctification of the name of G-d).

To view a full list of establishments certified by the rabbi, please visit <https://www.lighthousekosher.org>.



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## Markey shares his Jewish influences

By Susie Davidson

Two challengers have recently emerged in the 2020 Democratic primary race for the Massachusetts Senate seat held since 2013 by Edward Markey. Shannon Liss-Riordan, a labor rights lawyer and Steve Pemberton, a business executive and advocate for the underprivileged, are compelling candidates. And now, Rep. Joseph P. Kennedy III is also reportedly considering joining the race. But with 53 percent net approval and 23 percent disapproval ratings, Markey, according to statistical agency Morning Consult, is still the 10th most popular senator in the nation.

Markey, who served as the U.S. Representative for Massachusetts's 7th congressional district from 1976 to 2013, is well-liked by many. I've met him several times, and found him to be gregarious, genuine, humble and knowledgeable, and very proud of his working-class roots.

In February of 2018, Markey graciously accepted a handmade mezuzah presented to him by members of the Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action, there to thank the Malden Democrat for being one of nine state federal legislators who had voted to protect the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) that safeguarded youthful immigrants who were brought to the U.S. illegally. (The Supreme Court will likely rule on the program's status in June, 2020.)

"We have to put the lambs' blood on their doors to protect them from Pharaoh's army, who is these days, the deportation crew," Markey said.

"You're like Joshua blowing the shofar," he said at the hour-plus meeting. "You just have to say, this is our time."

Markey's wife, Susan Blumenthal, M.D., M.P.A., is a former U.S. Assistant Surgeon General First Deputy Asst Secretary for Women's Health, a Rear Admiral, USPHS (ret.) and a Clinical Professor at the Georgetown and Tufts University Schools of Medicine. He fasts with her on Yom Kippur, and has an impressive knowledge of Jewish theology and precepts.

"It's all about the stranger in your midst, and how you treat them," Markey told JALSA members that day, pointing to his honorary degree from Brandeis and throwing in some Yiddish words as he talked



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## Markey shares his Jewish influences

about his family's humble, working-class roots. "I'm the Senator from Massachusetts, can you believe it, from the second generation of immigrants!" he stopped to marvel.



"Your grandparents were among the truly 'Greatest Generation,'" Markey told them.

Markey recalled his own experiences with demographic and social evolution. "Who is one of us?" he said he grew up thinking, as back then, first-wavers tended to stick together within their religious and social cultures.

"But then, Pope John III came in and in the Second Vatican Council, said Jews and Protestants can also go to Heaven,"

he said, noting that it began to counter what he had been taught.

"When I was elected to be a state rep in 1972 in Malden, the other one was David Lederman, who was Jewish," Markey reminisced. "This is what I was part of."

"Now, we're trying to get standing for those immigrants throughout the US who are undocumented," he said. He said that the current generation has to continue the fight.

But he assured them that they had the tools. "The assets are all there, and with social media, you just have to be creative," he said.

"Trump gives us Pharaoh to organize around," he said.

While he said that others around the country might refer to Massachusetts residents as "a bunch of Socialists," they could also clearly see what the state is doing.

"Massachusetts has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country, and in many cases, the most successful companies and people," he said. "But here, we have capitalism with a conscience."

"I've never lived through a time like this, where you can walk down the street openly and proudly proclaiming yourself as a member of the Klan," mused JALSA Executive Director Cindy Rowe.

But Markey said it wasn't new. "He's unearthed something that was always there," he said. "What Trump has done is to give them permission. Knuckleheads can now say the things they've only been saying to their friends."

A few days later, Markey told reporters GOP senators were working toward a compromise on DACA, because they would not want to be associated with large-scale arrests of youths at their homes in Lawrence, Chelsea or Dorchester. He may well have been envisioning Pharaoh's deportation crews.

*Susie Davidson contributes to various news outlets and authored a 2005 book and documentary film, "I Refused to Die," about local Holocaust survivors and liberating soldiers.*

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# The Cold Soup

By Rabbi Manis Friedman

If you ask someone coming out of church on a Sunday, "Do you believe in G-d?" the worshipper is shocked. "What type of question is that? Of course I do!" If you then ask him, "Do you consider yourself religious?" what will the answer be? "Certainly. That's why I'm here!"

If you go to a mosque on Friday and you ask the average person there, "Do you believe in G-d?" what will the answer be? "Definitely." "Do you consider yourself religious?" "Well, obviously."

This is normal. These conversations make sense.

Now go to a synagogue on Yom Kippur. Ask the Jew sitting in the synagogue on Yom Kippur, fasting, "Do you believe in G-d?"

You cannot get a straight answer. "Umm, it depends on what you mean by 'G-d'." That's if they're the philosophical type. Otherwise they'll simply say, "What am I? A rabbi? I don't know."

So then ask them, "Do you consider yourself religious?" Have you ever asked an American Jew if they're religious? They crack up laughing. And they assure you that they're the furthest things from religious. "Are you kidding? Do you know what I eat for breakfast?"

Then every one of them will say, "I had a grandfather, on my mother's side, oh, that was a religious man. But me ...?"

So you ask what appears to be a logical question. "Then why are you here?"

For some reason, this average Jew, who doesn't believe in G-d and is very not religious, will look at you like you're crazy and say, "What do you mean? It's Yom Kippur!"

This is not normal.

Let's analyze this for a moment. What is this Jew actually saying?

You asked him if he believes in G-d, and he said "No." Or "When I was younger, I used to." Or "When I get older, I'll start to."

"So you don't believe in G-d?"

"No. I don't."

"Are you religious?"

"Furthest thing from it."

"So why are you here?"

"Because it's Yom Kippur!"

What he's saying is this: "Why am I here? Because G-d wants a Jew to be in the synagogue on Yom Kippur. So where else should I be?"

So you say: "But you don't believe in G-d."

He says, "So what?" and he doesn't understand your problem.

He is saying: "Today is Yom Kippur even if I don't have a calendar. This is a synagogue even if I don't like it. I am a Jew even if I'm not religious, and G-d is G-d even when I don't believe in Him. So what's your problem?"

Now that can be dismissed, and unfortunately many of us do dismiss it, as sheer hypocrisy. We say, "You don't believe in G-d and you're not religious - don't come to the synagogue. Don't come here just to show how Jewish you are."

The Lubavitcher Rebbe has a different approach. This insanity is what makes us Jewish. This is what shows how special we are in our relationship with G-d.

That's called truth. It's not about me. I don't want to be religious. I don't want to believe in G-d; I don't want to hear about this. But He wants me here, so here I am.

The same thing happens on Passover. Every Jew sits by a Seder. Ask the average Jew at a Seder, do you believe in G-d? Leave me alone. Are you religious? He chokes on the matzah laughing. So you're



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# The Cold Soup

celebrating the Exodus from Egypt 3300 years ago? History is not my subject. Then why are you here? Where should I be? It's Passover! That's what's so magnificent about the Jew.

Now, let's put it all in context. Three thousand, three hundred and twenty-six years ago, G-d asked us if we would marry Him. We had an extraordinary wedding ceremony, with great special effects - we were wowed. After the wedding He said, "I have a few things I'd like you to take care of for Me, so, please... I'll be right back." He hasn't been heard from since. For more than three thousand, three hundred years. He has sent messengers, messages, postcards - you know, writing on the walls...but we haven't heard a word from Him in all this time.

Imagine, a couple gets married, and the man says to his new wife, "Would you make me something to eat, please? I'll be right back." She begins preparing. The guy comes back 3300 years later, walks into the house, up to the table, straight to his favorite chair, sits down and tastes the soup that is on the table. The soup is cold.

What will his reaction be? If he's a wise man, he won't complain. Rather, he'll think it's a miracle that the house is still there, that his table and favorite chair are still there. He'll be delighted to see a bowl of soup at his place. The soup is cold? Well, yes, over 3300 years, soup can get cold.

Now we are expecting Moshiach. The Rebbe introduced this radical notion that Moshiach is going to come now. What makes that so radical? It means he's going to come without a two-week notice. We always thought there was going to be some warning, so that we could get our act together before he comes. Moshiach, coming now? But now I'm not ready. I don't want to be judged the way I am. I need a little bit of a notice.

If Moshiach comes now, and wants to judge, what's he going to find? Cold soup?

If Moshiach comes now, the Rebbe tells us, he will find an incredibly healthy Jewish people. After 3300 years we are concerned about being Jewish, which means we are concerned about our relationship with G-d.

Yes, if Moshiach comes today, he'll find that our soup is cold. We suffer from separation anxiety. We suffer from a loss of connection to our ancestors. We suffer a loss of connection even to our immediate family. The soup is cold. The soup is very cold. But whose fault is that? And who gets the credit for the fact that there is soup altogether?

We are a miracle. All we need to do is tap into it. We are the cure. Not only for ourselves, but also for the whole world. Through us the healing is holistic, it's natural, it's organic. Our relationship with G-d is organic. It's not a religion that we practice - it's us, it's who we are, it's what we are.

So the Rebbe tells us that the way to go is straight to G-d. Skip all the steps, skip the Kabbalah, go straight to G-d and be in touch with your purpose. The purpose is not Kabbalistic. The purpose is personal. G-d needs you to do a mitzvah. He sent you into this world to be who you are, because only you can do this particular kind of mitzvah. True, the mitzvot are the same for all of us. But when you do it, it's different, because it's holistic. It's with your emotions, with your past problems, with your family background, with your knowledge and with your ignorance. All that comes together and makes your mitzvah holistically unique.

So, let Moshiach come now and catch us here with our cold soup, because we have nothing to be ashamed of. We are truly incredible. When G-d decided to marry us, He knew He was getting a really good deal.

*Rabbi Manis Friedman, a noted Chassidic philosopher, author and lecturer, is dean of Bais Chana Women's Institute of Jewish Studies. This article was originally published at [www.chabad.org](http://www.chabad.org), reproduced with permission.*





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# Havurat Shalom: 50 Years in Somerville

By Aliza Arzt

Somerville has changed considerably in the past 50 years. From an undistinguished backwater next to Cambridge, notable mostly for the Tufts University campus it shares with Medford, it has become a lively, diverse and welcoming city. Havurat Shalom, which was established in Somerville in 1968 when it bought a house on College Avenue, has also continued to grow and change with the decades.

Havurat Shalom was founded as an alternative rabbinical seminary and Jewish communal experiment by a small group of men, led by Rabbi Arthur Green, currently the rector of the Rabbinical School at Hebrew College in Newton. Their aim was to create a new kind of Jewish community whose members would pray, study and celebrate together. They would live in or near the House at 113 College Ave. and would help each other explore their connection to G-d, Judaism and the sacred texts. They were committed to a do-it-yourself Jewish practice in a time when the established Jewish community relied heavily on professionals to carry out Jewish ritual and celebration. Although the seminary idea was abandoned soon after its inception, Havurat Shalom continued as a lay-led, communal group who spread these ideas with the publication of three "Jewish Catalogues" in the 1970s.

I have lived in Somerville and been a member of Havurat Shalom for more than 40 years.

The world, my city and Havurat Shalom have all changed since then,

though we continue to focus on prayer, study and spiritual exploration. Today, we are a small, consensual community of about 30 working members who carry out most of the functions of the group, and an approximately equal number of "associate members" who choose to affiliate in a less intense manner.

Our members are people of all genders and sexualities and include singles and families of different configurations, interfaith families and people who are exploring Judaism. When Havurat Shalom was established, most of the members were graduate students or other academics in their 20s and 30s. Today's members work at a variety of different jobs or are retired. We range in age from the mid 20s to the late 70s. Our building has an access ramp and we try to be accessible to people with disabilities.

All are welcome to join us at our Saturday morning Shabbat service. You can get to know us even better at our monthly potluck meal on the first Saturday of the month. Feel free to come and check us out any time. Some of us are Hebrew scholars and some of us are just learning to read Hebrew. No matter what our level of Jewish knowledge, we share our insights about the service together while we're praying. Our services feature enthusiastic singing, thought-provoking readings and discussions, and may include dance and other movement as well.

One of our crowning achievements has been the development of a truly egalitarian Shabbat prayer book, as well as a High Holiday Machzor. I've been working with the "Siddur (prayerbook) project committee" since 1984 to produce these books which feature a largely traditional liturgy but which address God and humans using masculine, feminine and, where possible, gender-neutral language.

As we approach the High Holidays, we once again take stock of where we are and how we've changed as individuals and as a community. Our High Holiday services are all open to the public and free. I invite you to join us this year in our reflection and energetic commitment to the process of t'shuva – return – and making our world a better place.

*Aliza Arzt is a home care speech therapist and Jewish educator. She has taught most recently at Limmud Boston and the National Havurah Committee Institute.*



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## Falling Gracefully: On Leonard Cohen's 'Book of Mercy'

By Tucker Lieberman



Leonard Cohen's collection of 50 numbered psalms was intended to be "valuable to someone who needs it at the time." So said the songwriter/poet upon his publication of Book of Mercy in 1984.

In examining our own flaws and anticipating the High Holidays as a time of apology and renewal, many of us may find we need these poems. We know we contain some darkness. Each of us has a unique moral makeup. So where, then, each of us must ask, does our light end and our darkness begin? What interpersonal loss must we trace, and how do we survive the grief of unpacking it so we can grow? Cohen's poems are about wrestling with misunderstanding, lamenting what could have been, striving for holiness.

(Here, the poems are cited using the numbers Cohen gave them.)

The rebuilding of the soul has no predetermined path; such ambition compromises purity and wastes time. The soul accomplishes much more simply by feeling its own solitude.

*"Blessed are you... You are the truth of loneliness, and only your name addresses it."* (9)

*"Out of the panic, out of the useless plan, I awaken to your name, and solitude to solitude all your creatures speak, and through the inaccessible intention all things fall gracefully."* (47)

Though beautiful in solitude, the soul also needs a study partner.

*"Friend, when you speak this carefully I know it is because you don't know what to say. I listen in such a way so as not to add to your confusion... now we can get down to a Jew's business."* (13)

*"My teacher... suffered me to play at friendship with my truest friend. When he was certain that I was incapable of self-reform, he flung me across the fence of the Torah."* (21)

How much easier it would be if we could quickly ascertain where we go wrong, as if the sickness of the soul were a simple medical diagnosis. But this is a different kind of knowledge. It may take years.

The question is *academically difficult*. Righteousness and sin can

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## Falling Gracefully: On Leonard Cohen's 'Book of Mercy'

look different for different individuals, and it's a difficult inventory to take. We aren't the best judges of ourselves and neither can others judge us completely, and we often resist listening to any internal or external output that asks us to change. "In the eyes of men he falls, and in his own eyes too," Cohen wrote. And yet this need for perpetual self-improvement remains; it even binds us together.

*"He falls to you, he falls to know you."* (8)

The process is also **emotionally tiring**. What if we discover that the very parts of us we used to treasure are now rotten and need to change? What if we discover that most of us is rotten? When this self-awareness strikes, it may feel blunt and visceral.

*"We stand in rags, we beg for tears to dissolve the immovable landmarks of hatred."* (15)

*"Seize my heart out of its fantasy, direct my heart from the fiction of secrecy..."* (28)

And it demands **moral effort**. Becoming good-hearted and living in a better manner may ultimately require a lot more work than we realized at the beginning. By starting out on this inquiry, are we aware of much work we are pledging to do?

*"Tremble, my soul, before the one who creates good and evil, that a man may choose among the worlds..."* (29)

*"And here and there, among the seventy tongues and the hundred darkneses - something, something shining, men of courage strengthening themselves to kindle the lights of repentance."* (32)

*"Holy is that which is unredeemed, covered with your patience... covered with time, until your name is praised forever."* (43)

These modern psalms are indeed valuable if they reach us in the moment we need them. Correcting one's own path burdens the intellect, heart, and conscience. We have to feel our way through shifting angles of light. It takes as long as it takes. When we reach the end, we start over.

**Tucker Lieberman is the author of *Painting Dragons and Bad Fire*. Learn more at [www.tuckerlieberman.com](http://www.tuckerlieberman.com).**



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## *Ivy League grad publishes book for his late father*

Needham-based writer and educator Matt Robinson has long had a “thing” for mascots.

“I will never forget going to the Brown-Harvard football games as a kid with my father,” Robinson recalls. “The game was never all that great, but I was captivated by the bear!”

For many years, Robinson dreamed of following his father to Brown and becoming the Ivy League University’s mascot.

After graduating high school, Robinson ended up following another path, but the love of the Brown Bear and other mascots stuck with him - so much so that, when it came time for the 20-year journalist to write his first book, the choice of topic was easy!

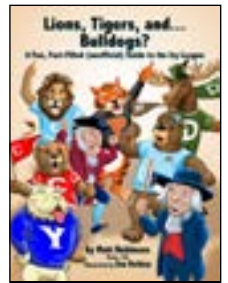
“I had seen books in which one of the BIG 10, PAC-12 or SEC mascots take you on tours of their campuses,” Robinson recalls, “but I had never seen anything like that for the Ivy League. As I went to Penn, my wife to Dartmouth, and my dad to Brown, I already had familiarity with these schools, so I decided to write the book that I could not find.”

The result is *Lions, Tigers, and...Bulldogs?: An unofficial guide to the legend and lore of the Ivy League (Fighting Quaker)*. In this book, Robinson presents stories and legends about the League, including how the schools were selected, how the name came to be, etc. The book then visits each of the “Ancient Eight” campuses and offers fun facts about their notable faculties, graduates, and traditions.

Though the idea for the book had been in his mind for many years, Robinson had always put it aside when a new writing assignment came across the transom. However, when his father was diagnosed with dementia in 2015, Robinson made a vow to the man who had introduced him to the Ivy League in the first place.

Robinson’s book is available at [www.lionstigersbulldogs.com](http://www.lionstigersbulldogs.com), where alumni can also share stories of their own.

“It was a labor of love,” Robinson says, “and a lot of fun!”



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## Arts and Culture



### *In the Spider's Web*

Based on the international best-selling novel by Chaim Eliav, adapted by Avraham Ohayom and illustrated by Dan Bar-Lev. **Feldheim Publishers.**

Yitzhak Austerlitz, a Holocaust survivor who lost his first wife and three children, visits Yad Vashem and collapses in a faint when he discovers a picture of the Nazi who tortured him and murdered his family. At the same time, on the other side of the world, in bustling, teeming Brazil, the strands of Jewish lawyer Jairo Silverman's

life become intertwined with the mysterious death of Mr. Alberto Hunkes, and with the secret that shrouds his son Eduardo.

*In the Spider's Web* untangles the threads surrounding a secret Nazi organization as Divine providence orchestrates a drama that no one dared to dream of.

### **Trayf** by Lindsay Joelle

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Best friends Zalmy and Shmuel spend their days as the Rebbe's loyal foot soldiers, driving their "Mitzvah Tank" through 1990s Manhattan, performing good deeds. The two young men soon find themselves at odds, as a newcomer wishing to learn more about their Chasidic ways creates discord between them. Juxtaposing the secular and the sacred, the familiar and the unknown, the accepted and the forbidden, Zalmy and Shmuel are forced to reexamine the core of their faith and their relationship. Rich in humor, emerging playwright Lindsay Joelle's *Trayf* is a moving new play that explores identity, assimilation, and friendship.

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## Our Moral Obligation on Immigration

*By Cindy Rowe and Eri Solomon*

Tisha B'Av is a story of migration and asylum - the moment at which our ancestral home ceased being a place of safety for us. Throughout centuries of diaspora, Jewish communities have found ourselves subject to oppression, from Roman slavery, to Iberian expulsion, to European massacres. We have been regarded as the "other," segregated into ghettos, and blamed for the failures of our host governments, who have turned our neighbors against us time and again. We have been forced to flee and to immigrate to foreign lands seeking safety for ourselves and our families.

As we see the Federal Administration attempting to scapegoat today's immigrants, enacting policies meant to stoke the flames of bigotry and discrimination, it is the obligation of the Jewish community to speak out about our own experiences. We must ask our state legislators to be the moral conscience of our state, and enact laws to protect our immigrants from family separation and deportation.

The Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action is joining with hundreds of organizations throughout Massachusetts in support of two specific bills to defend our friends and neighbors in the face of harsh federal decrees.

The Safe Communities Act would require that all immigrants in our state be guaranteed due process, and could not be interviewed by ICE without being told their rights. Police would not be allowed to ask about immigration status if they are called to protect victims of domestic violence, or to intervene in an emergency situation that has nothing to do with citizenship.

And the Work and Family Mobility Act would allow undocumented immigrants to get drivers licenses, so that they would not be in fear of being pulled over by the police and potentially deported for doing the things we all need to do - get to work, take our children to school, show up for medical appointments. And, as a byproduct, our roads would be safer because everyone would be licensed and insured.

Our immigration system has been broken for decades. Undocumented people are here because they have been forced to flee violence, poverty, and inhumane conditions in their countries of origin. They are raising families, running businesses, and paying taxes in Massachusetts. Let us stand up for our friends and neighbors, and live up to our foundational commandments to protect the stateless, the widowed, and the orphaned who seek our help.

*Cindy Rowe and Eri Solomon are, respectively, JALSA Executive Director and Lead Organizer.*



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**Jeffrey Blonder**  
**New Commander of Jewish War Veterans**



Jeffrey Blonder of Swampscott was recently selected to be the new Massachusetts Commander for the Jewish War Veterans of the United States. Blonder, who is a retired Senior Chief in the United States Navy, was elected at the Department of Massachusetts 89th annual convention held in Natick.

Blonder previously served as the Department's Senior Vice-Commander, and was the Commander of the North Shore Post of the Jewish War Veterans for four years.

The Jewish War Veterans is the oldest Congressionally Chartered Veterans organization in the United States and was founded in 1896 by Civil War veterans. The original mission of the Jewish War Veterans was to serve veterans without regard of race or religious background and to fight anti-Semitism in the United States. Those two missions continue and are still important to the Jewish War Veterans, according to Blonder.

Anyone seeking to join the Jewish War Veterans is urged to contact Commander Blonder at [Jwv.of.massachusetts@gmail.com](mailto:Jwv.of.massachusetts@gmail.com). "New members are the lifeblood of our organization and will allow the JWV to continue its important work in both the veterans and Jewish communities," Blonder added.

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