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Chanukah/Winter 2019

EDITION 38

Magazine



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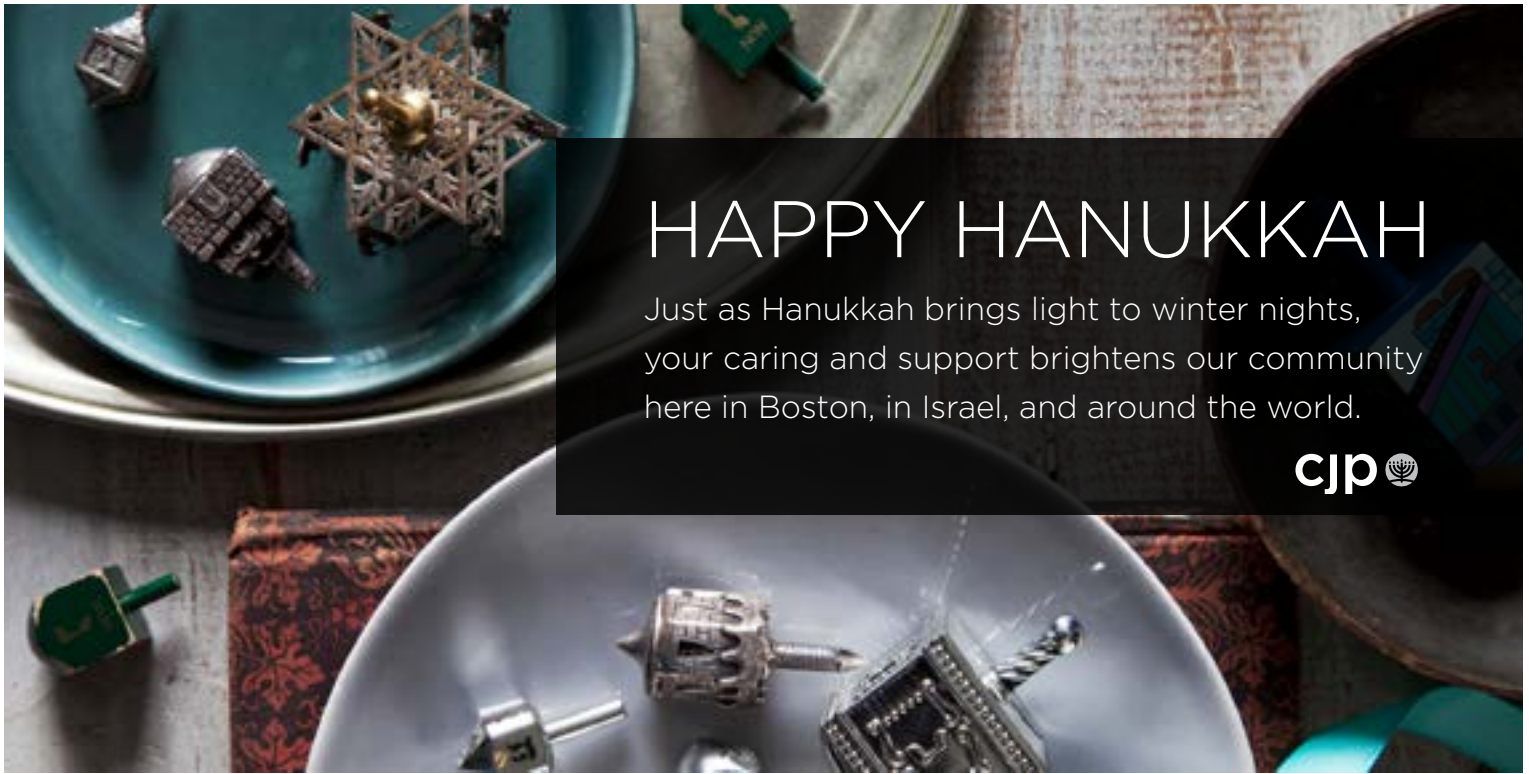
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HAPPY HANUKKAH

Just as Hanukkah brings light to winter nights, your caring and support brightens our community here in Boston, in Israel, and around the world.



Temple Emanuel, Newton

December 24 at 7:30 p.m., Hanukkah Happens - The Lighter Side. A one-of-a-kind by the Zamir Chorale of Boston, featuring Hazzan Elias Rosemberg with Joshua Jacobson, Zamir Chorale of Boston Artistic Director. Tickets: \$25/adult, \$20/student. Purchase your tickets at <https://www.templemanuel.com/event/hanukkah-happens>.

Events at Vilna Shul

Boston's Center for Jewish Culture, 18 Phillips St., Beacon Hill

Sunday, December 22, 11 a.m. Young Adult Chanukah Latke Toppings Taste-Off Brunch. Join young adults from across the community for our third annual latke toppings taste-off competition. Havurah on the Hill, the South End Moishe House, and the Somerville Moishe House partner together for a morning of conversation, brunch, and latkes.

Thursday, January 30. Dinner at 5:30 p.m. / Film at 7 p.m. Persona Non Grata: The Story of Chiune Sugihara. This film tells the previously unknown story of Chiune Sugihara, a Japanese diplomat (sometimes called the Schindler of Japan) and his life leading up to as well as after his decision to issue over 2000 visas to Jewish refugees in Kaunas, Lithuania.

Save the Date

Jewish Family Service (JFS) of Metrowest is pleased to announce the honorees for the 30th annual *Seize the Dream Gala* to be held on **Thursday, May 7, 2020** at the Sheraton Framingham Hotel: Bob Fields and the team at CommCreative; Retiring CEO of JFS, Marc Jacobs and receiving the JFS Max Michelson Humanitarian Award: Barbara and Samantha Shapiro. *Seize the Dream* honors area leaders and volunteers who have demonstrated an unfailing commitment and personal dedication to supporting vulnerable children, families, and senior adults in the local community and beyond. To learn more, please visit www.jfsmw.org.

Yachad Chanukah Celebration

Sunday, December 29, from 6 to 8 p.m., join the teen and adult Yachad Chanukah Party for 16 years and older. We will have dinner and candle lighting at the Yachad Community Center, 384 Harvard Street, Brookline. Cost is \$8 person.

Events at Wellesley-Weston Chabad

Wellesley-Weston Chabad invites the entire community to join one of our more than a dozen Chanukah events, classes and activities. Please visit www.wwjewish.org for more info and/or to RSVP.



Lecture: Jews in Brazil

The UMass Dartmouth Center for Jewish Culture and the Department of Portuguese present a lecture on *Jews in Brazil - from immigration to present politics* - by international journalist Shirley Nigri Farber. The event will take place on **Tuesday, February 4, 2020 at 5 p.m.** at the UMASS-D Claire Carney Library. It is free, in

English and open to the public.

Farber is publisher of *Shalom Magazine* and host/producer of the *Bate Papo com Shirley* TV show currently broadcasting in five New England states on Comcast on Demand. She will present the history of Jewish immigration since 1500 from various countries to Brazil, from the first synagogue of the Americas, to anti-Semitism today. She will also discuss the varied sites where these early Brazilian Jews settled throughout the country, from the Amazon to Rio de Janeiro. There will be a visual presentation and time for a Q&A. The snow date is Tuesday, February 11 at 5 p.m.

For additional information, please contact Rabbi Jacqueline Romm Satlow at jsatlow@umassd.edu.

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It is said that when you have two Jews, you have three opinions, so difficult it is for Jews to come to a consensus when they get together. When it comes to Chanukah we can't even agree on its spelling, let alone how to celebrate it.

Our Talmud tells us that in reference to Chanukah, our sages Rabbi Shammai and Rabbi Hillel also had a very well-known *machloket* (disagreement) on the correct way to light the eight branches of the Chanukyah, the Chanukah Menorah.

According to Shammai, one should start lighting all eight lights and reduce it till there is one left. But Hillel said we should start with one light, and on the last day, we would light the complete Chanukyah.

The Talmud tells us that after democratic discussion, it was voted among the sages and decided that we should follow the house of Hillel. Rabbi Hillel follows a common practice in Jewish law, *maalim bakodesh*, where we increase in holiness. Our sages thought it was important to describe the discussion in the Talmud and how the sages came up to the decision to be thereafter followed by all.

This example shows us how important it is to come together and have a discussion that it is *leshem shamaim* (for the sake of heaven), following the basic principles of Judaism and not going against our fundamental Jewish law.

In this edition, we bring different points of views within the Jewish community, from different writers and organizations. We want people to know all that is happening, because we feel it is important that all our community should come together, show up and participate, and not just leave when one's idea is not prevalent.

We hope that by giving the reader the opportunity to read all sides of the issues, we can have a civilized discussion that would enlighten our Jewish community, as do the lights of Chanukah. Only when we come together as one people, with one Torah, we will be strong and able to fight the darkness of the world, the anti-Semitism and all who want our people destroyed.

Please follow us on Facebook.com/ShalomMagazine, where you can read coverage of local events, listings of upcoming happenings, and share your own opinions. May you and your family have a Happy Chanukah!

Shirley Nigri Farber - Publisher

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On November 3, friends of the century-old Vilna Shul, Boston's oldest immigrant-era synagogue building that serves as a community cultural center and living museum on Beacon Hill, celebrated the near-completion of a \$4 million, year-long renovation. Nearly 50 donors to the Capital Campaign, including board members, gathered to affix traditional mezuzot to the doorposts of the new visitor center and the original front entrance, and had the opportunity to tour the new space. Phase I of the building renovation is expected to be completed by the end of 2019. Pictured from left to right are: Barry Shrage, Marilyn Lipton Okonow, and Barnet Kessel.



In early November, young adults gathered in Boston's Seaport district to brew their own Israeli-style craft beer at the Combined Jewish Philanthropies Fall israel360 event. With the help of master brewers from Jerusalem-based Shapiro Brewery, participants prepared Za'atar infused beer - Hertz-Ale - while learning about the emerging Israeli craft beer scene and life in Jerusalem. The event was part of CJP's series of Israel-themed, hands-on experiences for young adults. Learn more at www.israel360.org.



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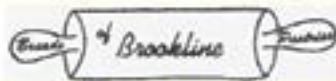


Mega Challah Bake



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Mega Challah Bake

Carol Fineblum, Michelle Herzlinger and Roseann Sdoia

Over 500 women joined the Boston Mega Challah Bake on November 12 at the Moseley's On The Charles Ballroom. Participants had a chance to hear inspiring words from Boston Marathon Survivor and amputee Roseann Sdoia, Carol Fineblum of Needham, and Michelle Herzlinger of Newton.

Photos by Andrew MacRobert



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Darkeinu: The Path Forward



The Synagogue Council of Massachusetts held their annual event, "Darkeinu: The Path Forward" on Sept. 19 at Temple Aliyah in Needham. A panel, entitled "The Future of Synagogue Life," was moderated by CJP CEO Rabbi Marc Baker, with event honorees Rabbi Noah Cheses (Young Israel of Sharon), David Farbman (Director at Gateways), Elyse Hyman (Executive Director of Temple Beth Avodah), and Rabbi Alfred Benjamin (Congregation Beth Shalom of the Blue Hills).

Synagogue Council Executive Director David Bernat presented the AREV 2019 grant recipients: Washington Square Minyan, Temple Israel of Natick, and Congregation Beth Shalom of the Blue Hills. Guests enjoyed a musical performance by Boston band Square Peg.



Keynote Lecture



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New England Inclusion Conference



The New England Inclusion Conference, which took place at the Yachad Campus in Brookline on Nov. 10, was an enlightening and memorable collaborative experience. For the first half of the day, participants listened as keynote speakers and panels addressed varied aspects of disability inclusion such as fashion, child psychology, and future steps towards greater inclusion and diminished loneliness. Throughout the rest of the day, participants inspired each other through personal stories and innovative exploration of inclusion and adaptive technology. The intellectually invigorating day culminated in a powerful performance by the ME2/Orchestra, a group for people with mental illness and those who support them. The conference was a wonderful opportunity for people of all abilities and backgrounds to come together to fight social isolation.

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ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE



Esta Gordon Epstein, Chair, ADL's Board of Directors, Ginny MacDowell, Lis Tarlow, Honoree, and Deb Shalom, ADL New England Board Chair



Sacha Baron Cohen received the ADL International Leadership Award from Jonathan A. Greenblatt, ADL CEO

On November 1, ADL New England held the 13th Annual *Women of Valor Award Luncheon*, honoring Lis Tarlow. Over 200 people packed the ballroom of the Mandarin Oriental Hotel to pay tribute to Lis, as well as to hear from ADL New England Regional Director Robert Trestan, former ADL Peer Trainer Domenica Gomez, and Berklee College of Music student Maria Landi. ADL's work, needed now more than ever, was highlighted throughout the lunch. Lis' poignant speech was the capstone of the afternoon. The *Woman of Valor Award* recognizes remarkable women leaders who have made an extraordinary impact on their communities, and exemplify the distinguishing values of integrity, leadership, and commitment.

On November 21 at Anti-Defamation League's **Never Is Now** Summit on Anti-Semitism and Hate in New York, nearly 2000 participants heard from luminaries including Hamdi Ulukaya, the Chobani founder & CEO who has become a champion of both support for refugees and the need for corporate leaders to be more involved in the world around them; and Sacha Baron Cohen, a renowned actor, screenwriter and director who fights hatred by using his art as a tool to expose people's prejudices.

Baron Cohen's talk, which demands that Facebook and other digital platforms take action against the spread of lies and hate online, has already been viewed over a million times.

"Allow me to leave you with a suggestion for a different aim for society. The ultimate aim of society should be to make sure that people are not targeted, not harassed and not murdered because of who they are, where they come from, who they love or how they pray," concluded Baron Cohen. *Photo: Jennifer Liseo/ADL*

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Shaloh House in Stoughton



On Nov. 20, Rabbi David Eliezrie(I), from Chabad of Yorba Linda, Calif., spoke about "The Secret of Chabad." He addressed how from a small fringe group, Chabad has become the largest worldwide Jewish outreach network, with centers in over 100 countries and in every state of the union.



On September 25, the Shaloh House Chabad of the South Area in Stoughton hosted friends and community members to unveil the renovated building.

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Susie's Column

Text and photos by
Susie Davidson

On Oct. 16, Norman Greenbaum, whose 1969 song "Spirit in the Sky" peaked at Number 3 on Billboard's Hot 100 and earned a gold record from the Recording Industry Association of America, returned home to Malden for the ribbon cutting of a huge, colorful downtown mural by artist Jesse Melanson. During the complimentary dinner by Anthony's of Malden and festivities at the nearby Markey Community Center, he received a citation from Mayor Gary Christenson.



Brookline residents Mary Malis, 101 (r) and Annette Winiker, 93, at the Oct. 15 Brookline Senior Center's fourth "Party of the Century." Malis, a Jewish former reading instructor and Winiker, who is the Yiddishe mother of well-known area orchestra musicians Bo and Bill Winiker, joined a large crowd honoring centenarians and seniors at the celebration, which was sponsored by BrooklineCAN, Brookline Council on Aging, Hebrew SeniorLife's Center Communities of Brookline and Goddard House Assisted Living.

The song has been featured in over 30 major films including Ocean's 11, Apollo 13 and Guardians of the Galaxy, and many ad campaigns and television shows including "Wayne's World."



Greenbaum, a member of the Malden High School Class of 1960, grew up in an observant Jewish home in the city's Jewish Suffolk Square neighborhood, where he was bar mitzvahed and attended Hebrew school at Congregation Beth Israel, prior to moving to Los Angeles in 1965.



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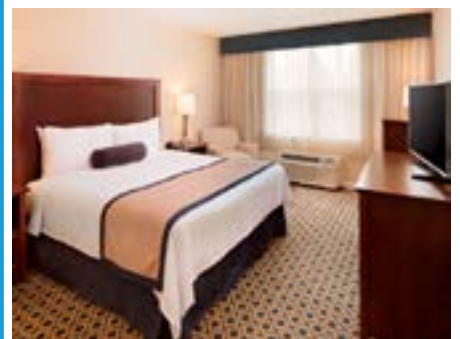
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The story behind Chanukah



By Sandra Lilienthal, Ed.D.

This year Chanukah coincides with Christmas. Like every year, I will hear people talk about the “December Dilemma,” as if religions need to compete with one another to see who has the best holidays. Christmas is a fundamentally theological Christian holiday, in which one celebrates the birth of Jesus, the Christian Messiah. It is about one not-really-human leader, who brings salvation to his people. Not so with Chanukah.

Chanukah is not about one leader, but about a community that fights against assimilation and for the rights to practice their rituals in their Holy Temple. And yet, many Jews do not really know the story behind the holiday of Chanukah.

In 332 BCE, Alexander the Great conquered Judea, which became part of his Macedonian Empire. With Alexander’s death in 323 BCE, his empire was divided into three parts, amongst his generals. The Kingdom of Judea (and Jerusalem, its capital) was added to the empire of Antiochus III, with Israel coming under the ruling of the Syrian-Greeks.

The Jews were given freedom to practice their own religion. Many Jews were enthralled with Greek culture, especially the upper class, those close to the ruling party, and the trendsetters. They were the Jewish aristocracy and among them, many belonging to the priestly class. Greek values and culture were “interesting,” and a great deal of emphasis was given to learning, similar to Judaism. Because of this, assimilation occurred quickly, but it was not forced – it was a personal choice.

However, things quickly changed under Antiochus IV. When Antiochus Epiphanes became king of the Syrian-Greeks, he was not content to simply accept the taxes and loyalty of the Jews as his predecessors had done, and let them live by their rituals. He wanted the Jews to fully accept the Hellenistic Greek culture.

Matityahu, head of the Hasmonean family from the town of Modi’in,

appreciated certain aspects of the Greek culture, and was considered a moderate Hellenist. But when pig sacrifices were introduced in the Temple in Jerusalem, and when he was asked to sacrifice a pig on an altar in Modi’in, he refused, furthermore stabbing a Jew who was willing to do this, killing the king's agent, and destroying the altar. Because of this he had to hide in the hills. He died shortly after and Judah, his son, led a rebellion. In a few years, this small group of rebels had defeated the Syrian army. After three years, they captured the Temple Mount, cleaned and purified the Jerusalem Temple, and rekindled the Temple’s Menorah. On the 25th day of Kislev in the year 165 BCE, Judah offered a Korban Tamid, the daily sacrifice, for the first time in many years.

The Temple was rededicated and the ceremonies lasted for 8 days. The Book of Maccabees (II, 10:6-8) tells us that the Jews were belatedly celebrating Sukkot and Shemini Atzeret because three months earlier, holed up in the mountain caves around Jerusalem, they had been deprived of that joy. They had vowed that if they ever made it there alive, they would celebrate Sukkot in Jerusalem.

Up to this point, the story is found in the Book of Maccabees, which is not part of the Hebrew Bible! However, the Rabbis in the Talmud (Shabbat 21b), in discussing Chanukah, tell us another side of the story. They do not mention the military victory, neither do they directly speak to the spiritual victory and the religious freedom achieved by the Maccabees. Instead, they point to the miracle of the oil which lasted eight days, even though it was only enough for one day. The miracle of the oil became the focus of the holiday and is remembered by the lighting of the *Chanukiah* and the eating of foods fried in oil. *Hallel* (thanksgiving psalms), a special Torah reading and the *Al HaNisim* prayer are all additions to the prayer services that week.

So why is it that Chanukah became the most popular Jewish holiday? Is Chanukah’s popularity due to the fact it happens close to a Christian holiday? Is it because it is an easy to celebrate Jewish holiday, with no work-related restrictions, no synagogue ritual, no strict rules?

Although most likely all of the above are part of the answer, I would

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The story behind Chanukah

like to add another thought: somewhere in our collective memories, it is registered that the message of Chanukah is as relevant today as it was in the days of the Syrian-Greeks.

One would have thought that the Jewish people and the ancient Greeks would easily live side by side. After all, they had much in common. Both valued wisdom, for example. And at first they did manage to have a good relationship. The Jews tolerated Greek rule from the time of Alexander of Macedonia. Many Jews studied Hellenist philosophy, and King Ptolemy had the Jewish Torah translated into Greek. The entire Chanukah story was completely out of character for Ancient Greece, a nation that did not oppress those under their rule.

From the Jewish side, the story was also not typical. Jews have borrowed from every culture with which they have come in contact. We have songs, foods, and customs which originated in any of the many countries Jews lived in. And the one culture we borrowed more from than perhaps any other was that of Ancient Greece. The Talmud tells us that the only language the Torah could be elegantly translated into is Greek. The Rabbis considered Greek to be a beautiful language and that of all peoples, the Greeks were the ones who had ideas closest to ours. They praised many of the Greek philosophers. Maimonides even wrote that Aristotle was part prophet.

With the above in mind, how can we explain such a violent clash? Why were Jews and the Hellenists rulers unable to compromise? The Greeks believed that their culture was respectful of all. The Jews were free to observe whatever rituals they wanted. However, what bothered Greece was the fact that Jews were following rituals not because they intellectually believed in them, but because G-d told them to do so. For the Greeks, this was “senseless,” it was not built on intellectual reasoning. They would have accepted all practices which were “ra-

tional.” Following a Being who is above reason, though, could not be tolerated.

The Greeks were also proponents of an all-inclusive society, with no distinctive groups, as they understood world peace could be achieved with the elimination of distinctions. By keeping their rituals and observances, the Jews were an impediment to this desired homogenization.

But the greater battle fought at that time was against excessive acculturation and assimilation. Many Jews in those days agreed that Jews should not look or be different from the greater society. This is not so different from the dilemma we face today, how to accept and live within the sophisticated surrounding culture in which we are immersed, while at the same time keeping one’s own “tribal” existence which is necessary for survival.

In order to achieve this balance, there must be a strong resolve by Jews of all denominations to remain Jewish. Just as our ancestors were graced with Greek analytical methods, literature, and even theology, so should we not reject everything we can learn from the cultures in which we live. There is no doubt that

Jews share and embrace American values. However, when those ideas clash with Jewish ideals, we must have the strength to reject them for ourselves, while being able to live with those who accept them.

Chanukah teaches us that we will always live with the tension between being part of the culture in which we live, along with the desire to retain our values, beliefs, and customs. Balancing both sides is the true contemporary Chanukah miracle.

Sandra Lilienthal is an adult educator based in South Florida, and the Director of Education for the international Global Day of Jewish Learning. She is a frequent speaker at conferences and for Jewish organizations. She is a 2015 recipient of the Covenant Award for Excellence in Jewish Education.





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Creating a Legacy

Address by Norman H. Finkelstein during the Walnut Street Synagogue Founder's Day (reduced due to space).

The distance between my father's birthplace in Kilikiyev, Ukraine to my mother's birthplace in Chiplivutz, Romania is 315 miles. And the distance between my father-in-law's birthplace in Libau, Latvia to my mother-in-law's birthplace in Bialystok, Poland is about 340 miles.

Back then, just a few days' journey would have connected them, but would probably never have happened. They met instead in Chelsea. And that is the short answer to the question, "Who were the Jews of Chelsea?" Most immigration records for those first generations lumped everyone together as coming from Russia. We know that they were really coming from Lithuania, Poland, The Austro-Hungarian Empire, Germany, Ukraine, Rumania, Serbia, Bosnia, and a dozen other countries.

While their religion connected them: the early arrivals were separated by European geography and local culture. Even the Yiddish they spoke and dreamed in had recognizable differences.

The Walnut Street Shul was Lithuanian, the Elm Street Shul, Russian. There were shuls founded by landmen from very specific places like Onichty and Lubavitch. Those early associations provided a sense of security, familiarity and camaraderie. But that single-minded sense of purpose quickly gave way to the traditional American melting pot.

That's how my Latvian father-in-law and my Polish mother-in-law became members of the Litvishe shul. It's fitting that the founders named the shul, Agudath Sholom, (very loosely translated as "bound together in peace.") The message was clear. This is a synagogue, that although following Litvishe traditions, was open to all.

This was not unusual in America. The first Jews who arrived in

New Amsterdam in 1654 were Hispanic. They brought with them the religious practices of Sephardic Judaism. Until the 1820s, the only shuls in America were Sephardic even though by then most of their members were Ashkenazim. As Jewish immigration to America grew, with people arriving from different countries with varied ritual observances, the tradition of multi-synagogues developed. Within its 1.8 square mile border, 18 shuls once served the Jews of Chelsea. The largest being Agudath Sholom and Ahavat Achim Anshei Sfarad, both destroyed in The Great Chelsea Fire of 1908 which decimated the city and later rebuilt.

So who were these early founders? First, they were proud visionaries. We are not talking about wealthy people, yet they built this highly visible building - not as a monument to themselves, but as an investment in the future.

They never forgot their roots. When World War I broke out in 1914, the neighbors and relatives left behind in Europe were in peril. Caught between opposing armies, Jews were particularly hard hit with indiscriminate shelling, forced removals and economic ruin. Local Jews could not sit idly by and watch the suffering.

Under the leadership of David A. Lourie, they formed the Chelsea Jewish Relief Committee, composed of all the Jewish organizations in the city, including this shul.

They were ardent Zionists. The modern Zionist movement was born in 1897. Its most fervent supporters were those Jews personally impacted by the pogroms and discrimination of the Russian Empire. So, it almost seems natural that the Jews of Chelsea would also take up the cause.

To me, the most pivotal event in the first decade of this building was on June 30, 1915. That's when the national convention of the Federation of American Zionists meeting in Boston moved the entire convention to Chelsea for one day. Why Chelsea? A newspaper article of that time opened with the question: "Where and what is the most Jewish city in the United States?" The answer: "Chelsea, Mass."

At the time, 25 percent of its population were Jews. A greater percentage than New York City.

A line of cars brought the over 500 delegates to Chelsea. They were welcomed by 1000 local Jewish children, dressed in white, waving American and Zionist flags and singing Hatikvah. And finally, they were American patriots.

When the United States entered World War I in April, 1917, patriotism was already on display throughout the country. Chelsea was no different. Local Jewish boys headed off to the battlefields of Europe. Some never came back alive.

We've come a long way since 1911. Just as Chelsea has evolved, so have we. Like those early founders of the Walnut Street Shul, we are here today to imagine a new vision for the future of this building and what it represents. May we all go from strength to strength.

Two-time National Jewish Book Award winner Norman H. Finkelstein is the author of 20 non-fiction books. He holds undergraduate and graduate degrees from both Boston University and Hebrew College. Photo: Darlene DeVita



Happy Chanukah

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Walnut Street Founders' Day



City Manager Tom Ambrosino, Edward J. Medros and City Councilor Judith Garcia



Samuel Gruber



Honorary Chair Herbie Kupersmith and Cookie Kupersmith



Over 250 people came to the 110 year-old Walnut Street Synagogue in Chelsea on September 15 to celebrate Founders' Day. Descendants of founders, identified through genealogical research, joined synagogue and community members at the joyous event. Greetings were provided by city officials, CJP, clergy and long-time shul members. Featured speakers were international Jewish art and architecture historian Samuel Gruber, PhD, and local Jewish historian and award-winning author Norman Finkelstein. Entertainment was provided by the Shirim Klezmer Orchestra. President Edward J. Medros outlined the shul's future, including restoration of the building and plans to host cultural and historical programs.

photos: Darlene DeVita



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Practicing Gratitude, Not Attitude



By Dr. Rebecca Housel

Gratitude starts in the home. We create a culture of gratitude within our own families when we as parents lead by example. When my son was growing up, he knew I was vegetarian for ethical reasons. Not just because I told him, but because I *showed* him. Frequent hikes, canoeing on the weekends and engaging in the wonders of the natural world helped my son to understand the value of life. I never forced him to be a vegetarian. Or even suggested it. If he wanted meatloaf, I made meatloaf. But when he turned 21, he decided that he wasn't okay with sustaining his life on the abuse and death of others. Today, he's on the verge of 30 and is still an ethical eater. While some people may scoff at ethical eating, what it shows is a kind of gratitude and respect for not just human life, but all life. I'm so proud of my boy for choosing to walk a path paved in gratitude...it's the best gift he could have ever given me.

My diet is completely plant based, and for the record, I loved steak. Why did I decide to go vegetarian? Gratitude. I had cancer as an older teen. My 20th birthday was followed by years of treatment. That's when I started to view life outside of my familial culture, a culture that taught me coded language as a way to politely insult people. A culture that showed me that anyone who was even remotely different would be discarded. Decades of "love" simply evaporated into the ether. Nothing mattered more than public opinion. Or rather, perceived public opinion. That wasn't something I was willing to pass on to my own family.

When I think of Chanukah, or any of the holidays celebrated over the winter season, I think about gratitude. You can't see a miracle in



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Practicing Gratitude, Not Attitude

a days' worth of oil if you lack gratitude. You can't see the value in a daughter either. Or anyone else, for that matter. All you can see is yourself. You imagine others are out to get you when they're not. You imagine that every social miscommunication is a deliberate slight. Without gratitude, there's no room for true forgiveness...for yourself, or anyone else. There's just anger. Envy. Jealousy. Suspicion. Paranoia erodes your personhood. You find yourself justifying the discard of close family members and friends alike. All because you lack gratitude.

When we're grateful, we are happier. Martin Seligman, a Jewish-American psychologist, proved this through the study of what he called 'positive psychology.' When you see the glass half-empty, you only ever see problems. But obstacles are artificial. Solution-seekers understand this. We also understand that the glass is neither half-empty nor half-full, because it's refillable. Only those who wish to sabotage you and your life hold on to anger and ask you to do the same. It's self-destructive and derives from psychology's 'Dark Triad' - which includes narcissism, Machiavellianism and psychopathy.

As we turn toward the season of light across the world in preparation to reaffirm our belief in miracles, let us look to the miracles we already have - our families and friends. How a parent can discount a child or grandchild is beyond me. How any sibling can find a reason to discard a brother or sister is equally baffling. When these things happen, it is a sign of treatable mental health concerns, but unlike a physical wound that bleeds, mental illness can be masked.

Positive psychology is a life-skill that extends not only our individual happiness, but our physical lives as well. It's the best gift to pass on to your children. Teaching the legacy of gratitude over attitude means helping future generations see the value in all life...including the lives of the people who matter most.

You can't say you have family values when you abandon a child or

discard a sibling. You can't convince people you are a good person when you have cut off your own family. Be a source of light not just during the Chanukah season, but all year round. If you burned a bridge with family or friends, now is the time to repair any damage you may have caused. Judaism is about self-responsibility at its core. You're a hypocrite if you are even a cultural Jew and preach repairing the world when you yourself have a broken family. Teach your children gratitude by showing them how to be grateful for the blessing of family and friends. Bloom and grow the culture of thankfulness in your home...and the light of the holiday season will extend throughout the branches of your family tree for generations yet to come. Now THAT is truly a miracle!

Dr. Rebecca Housel is a New York Times bestselling author and editor; she writes "Survive Anything" for Psychology Today and is an author and editor in the Mental Health for Millennials book series. She is also an expert contributor for 7Cups.com, winner of Stanford's Medicine X Award. To learn about Dr. Housel's future appearances in the Boston area, please visit RebeccaHousel.com.

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Our father Abraham

By Sivan Rahav-Meir



Avraham Avinu is the most influential person in the world, until today. If there was a true "chart of the influencers," he would be at the top. Christianity, Islam and, of course, Judaism, and the rest of humanity, too, have been influenced by him. But in practice he did not command any great army, did not perform any miracle, and did not make any prophecy. We have no stirring speech

from Avraham to remember by heart. He is the outstanding historical example of influence without physical force. Here is the only sentence that the Torah provides for us, in an attempt to demonstrate why he was chosen:

"For I have known him because he commands his sons and his household after him, that they should keep the way of the Lord to perform righteousness and justice." (Genesis 18:19)

This is astonishing: Avraham was chosen because he was a good father to his children, because he cared about his family, because of the instructions he gave to them and to other members of his household – and to us as well. We, too, call him Avraham avinu, our father Abraham. It's not written that he fights for social justice in the world but he is doing it, first of all, inside the home. He doesn't just speak in public. He begins by educating at home, in the living room and in the kitchen. And our national hero fights, first of all, for values meant for the members of his family in order that they would pass these values down to their families, and on and on, until they reached us, too.

This is a revolutionary approach. We know that many great leaders led miserable personal lives. Their influence was felt throughout the world and they were widely admired, yet they behaved badly toward their wives and children. Here we find a different focus. The task of parenting, of raising a family, is Godly. It is the primary mission of a Jew.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks writes: "The great scenes in Abraham's life - waiting for a child, the birth of Ishmael, the tension between Sarah and Hagar, the birth of Isaac, and the binding - are all about his role as a father. Judaism sees parenthood as the highest challenge of all. To know the mind of G-d, we do not need theoretical physics. We simply need to know what it means to be a parent." This is not something natural, but it is a holy mission. Avraham is, first of all, our father and Sarah is, first of all, our mother and this week's Torah portion reminds us that being a parent is an all-important calling in our lives.

This article was written during the Parashat (Torah portion of) Lech Lecha, reproduced with permission.

Sivan Rahav-Meir is a mother of five. She is an Israeli journalist, primetime news reporter, and TV and radio anchor. Her lectures are attended by hundreds and broadcast throughout the world. To learn more and sign up for her daily WhatsApp, visit www.sivanrahavmeir.com.



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Our Chanukah Wants

Rabbi Jonathan Hausman

Wanting... we seem to do that very well. Whoever wrote Psalm 23's (traditionally ascribed to King David) "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want" must have been talking through his yarmulke! The fact is wanting, desire is perfectly normal and very American.

Wanting makes us wander in and out of malls endlessly in search of something we often have to convince ourselves we should be wanting.

The want ad is a popular feature in the daily newspaper ... "100% Jewish Cuban American Ashkenazi Male, never married, 32, attractive, 5'4", down to earth, genuine and *mensch* seeking *bashert* (the one destiny has picked out for me!) with a good sense of humor."

Wanting is something at which we excel. We want warmer temperatures in December's cold and a cooler Fahrenheit in August's heat. We want more for less and never the other way around. A Talmudist insists "if nobody had any serious wants, we would never marry, have children or build a home." Indeed, I meet young couples in love prior to marriages who regularly exclaim "we want to build a little home for two, or three or four, or more." Certainly, such desires are a throwback to a former generation.

Wanting... there has been a surplus of it around since the serpent bent Eve's ear and told her it was valid to want the fruit of the tree in the middle of the Garden of Eden. That is when wanting allegedly entered the human scheme. The trouble with a lot of us is that we don't know what we want.

The Siddur, the Jewish prayerbook, recommends the monthly prayer "*She-yi-ma-lay mish-a lot li-be-nu* – let our legitimate wants get satisfied."

First, though, we have to know what we want. "What do you want for Chanukah" is a different question from "what do you want for your life?" In "Conversations With My Father," Charlie puts it to his implacable dad "*Vos vilst du, papa?* What do you want? I did what you wanted to the letter, but it was never good enough!"

It is not my original thought. Chanukah's miracle is not the discovery of one vial of oil sufficient to kindle a flame for one day that held out for eight. The real miracle is the presence of mind of one anonymous Kohen, a priest, who set aside oil to be found when the Ancient Temple was dismantled for posterity to retrieve. That priest had a wish list, like the rest of us. Still, he knew what he wanted more than anything else in the world: faith, values, tradition and hope to thrive. Jews and Judaism to survive and to thrive.

Most of us are tentative. Let me invite you to the Charter meeting of the Wanters Anonymous some day in the future... where we can begin to figure out, once and for all, what we really want. Oh yes, and may our true needs become reality.

Chag Urim Chanukah Sameach.

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

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Jew in the City's All Star Awards

With anti-Semitic attacks on the rise, and a greater risk of owning your Judaism publicly, *Jew in the City's All Star Awards* couldn't come at a more crucial time. Now in its 6th year, the All Star Awards highlight some of the most accomplished religious Jews in the world today as part of *Jew in the City's* mission of rebranding Orthodox Jews and Judaism.

Boston residents the Honorable Stephanie Pollack, Secretary of Transportation of Massachusetts and AJ Edelman, First Orthodox Jewish Male Olympian are among the ten exceptional individuals who have been named to the 6th class of Orthodox Jewish All Stars by *Jew in the City*.

The All Stars were honored at an awards show on December 2 at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall. This diverse and accomplished group also included Joseph Essas, CTO of OpenTable; Bat-El Gatterer, the First Orthodox Jewish Female Olympian; and Shulem Lemmer, the first Hasidic Jew to sign with a



major record label; as well as the ones who were not able to attend: Karen Barrow, Senior Editor at the New York Times; The Honorable David Friedman, U.S. Ambassador to Israel; Dov Kramer, Executive Producer at WFAN radio; Sam Rascoff, Former Director, NYPD Intelligence Analysis Unit; and Jerry Wittenstein, a NASA scientist who developed three out of the six trajectories for Apollo 11.

In addition to the *All Stars*, four-time Emmy-nominated actress Dr. Mayim Bialik was recognized for her historic commitment to Jewish observance in the midst of secular Hollywood. She accepted via Skype the *Keter Shem Tov Award* for her efforts to improve how Orthodox Jews are regarded in the world.

Jew in the City, a nonprofit founded in 2007 by Allison Josephs, reverses negative associations about religious Jews by highlighting an approach based on kindness, tolerance, sincerity, and critical thinking, and makes engaging and meaningful Orthodox Judaism known and accessible. Its recently launched initiative, *Project Makom*, helps Jews raised with negative experiences in the Haredi world find a positive place to belong within the Jewish community.

Jew in the City is reshaping the way the world views Orthodox Jews and Judaism. It publicizes the message that Orthodox Jews can be funny, approachable, educated, pro-women and open-minded - and that Orthodox Judaism links the Jewish people to a deep and beautiful heritage that is just as relevant today as it ever was. With a mix of light humor and rich content, *Jew in the City* explores controversial topics in a pleasant and easy-to-understand fashion, appealing to anyone who is curious to learn more about Orthodox Jews and observant Judaism, whether they are Jewish or not.

Photo: Kruter

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Celebrating Light in the Darkness



By Rabbi Jessica Lowenthal

There is a small town in Norway-Tromsø where, from November through January, the sun doesn't rise above the horizon. Kari Leibowitz, a Fulbright scholar and Stanford first year PhD student in Social Psychology, conducted research under the assumption that in such a climate, there would be a high rate of seasonal depression. However, she found that the rates were much lower than expected.

Hoping to find coping mechanisms that could be applied to other areas of the world, she went in asking, "why aren't people more depressed?" She quickly realized that was the wrong question. When asked, the residents responded, "Why would we be?"

Rather than dread, there was excitement and anticipation for the dark season. Residents looked forward to skiing, held multiple festivals, and created a sense of community during the cold. They have a word, *koselig*, that translates to a sense of coziness and joy. People come together, drink hot chocolate, light fires, and snuggle under blankets. Rather than finding ways to endure the winter, they have embraced ways to celebrate it.

The need for finding joy and community in the dark winter is actually a general human experience. It is for this reason that almost all people have some type of celebration of light during this time. In Hinduism it is Diwali, in China it is the New Year and lantern festival, in the Netherlands it is St. Martin's Day, and in Judaism it is Chanukah.

Chanukah commemorates the battle for religious freedom. The Syrian-Greek Emperor, Antiochus IV, wanted to make everyone in his empire the same. He outlawed certain Jewish practices, replaced the High Priest of the Temple, and used the new Priest to levy higher taxes on the Jewish community. When there was a rebellion in Jerusalem against the empire, Antiochus sent his men to quash the rebellion and demand that the Jews sacrifice to the Greek gods. When they came to

the Judean hills, one old Priest, Mattathias Maccabea, declared war on the Greeks, and those loyal to him followed. For months, they attacked the Greek armies and somehow, though severely outnumbered, the Jews defeated the army and returned to their decimated Temple.

When the Jews went into the Temple, they wanted to light the menorah with anointed, holy oil. Most of the oil had been spilled in the destruction and there was only one vial left, enough to give light for one day. Miraculously, though, the oil lasted eight whole days. The Talmud tells us that we light candles for eight nights to remember this miracle from G-d.

Interestingly, the Talmud does not talk about the battle. It does not focus on the military victory; rather, the emphasis is on the spiritual. What could have been a national holiday became a religious one, therefore extending its relevance to many generations who found themselves living in dark times. Imagine living under persecution and celebrating a holiday where your Jewish ancestors were able to throw off their foreign rulers. Feelings of inadequacy, failure, and anger could easily erupt. Instead, by shifting the focus, the rabbis of the Talmud transformed a holiday of Jewish particularism into a celebration of universal values. Yes, the weak overtook the strong, and light won out over darkness. That light is not an army, but hope and faith that the winter will end and spring will come again.

Most of the world hasn't embraced the winter like Tromsø. We are still trying to find ways to cope with the cold and the dark. We are counting down the nights until we leave work and it is still daytime outside. Chanukah reminds us that the light will come back, albeit slowly. The lighting of the menorah is a parallel to the lighting of the world. It reminds us that the sun will return and the cold will melt away. In the meantime, we can look forward to Chanukah, to coming together as a community and filling our space with light.

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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MD assisted suicide



By Rabbi Dr. Yosef Glassman, MD

Life. What is it? This is perhaps the central question around the debate over physician-assisted suicide. For if one doesn't first define life, how can one discuss the topic of physician-assisted suicide, now legal in the State of New Jersey in addition to eight other U.S. states? Proponents of ending one's life for the terminally ill often pose the question of whether one has autonomy over one's own life, particularly at the end. Others turn the discussion into a question about suffering at the end of life. Both of these valid questions only scratch the surface of the topic, but the core deeper question is "What is life?" And when one finally defines life, one also must ask: "Does life have intrinsic meaning?" And if so, do the last six months, or six seconds, for that matter, lack so much meaning that one may end them with a pill?

First, one must address pain. Despite barbs back and forth, both sides in this debate must agree that no side wants any patient at any stage to suffer. When the debate starts there, a healthy discussion can ensue. No person, be they a healthcare professional or a layperson, wants anyone to suffer in pain, not even for a moment. Proponents of physician-assisted suicide may say that those against this practice want patients to needlessly suffer at the end of life. This could be no further from the truth.

Demonizing those who hold each second of natural life as intrinsically meaningful is unproductive and false. One must assume the best intentions for the alleviation of pain on both sides. But there are two types of pain at issue: physical pain and existential pain. Physical pain is surely a challenge to treat at times, especially when there is nerve damage or metastatic disease, for example. Effectively treating physical pain requires accurate reporting, an attentive patient advocate, and a responsive health care professional, but it can be done.

Oftentimes, however, in this emotionally charged discussion about suicide for the terminally ill, one is often referring to existential pain - the general pain of being alive. Every human possesses some degree

or another of existential pain, by virtue of being a weightless spark of soul, forcibly injected into a heavy body. This pain is much more complex to address, but is often the main issue to address, particularly toward the end of life.

The electromagnetic force that animates the body is weighed down by carbon, calcium, oxygen, magnesium and nitrogen, amongst other earthly heavyweights. Our bodies are not easy to carry, even when we're not in any physical pain. The soul is light and the body is gravity-bound. Even if one does not believe in a soul, one would still acknowledge that the animating force, when gone, only leaves dead, heavy weight. Those who deal with corpses on a regular basis know that without the animating force, whatever one calls that force, the body literally reverts to a heavy clod of earth.

Secondly, it is important to remember that this debate is not about a "minority religious view" imposing itself onto larger society; rather, it is a battle for the preservation of universal values. Most rational people acknowledge the need for a universal morality, whether in the form of society possessing a secular court system of justice or prevention of cruelty toward animals, for example. Additionally, several laws built into society that espouse universal values are often taken for granted, but add to the fabric of the peaceful interconnectedness of humanity.

In that vein, most people might agree that the U.S. taboo against adultery, whether criminal or misdemeanor, should not be voted out. The majority might also agree that the prohibition against stealing office supplies should not be voted out.

Some may make the distinction: end of life suicide "doesn't hurt anyone else," whereas adultery may hurt the feelings of the spouse, and stealing office supplies may hurt an employer's bottom line. Yet, the opposite is true: suicide only briefly affects the self actor both emotionally and financially; the deceased has no detectable emotions, nor financial means. Yet suicide will affect those closest to him or her for years to come, both financially and emotionally.

All people who oppose "biblical injunctions" onto secular law may indeed also oppose the biblical injunctions of consensual adult sibling incest, but this is highly doubtful. Those biblical injunctions that have been quietly built into the fabric of American society without a peep will often stay in place since they represent universal values. Those who treat universal morality as a fast food menu will often suffer indigestion. End-of-life suicide is no exception. Suicide is indeed self-murder.

Additionally, if one is to advocate truly separating religion and state (a nearly impossible feat), one might also be vehemently opposed to any form of Christian religious decorations in December that are funded by the local municipality, including the White House Xmas tree. These symbols certainly impose a particular religion onto America, whether consciously or not. Mistletoe and mall Santas are surely not Jewish, Hindu nor Muslim decor. The token menorah doesn't take away from the overwhelming nature of most public municipality imposing state religion on the masses. Additionally, a true anti-coercion advocate might do well to avoid dollars that clearly state "In God We Trust."

But perhaps the debate does have some focus around the green G-d-backs. It only costs \$1.50 to commit suicide, but thousands of dollars for chemotherapy, dialysis and hospital beds at home, not to mention missed work time by a concerned family. That is not to say that people want their "terminal" family member to die early for financial reasons, but finances do exert considerable pressure on people both consciously and subconsciously. Physician-assisted

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MD assisted suicide

suicide is a big money-saver over life-preserving therapies and can bring unspoken pressure.

Yet an end-stage patient who doesn't want to die may be easily convinced by loving folks around him or her of the reality of becoming a financial and emotional burden, even without explicitly saying so. Most people naturally don't want to be a burden to anyone. Imagine the pro assisted-suicide doctor holding his pen at the next visit with his 90-year-old metastatic cancer patient, who wants to go on living, while she sits next to her two loving children, who don't want Mom to die, per se, but face daily stress over the challenge of visiting daily, and driving her to chemotherapy. They may even innocently say at that doctor's visit, "Mom, there is another new option in New Jersey; of course, it is your choice."

So what is life? It is that animating force, stemming from the infinite unseen unifying energy that one may call G-d, or not? Doesn't matter in this debate. The unseen energy that provides the animating force is obviously retrieving that force upon human death, and the animating human energy enjoins the universal oneness. Call it G-d, or not. The source is the same. Life came from the source and reruns to the source -- call it conservation of energy, or call it the afterlife. It doesn't matter. The energy that was forced on that clod of carbon, nitrogen saline bag of earth we call the human is life. One had no choice for it to enter, but the argument exists that one had a choice for its exit time.

The life debate comes down to the question of ownership. Surely the heavy saline protein earth bag that becomes the animated and meaningful living human isn't permanently "ours." Our heavy body is surely borrowed, both from a religious and a secular perspective. The earthly elements of the body always return to the earth. So, do we have the right then to return that sacred borrowed property early and release the animating force?

Surely, from a Torah perspective, turning in the holy physical body early to free the suffering soul early is not our decision to make. Our souls were placed into the physical body to perform the will of the

Creator, and have a particular role to play up until the very last natural breath. Every moment is infinitely meaningful, having been granted by the giver of infinite meaning. The giver of infinite meaning doesn't pick and choose which moments have meaning and which do not. While we often do not see the deeper meanings in our lives or of every moment, that does not take away from their intrinsic meaning. The Torah is clear. Suicide is murder. Period. Suicide assumes that only parts of life have infinite meaning - not its entirety. And surely it denies the idea of universal intrinsic meaning.

So how does one convince someone, even someone who may believe in a soul or even a higher power, to not commit suicide, without a Torah perspective? It goes back to the question of "What is life?" If one acknowledges that the animating force that one possesses currently is part of an infinite animating source, and is indeed one and the same, then making the choice of dropping one's physical nature assumes the role of that universal omniscient force. That is to say that the unified oneness of infinity is usurped by the minuscule spark, though while significant in some ways is essentially insignificant compared to that infinity.

The minuscule spark that we call a soul, or animating force, cannot have dominion over the unified infinity, nor can be so bold as to exert its power over it whatever one calls it - whether it is G-d, Hashem, or the unified field theory. And while we do have the choice of using our bodies in a multitude of positive ways while we are on the earth, we have no choice when that exertion starts, nor when it finishes.

Those are two sacred moments both in secular and religious thought - and their sanctity cannot be manipulated. The minute one manipulates those forces, one plays the role of infinite and exerts his or her will on one's source. Suicide does not only affect the self; rather, its effects ripple across humanity and disrupt the balance of infinite unity.

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

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One-on-One with Rabbi Marc Baker

In July of 2018, Rabbi Marc Baker became CJP's president and CEO. The organization recently launched a year-long listening tour called "The 360Five." Shalom Magazine asked Baker what he learned from meeting with members of the Jewish community throughout Massachusetts.

The following is an exclusive interview by Shalom Magazine editor Shirley Farber.

SF: What do communities expect from CJP in the wake of recent anti-Semitic events?

MB: Fighting anti-Semitism - and mitigating fears for our safety - is vital in Boston, America, and the world. We are working to quickly and strategically determine the best role for CJP to play, in coordination with the critical partners we are lucky to have here in Greater Boston. We have convened a task force to assess the landscape to fight hate, and to help us amplify and lift up the important work happening while helping to fill gaps to ensure we are as coordinated as possible in our communal fight against anti-Semitism and other forms of hate.

CJP has a unique ability to mobilize and organize our community, particularly during crises. That's what the community expects from

us - to be a central, unifying voice of the Jewish community in difficult times. CJP can play at least two key roles: First, CJP must work proactively to ensure that our community is safe and has spaces to gather proudly that are secure - no one should ever stay home out of fear of going to a Jewish space or gathering as Jews to celebrate, mourn or be in relationship with one another.

Second, CJP can work with communal partners to ensure full coordination of a communal response to anti-Semitism, specifically using our communications platforms to present unified and unambiguous condemnation when it occurs. Though we hope never have to react to a horrific incident like what happened in Pittsburgh, we believe CJP has a key role in ensuring our community is prepared and would have a coordinated, thoughtful response and reaction should the worst occur. It is painful to think about, but our role is to ensure we have thought of every possibility with our partners.

SF: What did you expect to hear, and what would you say are issues common to all visited communities?

MB: We heard that people have a great deal of pride in our Jewish community; that it is warm and welcoming with tremendous opportunity for anyone to take part in Jewish life. At the same time, we heard that there are people who feel marginalized, who are seeking meaning and engagement, and are having a hard time finding it.

We're divided on critical issues and sometimes have a hard time discussing them. We heard that social isolation is an issue for some; that we need to be more welcoming to people of all abilities, and that some communities feel distant from Jewish life based on geography and population. We also heard a wide array of views on Israel.

One universal theme was the high cost of Jewish life - whether synagogue membership, Jewish day school, or Jewish learning - is a concern for many people.

SF: What are the issues that differentiate one community from another, and how can CJP help? Specifically, what are the most urgent requests from each community?



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One-on-One with Rabbi Marc Baker

As you note, each region had its own concerns, but given the diversity among participants, it was hard to say that people in one particular area shared the same concerns. We were able to make some generalizations based on what we heard. On the North Shore, it was often the challenge of access and distance to Jewish events. In Brookline, we heard quite a bit about social isolation among older adults. On the South Shore, we heard about the lack of Jewish institutions and challenges among those that remain. We heard in Cambridge that there's a need for brick-and-mortar places to come together and that the high cost of living is making it difficult for some families with children to remain.

We took these regional differences into account when reorganizing CJP to increase our focus on geographic areas, each with distinctive needs and Jewish communities. We now have relationship managers assigned to six distinct regions, who are charged with being in (and accessible to) a community and maintaining a strong multiway feedback loop between the local area and the Greater Boston community.

SF: Did any ideas come up at your meetings on initiatives that could help connect Jews and strengthen Judaism in this specific area?

MB: The role of the listening tour is not only to gather feedback, but to take what we've heard and turn it into action. We heard a lot of great ideas, and one of the goals for the next round of the listening tour is to take a deeper dive into some key areas and start to figure out ways in which we can work together to strengthen the Jewish community. One of the most exciting things about providing our

new relationship managers to local areas is that we are now able to harness good ideas more easily. It was amazing to feel the energy at each stop on the listening tour, and of course so many amazing ideas bubbled to the surface. People reflected that sometimes it was hard to access CJP, and so we are committed to making reaching us easier.

SF: How is CJP helping community organizations protect themselves against anti-Semitic attacks?

MB: We have security experts on staff, including Associate Vice President of Security Jeremy Yamin, who conducts trainings, meeting with representatives from Jewish organizations, and consults with law enforcement. We're also working with our partners at the ADL to help police officers and others to identify hate symbols to increase their ability to be proactive in confronting hate. If organizations would like to have a security consultation,

they can email Jeremy at jeremy@cjp.org. We also provided funding - in partnership with JCRC - to organizations to bolster security.

SF: How are your current methods of addressing issues reported by the community different from what has been done in the past?

MB: The things that we're doing very well, we'll keep doing. But the Jewish community is changing, and we need to change with it.

On the one hand, CJP's core work has been constant since our founding: strategically investing philanthropic resources and organizing and mobilizing people to create a strong, thriving Jewish community that in turn does its part to better the Jewish People, Israel and the world. But like any organization operating in a dynamic setting, CJP needs to evolve to best serve our community.



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The solidarity we need: On resisting anti-Semitism



By Tucker Lieberman

How can we resist anti-Semitism and make a better world?

Hate and paranoia manifest in different ways toward different targets. These beliefs aren't rational or even consistent. While individuals may develop anti-Semitic themes within their worldviews, antisemitism itself is incoherent. Because it's slippery, sometimes it's hard to know how to resist it.

I believe we need solidarity with others, Jews and non-Jews alike. We need to understand where our struggles overlap and how we can help each other.

Anti-Semitism manifests in many ways

Based on conversations I've had, most Boston-area Jews can recall being targeted with at least one anti-Semitism comment or incident. The nature and frequency can depend on whether one is visibly Jewish and where one has lived.

Multiple Jews have been assaulted this year in New York City, for example, including an Orthodox rabbi who had a brick thrown at his head. This kind of violence tends to target people who wear traditional Jewish dress.

Sometimes just having a name that appears to be Jewish can trigger hate. In the last presidential election year, Atlantic editor Jeffrey Goldberg, journalist Julia Ioffe, and conservative commentator Bethany Mandel were deluged with harassment, including death threats and Holocaust references. (Deborah E. Lipstadt describes these incidents in her book *Antisemitism: Here and Now*.)

Sometimes the attacks are directed at us when we enter identifiably Jewish spaces, regardless of the community's political leanings or the level of religious observance. This year, there were mass shootings during services at a Chabad synagogue in Poway, California, as well

as at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, which is Conservative and describes itself as "traditional, progressive, and egalitarian." The shooter in Pittsburgh had complained about the synagogue's support for the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, which helps resettle refugees. Closer to home, over the summer, the Chabad centers in Arlington and Needham were struck by an arsonist.

I am usually not visibly Jewish, and only once, when I was a thousand miles from Boston, have I received a deeply hostile anti-Semitism comment. I was asked by a married couple if I was a believing Christian, and, when I responded, "No, I'm Jewish," they asked me why I killed Jesus. They weren't joking, and the question wasn't rhetorical: they really wanted to know, did not accept my denial of responsibility, and seemed rather angry about the matter.

There is, of course, the common trope of Jews as hagglers, bargain-hunters, and negotiators, and, worse, as greedy, gloating deceivers. Many Jews have had someone characterize them as such, even if only within the context of a joke.

The business villain stereotype, as I've argued elsewhere, underlies the allegation of a nonexistent "War on Christmas" that has been hyped by conservative media for fifteen years. Talking heads complain, as if they are personally victimized by it, that department stores aren't Christmassy enough, and I think it's not merely coincidence that the CEOs have Jewish-sounding names.

Why are they against Jews?

Some people are anxious when their idea of "the Jews" is invoked, and anti-Semitism beliefs are often outright paranoid. It's hard to pin down these beliefs, as they tend to be inconsistent and unpredictable. To anti-Semites, "the Jews" may mean everything and nothing.

The irrationality of anti-Semitism is revealed by the contradictory claims under that umbrella. They hate us because:

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The solidarity we need: On resisting anti-Semitism

Because we have any job: doctor, lawyer, banker, politician, scientist, teacher, public intellectual, journalist, artist, entrepreneur. Or because we have no job at all.

Because we arrived from somewhere else, or because we have culturally assimilated and might marry into their families.

Because European Jews have white privilege that other people of European descent don't want to grant us, or because we are believed to have darker features, or because we inconveniently complicate the idea of whiteness.

Because we are immigrants, people of color, speakers of Yiddish, queer, left-wing - or because we are not these things when they expect us to be.

Because we recognize Israel's existence, have visited Israel, or have any opinion whatsoever about Israel.

Because we are too observant or too non-observant; too theological or too irreverent; too interested in our "chosen peoplehood" or in the demand for secular government.

Because the existence of Judaism reminds them of where Christianity and Islam came from.

Because they are Holocaust deniers land, simultaneously, would-be Nazis. They pretend to be non-racist but are secretly pleased by racists. Or, they maintain that the Holocaust didn't happen and also that it should happen.

Because we have suffered genocide so we seem vulnerable, and because our endurance makes them feel guilty.

Because we are so few in number yet somehow, in their minds, control the world.

These reasons are incoherent. If you put all the anti-Semites in a room together, they wouldn't agree (and would probably

attack each other). The less polished among them may never realize that their own ideas are inconsistent. As soon as we begin to unpack their agenda, we gain a new perspective on our own diversity.

Solidarity

Jews are diverse, and any of us might be targeted for any number of reasons. We have to support each other. We must also realize that, even when all of us band together, we will remain a minority. We Jews alone in our foxhole may not be able to defeat the enemy without a Chanukah miracle. Which leads me to a bigger, more ambitious form of solidarity.

Humans are diverse. We face all kinds of threats based on our identities: race, nationality, language, religion, gender, sexuality, physical disabilities, learning differences, and so on. Anti-Semitism matters, and so do all the other types of hate, ignorance, and discrimination which are never fully separable from anti-Semitism. All of it is irrational. We will be more empowered to prevent and combat it when we connect ourselves to everyone else who is fighting it.

Tucker Lieberman has just finished writing a history about race, gender, and trains. www.tuckerlieberman.com.



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PEACE WALK AT UMASS AMHERST

By Shira Almekies

Up until my senior year of high school, I was in what many refer to as “a bubble.” I would wake up at 6 in the morning and head to my Jewish private day school. I wouldn’t return home until 7 p.m., sometimes even 9 o’clock at night during sports seasons. I didn’t have the kind of exposure a person in a public school would have to the world.



Being Jewish was never a description I used for myself, because I was always surrounded by Jews, by people who understood. However, when I made it to college, I found myself explaining my situation to people, whether it was to professors clarifying why I wouldn’t be in class because of another holiday, or telling my non-Jewish friends I couldn’t go out with them because it was the Shabbath. It was all just so different.

But it was something that I could deal with. They simply didn’t understand, and, in a way, I felt it was my job to teach them about the way I lived my life. I was never embarrassed or nervous to mention my religion; I was actually quite proud to tell people, and everyone was so accepting. I thought I was welcomed at UMass Amherst, that there was a place for me here - that was, until I saw some chalking on the side of the Fine Arts Center.

I was in a meeting discussing the upcoming BDS panelists who were coming to speak at UMass (for the second time in 7 months) when I heard about it. A Hillel staff member handed me his phone,



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PEACE WALK AT UMASS AMHERST

and I saw the five red and blue swastikas drawn onto the side of the Fine Arts Center. At first, I didn't think much of it. I was used to seeing them drawn on public bathroom doors, or scratched into a park bench.

People who did this were just ignorant; they didn't really understand what it stood for; it was a fleeting decision. The more I thought about it though, the more it got to me. This was not a stupid high school kid etching it onto a desk while bored in class, it was a calculated message to me, and the UMass Jewish community.

In order for them to get to that wall, they had to have climbed the fire escape, they have had to have done it at night. It was planned to the nth degree. Usually following hate crimes like this, UMass would send out an email explaining the situation and condemning these actions, but that email never came. Instead they posted it on a secondary page on their website, and it barely felt like they cared. There were only a mere five sentences explaining the situation and a minimal, propaganda-filled apology.

As I sat there with my fellow peers at this meeting, tears welling in my eyes, I felt as though I was fighting an uphill battle that I was losing. I felt as though the anti-Semitic groups and the anti-Semitic faculty had won, and that it was time to pack up and go home. The



Shira (r) and friends at the Peace Walk



wordless message written on the wall said it all: I was not welcome here, the Jewish people were not welcome here. Given everything that had been happening on campus, it just seemed as if I was hitting a wall.

I sat there feeling nothing but defeat and devastation. I think our Israel fellow realized the extent of our pain and told us it was not a win-lose situation, it was not a zero-sum game, and this was not an us vs. them. The wall we had been hitting was a lack of education on anti-Semitism, on BDS, on anti-Israel. It was a lack of conversation. This fight was not one to win over any other group because there were no winners. This was a fight for peace, and for an open discussion.

I soon came to realize that the tool to break down this wall of silence was in my hands, in our hands, in the hands of Jewish people. Let us not forget what the great civil right activist Martin Luther King, Jr. once said: "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

Shira Almekies grew up in Stoughton, Mass. and is now a sophomore at UMass Amherst majoring in legal studies and communication.

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Toward a Just and Lasting Peace

By Natalie Rosen

If one is a settlement negotiator between two parties, each claiming rights to what the other has, what does that settlement negotiator do first?

I believe the negotiator must establish exactly what each party claims and, the question must then be asked of both: How much do you desire an end to the violence, an end to the rocket fire, an end to the killing, and an end to the fear that one's children may not live to see their own children grow up?

How much do both parties realistically want peace with an adversary that claims religious rights to all the land? Peace is, of course, impossible if both parties do not negotiate or give into anything the other wants. Peace cannot be achievable if one side will not budge from its perceived rights to the land the other claims for its own as well.

I believe in a two-state solution between Palestinians laying claim to one state and Israelis laying claim to the other. But without an acknowledgment of the rights of each, peace will never be achieved, and the threat of violence, rocket fire and death will always prevail.

Do they not want a better life for their children, free of the threat of violence and potential annihilation? This is what is at stake for both sides. Each is seen as an existential threat to the other, yet who truly wishes to live in a state of war where one side could attack the other at a moment's notice?

The roadblocks to peace for both sides are many, and I catalog two as supreme: The first is that one side gives the other side no religious credence. Nothing will be achieved when both sides claim to have G-d on their side.

The second obstacle to peace is the Trump administration's enforcing its intractable policies upon the situation. Donald J. Trump, who reads little to nothing on any issue, believes he is an arbiter. His declarations of the legality of settlements and Jerusalem being the capital of Israel serve only to provoke Palestinian violence as well as engender Muslim as well as international ire.

And his so-called friend Netanyahu is under indictment by Israeli police and prosecutors for illegal excesses of his power - just as Trump, if he were not President, most likely would be too, for the plethora of crimes for which he is very likely guilty.

Instead of provoking, Israelis must empathize with the Palestinian plight, living in dastardly conditions subject to Israeli whim and control at a moment's notice. Likewise, Palestinians must develop an empathy for the tragic historical reality of the Jews and, in particular, not engage in Holocaust denial but understand the Jewish yearning for a Jewish state. The near elimination of the Jews of Europe gave impetus to the Zionist desire for a state the Jews could call their own, defending them against all existential threats.

Both the Palestinians and the Israelis hold valid claims to the land and deserve the right to live in security. Yet certain issues must be acknowledged, and empathy and compromise must manifest, if there is to ever be a just and lasting peace.

Natalie Rosen lives in Framingham.

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“ANNE FRANK IN REVERSE” TRIP

Over Thanksgiving break, 11 university students from diverse backgrounds traveled to the Netherlands and Germany for an intense Holocaust memory mission with *Together, Restoring Their Names*. The trip, titled “Anne Frank in Reverse,” explored the Holocaust through the lens of Dutch Jewish history from before, during, and after the Holocaust. Students examined the memorialization of Anne Frank and probed contemporary issues including anti-Semitism and Holocaust commemoration in Dutch public spaces.

Across multiple locations, student fellows acted as peer educators, speaking on topics that they preselected to research ahead of the trip. For example, Brandeis University student Dario Alves, who grew up in Cape Verde, presented his research about the immigration of Portuguese Jews to the Dutch metropolis, and how they interacted with Dutch Jewish community members who already lived in Amsterdam.

Clark University student Lamisa Muksitu, who comes from a Muslim background, researched Jewish hiding places during the Shoah. Sites that the group visited around Amsterdam included the National Holocaust Museum, the Jewish Heritage Museum, and the Resistance Museum. In addition to visiting sites in Amsterdam, students traveled to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in Germany on Thanksgiving Day.

Together, Restoring Their Names director Elan Kawesch explains that the date was picked intentionally. “It’s incredibly important that we step back and realize that while we have much to be thankful for, the American Jewish community and so many other minority communities are facing marginalization and racism in today’s

world,” Kawesch said. “We find it crucial to build bridges across communities to tackle issues like anti-Semitism through Holocaust education, which is intersectional in nature,” the Brandeis University senior added.

On this trip, the organization’s second to the Netherlands, each participant produced a piece of writing about their experience, or research that they completed during the trip.

The trip is organized and funded by *Together, Restoring Their Names*, a student-led group. Founded in 2015, the *Together, Restoring Their Names* initiative implements Holocaust memory service-learning opportunities for undergraduate students in the Boston area. Student fellows work to improve the quality of Holocaust education on campus, and serve the local survivor community. The program is supported by Combined Jewish Philanthropies’ IACT Initiative, and is open to students of all backgrounds.

At the core of each fellow’s experience is a personal project they undertake for the initiative, based on the programmatic goals of: educate, serve, and learn. *Together, Restoring Their Names* has taken dozens of students on trips to Europe, engaging them with Holocaust memory and education. In 2015, TRTN took a diverse group to Poland for their first trip. In addition to visiting significant Holocaust memory sites within Poland, the group toured Auschwitz I and Auschwitz Birkenau. Similar trips have taken place from 2016-2019 in London, Berlin, and Washington.

Cheyenne Paris is a graduate student at Brandeis University and a fellow for Together, Restoring their Names.



Dario Alves, Brandeis University; Penelope Kogan, Clark University; Sarah DeFanti, Simmons University; Lamisa Muksitu, Clark University; R. Miller, Brandeis University; Narain Reddy, Boston University; Zak Kranc, Northeastern University; Cheyenne Paris, Brandeis University; Ben Shapiro, Tufts University.

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Remembering the Jews of Ukraine

By *Simona Gilman and Rachel Gauferberg*

The Baker Street Jewish Cemetery sits in a quiet corner of West Roxbury. Founded by a community of Jews who had relocated to the Boston area at the turn of the 20th century, the farmland turned cemetery serves as the final resting place for many Jews from Eastern Europe. Having fled pogroms and violence in their home countries, thousands of Jews made their way to the States, including those from Starokonstantinov, Ukraine, a community nearly 200 miles southwest of Kiev.

In one of the three dozen smaller subdivisions of the Baker Street Jewish Cemetery, nestled between plots for the Quincy Hebrew and the Or Emet communities, you can find a newly erected memorial not to one person, but to an entire community nearly wiped out during WWII.

Sponsored by Semyon Rudyak, a Holocaust survivor and philanthropist living in Boston, the memorial is a testament to those lost and the resilience of those who survived. Born in the town of Dzhurin, Ukraine, Semyon was eight years old when the war broke out, and his hometown was soon occupied by Romanian forces. Jews were all rounded up into a ghetto and while in this ghetto the Romanians



Memorial in Bila Tserkva, Ukraine

did not target Jews for extermination, living conditions in it were abhorrent. Many passed away from disease and malnutrition but some, including Rudyak's family, survived.

Following the war, he moved to Starokonstantinov in 1957, where he met and married his wife Rufa and raised their children. In 1992, after the fall of the Soviet Union, Semyon and his wife ultimately immigrated to Boston, joining an already established community of Eastern European Jews.

The memorial is modeled after the one placed at the edge of a ravine in Starokonstantinov. This ravine, or "yar," is one of thousands that serves as a mass grave for Jewish communities wiped out across Eastern Europe by Nazi and soldiers. Over 5000 Jews who had called this community home were killed in a number of murderous operations conducted between August, 1941 and November, 1942.

The memorial has four symbols. The two at the bottom are the symbol of the Cohanim, or high priests. The middle contains a pitcher, indicating the grave of a Levite, and at the top are a Jewish star and a candelabra (*menorah*), which are both typically included on Jewish

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Remembering the Jews of Ukraine

tombstones. The middle of the memorial contains an inscription (in Russian on one side and in English on the other) which reads: "Remember the 5,267 Jews brutally murdered in Starokonstantinov. 29 November 1942," and the bottom inscription states, "Eternal Memory."

Semyon and others hope that the memorial will serve not only to commemorate and remind us of the horrors of the Shoah, but also as a warning against anti-Semitism and hate.

Efforts to keep the memory of the victims alive continue today. There are over a thousand such "yars" all over Ukraine, a testament to local collaboration with the Nazis at the onset of World War II, and to the tragic human propensity for violence against neighbors and friends.

Only a few hours away from Kyiv, 90 Jewish children, including infants, were murdered in the town of Bila Tserkva. Their parents were killed a few days earlier. A few months ago, 78 years after the murders in Bila Tserkva, a memorial to the murdered children was unveiled, made possible by efforts from the local Jewish community and with the financial support of two small organizations – RememberUs.org from Needham and Christians for Israel from the Netherlands.

Perhaps the most well-known yar in Ukraine is Babyn Yar – the ravine where the mass murder of the Jews of Kyiv took place. On September 26, 1941, an order was posted all over Kyiv, the capital of Soviet Ukraine under German occupation, commanding all Jews of the city to come to a gathering place with their valuables and warm clothes. The penalty for disobeying the order would be death. The common belief at the time was that people would be relocated. It was said later that the number of people who came surpassed even Nazis' expectations.

During the Jewish Holy Week, and before Yom Kippur, over two days, September 29 and 30, 33,771 people were murdered at the hands of the Nazis and their collaborators for one and only one reason - because they were Jews. These killings continued until the beginning of November, 1943, when the Soviet Army recaptured the



Memorial at the Starokonstantinov cemetery, West Roxbury

city. In this time, not only Jews were targeted, but prisoners of war, the mentally ill, and others. It is estimated that the total number of victims of Babyn Yar, both Jews and non-Jews, is between 100,000 and 150,000.

While the most well-known, the Jewish death toll of Babyn Yar was surpassed just a few months later at the Bogdanovka extermination camp outside of Odessa. Between 40,000 and 50,000 Jews perished there.

Nearly 80 years on from WWII and the mass extermination of Jews in Europe, few individuals remain to give first-person accounts of the massacres. Instead, the responsibility of collective memory falls to the memorials, erected as silent witnesses to history, and to us, the next generation.

Simona Gilman is the Senior Marketing Manager for GNS Healthcare. Rachel Gauferg is a research assistant at Brigham and Women's Hospital. Both volunteer with RememberUs.org.

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AJC Launches *Translate Hate*

On November 12, the FBI released their annual hate crimes report, which revealed data showing that Jews were the target of a stunning 57.8 percent of all religious bias crimes in 2018, despite making up less than 2 percent of the U.S. population.

To enable Americans of all backgrounds to expose antisemitic tropes and take action against hate speech, the American Jewish Committee (AJC), the leading global Jewish advocacy organization, has launched *Translate Hate*, an innovative digital resource (AJC.org/TranslateHate).

“The FBI report confirms what we already knew. The taboo on hate is eroding,” said Robert Leikind, AJC New England Regional Director. “We need tools to fight back. This is why AJC has created *Translate Hate*.”

Presented in the form of an illustrated glossary, *Translate Hate* lays out 24 terms and expressions that are examples of antisemitism, explains the antisemitic nature of certain words or phrases when used in specific contexts and provides brief histories of their harmful usage. The resource also offers users the tools and information they need to report hate speech, whether it is encountered online or in everyday settings.

Translate Hate is AJC’s latest initiative to raise awareness of the reality and prevalence of antisemitism in America and to mobilize the general population to join the fight to eradicate hatred of Jews. It follows on the October 23 release of AJC’s groundbreaking survey of American Jews’ perceptions of and experiences of antisemitism in the United States. The unprecedented national study found that 88% of American Jews believe antisemitism is a problem in the U.S. today, and 84% percent say it has increased over the past five years. Approximately a third of American Jews say they have been the targets of antisemitism and seven out of ten say their Jewish institutions have taken concrete protective measures due to the threat of antisemitism.

Individuals are encouraged to use the hashtag #TranslateHate when speaking out against usage of any of the terms in the *Translate Hate* glossary.



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Chanukah Questions

What does the holiday of Chanukah celebrate?

Chanukah celebrates two miracles:

a) The 2nd century BCE victory of a small, greatly outnumbered and out-armed army of Jews known as the “Maccabees,” over the mighty Greek army that occupied the Holy Land. The rebellion was in response to the Greek attempt to force a Hellenistic, G-dless lifestyle on the Jewish inhabitants of Israel.

b) The kindling of a seven-branched Menorah (candelabra) was an important component of the daily service in the Holy Temple. When the Maccabees liberated the Temple from the hands of the Greek invaders, they found only a small cruse of pure and undefiled olive oil fit for fueling the Menorah. The problem was, it was sufficient to light the Menorah only for one day, and it would take eight days to produce new, pure oil. Miraculously, the oil burned for eight days and nights.

What does the word Chanukah mean?

Chanukah means “dedication” or “induction.”

Following their victory over the Greeks, the Maccabees rededicated the Holy Temple and its altar, which had been desecrated and defiled by the pagan invaders.

The word Chanukah can also be divided in two: *Chanu* -- they rested, and *Kah* -- which has the numerical value of 25. On the twenty-fifth day of the Hebrew month of Kislev, the Maccabees rested from their battle, and triumphantly marched into the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, ready to rededicate it.

How is Chanukah celebrated?

On each of the eight days of Chanukah, we light the menorah, a nine-branched candelabra, after nightfall (except for Friday afternoon, when the candles are lit shortly before sunset). On the first night we kindle one light plus the *shamash* (attendant candle), on the second night we kindle two lights plus the *shamash*, and so we continue until the eighth night when we kindle all eight lights plus the *shamash*. The menorah lights can be either candles, or oil and wicks.

It is traditional to eat foods fried in oil on Chanukah, to commemorate the miracle of Chanukah which occurred with oil. It is also customary to eat dairy foods during the holiday.

It is also customary on Chanukah to give money gifts to children, and to play dreidel games, and to give an increased amount of charity each day of Chanukah. There are also certain passages we add to the daily prayers and Grace After Meals.

Is the public celebration of Chanukah a reaction to the holiday of a different faith - to ensure that Jews don't feel second-class?

The Passover Seder is carried out in the privacy of one's home. On Rosh Hashanah we go to the synagogue to hear the sound of the shofar. But there's only one holiday whose primary mitzvah is PR-oriented, whose message is meant to be advertised and broadcasted, and that is Chanukah.

Originally, the sages who established Chanukah instituted that the menorah be lit at the entranceway to one's home. The concept of *pirsumei nissa*, “the publicizing of the miracle,” is, and always was, part and parcel of Chanukah.

Many of the laws associated with the menorah reflect this central theme of Chanukah. For example, the Talmud (Shabbat 23b) explains that one who only has sufficient funds for either Chanukah candles or wine for Kiddush should purchase the candles, and make do with a wine-less Kiddush. Why? “The Chanukah lights are more important, because of *pirsumei nissa*.”

In the Diaspora, the practice of publicizing the miracle via lighting the menorah in full view of public thoroughfares was discontinued due to the persecution that such displays could have potentially engendered. In Jerusalem, though, to this very day, menorahs are lit in plastic or glass casings outside the homes.

Now that by the grace of G-d the vast majority of Jews live in lands that pride themselves on their commitment to religious freedom and tolerance, it is certainly appropriate to restore the holiday message that had been silenced for so long.

And there certainly has never been a time when the message of the Chanukah lights has been more needed by societies that so thirst for meaning and spirituality.

Rabbi Moshe Y. Bleich is the rabbi at Wellesley-Weston Chabad.





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Lessons to be learned from recent escalation

By Steven Schimmel

We woke up on the morning of November 12 to news that over 150 rockets had been fired from the Gaza Strip into Israel, sending thousands of Israeli families into bomb shelters. In the subsequent days, over 400 rockets were fired in total.

This rocket barrage was supposedly in response to an Israeli military operation that earlier that evening had killed the top leader of Palestinian Islamic Jihad, an Iran-backed terror group in the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip. As is the standard practice, Israel utilized precision guided missiles to take out this terrorist leader while preventing civilian casualties elsewhere in the building that was struck in the attack.

While later missions might have resulted in a small number of civilian deaths, I'm making a point of emphasizing Israeli protocol on this because it stands in stark contrast to the rocket barrage fired from Gaza into Israel - these Gaza rockets are purposefully fired to create fear, terror, and death of civilians. This troubling reality is part of the terrible dynamic of this conflict, but as many of us know, it is typical of the situation. This rocket fire and the thousands of rockets fired over many years is the sad reality faced by communities in the southern part of Israel since Israel unilaterally withdrew from the Gaza Strip fourteen years ago in the summer of 2005.

And while recent attacks have reached as far as Tel Aviv, these periodic flare-ups have been especially traumatic for Israelis along the Gaza border. These rocket attacks have become a major obstacle in the quest for peace, and have greatly strengthened Israel's case for continuing to control Judea and Samaria (the West Bank).

There might even be a connection between this round of rocket fire and U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's recent announcement that Israel's settlements weren't necessarily inconsistent with international law. An argument could be made that the settlement policy change was announced with this type of terrorism in mind. Fear of rocket fire into the heart of Israel is one of the major concerns over relinquishing control of the West Bank, which also strengthens arguments in favor of settlements.

The current political crisis in Israel is also making the situation more volatile. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu is under investigation on a number of charges and is facing the unprecedented situation of also needing to campaign in yet another divisive election. Military operations are now colored and overshadowed by this political crisis. And so a wrong move by Netanyahu or provocation by terrorists could have huge implications.

But perhaps the most disconcerting element of this conflict is evident in the message from Palestinian leadership in the West Bank. After the rocket fire, the chief spokesman for the PLO, Saeb Erakat, gave official remarks blaming Israel for the escalation in the conflict. He said that it was a "crime" that Israel had taken out the PIJ leader - a terrorist responsible for dozens of attacks, rocket fire, and destabilization in the region.

It's a shocking statement. This is the message coming from the supposed moderate voice of the Palestinian people. The fact that the Palestinian Authority spokesman condemned what should be seen as exemplary action is revealing and is also commonplace. Blaming the conflict on Israel is a manipulative tactic used regularly by many

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Lessons to be learned from recent escalation

anti-Israel organizations. Erakat's comment could be shrugged off as yet another bit of anti-Israel propaganda employed by yet another group in the Middle East, but the PLO isn't just another group. The PLO and Palestinian Authority are to be the government of a future Palestinian state. These are the people expected to live side-by-side with Israelis in peace.

Viewpoints like the one expressed by Erakat concern Israelis and should be alarming to those who seek peace. What is to be expected from the Palestinian leadership of a future state? The PLO messaging sounds even worse when considering that PIJ is in effect an enemy of the PLO - Erakat could have just as easily thanked Israel for the operation.

This could be a step in furthering peace. Eliminating one of the top terrorists in an organization that has destabilized the region is a good action, and the Palestinian Authority's response should be a major concern for anyone who wants to see a peaceful resolution to this conflict. Calling the elimination of one of the top terrorists in the Gaza Strip a "crime" is indicative of one of the deep issues plaguing the Peace Process. Comments like Erakat's give the impression that Palestinian leadership continues to support armed struggle against Israel, which many Israeli leaders believe continues overtly, tacitly, and by incitement.

Whether or not this is true, the perception makes future peace agreements less attainable. And Israeli leaders who wish to solidify Israel's control of the West Bank through annexation point to comments like Erakat's and ask whether rockets will be fired from

a future Palestinian state in the West Bank. The rocket fire and the comments from the PLO give credence to concerns behind these questions.

The hostility toward Israel from the PLO is of course nothing new, but for those who seek peace, Erakat's comments should be condemned along with the rocket fire. Israel should and must continue to do all it can do to eliminate terrorists in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank whenever necessary and continue taking precaution to avoid civilian casualties. This was yet another moment when the world could have rallied in support around Israel, and congratulated them on the successful operation that also helped to check the power of an Iran-backed terror group - but that again is complicated by Netanyahu's indictment, antipathy toward settlements, and by growing anti-Israel sentiment around the world.

To say that the situation is complicated would be an understatement, but it is and seems like it has always been complicated -- maybe that's the most

important lesson of all.

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



A rocket launched from Gaza landed at a kindergarten in Netivot, southern Israel. Photo: Aviad Amos

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Settlements and Israeli foreign policy deter peace in the region

By Seth Speigel

Israel and its security are rightfully highly emotional issues, following its independence just three short years after the ending of the Holocaust and the genocide of 6 million. Jews do deserve a land that they call their own, where they have the demographic majority and can feel safe and go about their daily lives as nearly everyone else does.

However, some decisions that are made with high emotion in the name of safety and wellbeing end up backfiring, with devastating consequences. For example: "Does keeping and expanding settlements in Palestinian territory keep and ensure security for Jews in Israel and for Jews around the world?" The answer is no.

The claim that settlements help to bring stability by widening the area of Israeli security operations in the wake of the many rocket attacks is false. The rockets themselves are a crude technology, and before the settlements, there were no increased rocket attacks on neighborhoods, nor suicide bombings, as we have seen. It is indeed just the opposite - the settlements are giving Palestinians an excuse to further build and launch the rockets. If you take away their excuse, it will then be difficult for the groups responsible for the attacks to get the local support needed to build and conceal the rockets in their neighborhoods.

The original Allon plan for settlements, proposed during the 1967 War, called for Israel to relinquish all settlements in exchange for peace agreements - not to halt, and then expand them at will. Even former President Ronald Reagan, in 1981, called settlements unhelpful

and provocative, and in 1983, bid Israel to halt all new settlements.

The Palestinians have been left with very little to govern within their boundaries, yet Israel expects them to be able to respond against foreign-funded heavily armed groups. That is why Israel does have some responsibility in these attacks. How can the PLO fight corruption and those who will not hesitate to attack them, too, if they are not allowed the requisite resources and international backing?

Israel also has made multiple mistakes when it comes to how it handles its neighbors. In 2006, the government in Beirut was headed by the Future Movement, which was opposed to the heavy Syrian and Iranian influence in Lebanon. Instead of Israel meeting with and working with this potential ally to drive Hezbollah out of Syria, Israel decided to go solo, thus allowing them to claim that they were the subsequent victims. Israel should rather have worked in concert with the Lebanese government to disarm Hezbollah, thereby eliminating the rocket problem from the north.

Those who call upon the Palestinians to do more to enforce the rule of law on the lands that they are supposed to be governing should allow Palestinians to have the adequate resources to do so.

As for Israel, those who defend the policies of Netanyahu often fail to mention that Netanyahu has been indicted by Israeli law enforcement for serious corruption. Nor do they address the fact that he has consistently used fear to manipulate voters into his favor. This is also the same Prime Minister who treats fellow Jews just as badly.

For example, one must look at the plight of the Ethiopian Jews in Israel and their treatment under Likud policies. There also has never been an offer by the Israelis to aid the Palestinians in rooting out corruption -- but would a Prime Minister who is also indicted for the same be of any credibility in that fight?

Israelis who are not living in the settlements and Palestinians are often ultimately victimized, rather than aided by a Likud leadership that is both corrupt and antithetical to the peace process.

This February, Blue and White Leader Benny Gantz said that Israel needed to find a way to end its "control" over the Palestinians. And hopefully, a new Israeli government will exercise such compassion and understanding, rather than provocation.

Seth Speigel holds an M.B.A. degree and lives in Laconia, N.H.

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Jewish legal right to settle in all of the land of Israel

By David Bedein

On Nov. 18, the U.S. government issued a policy statement, recognizing the Jewish legal right to settle in all of the land of Israel.

Most people, even Israelis, do not know what their legal rights are in the land of Israel.

The Balfour Declaration, issued by the UK in 1917, declaring a Jewish national home in all of Palestine, represented a unilateral declaration.

However, the Supreme Council of the Principal Allied Powers, the victors in World War I, endorsed the legality of the Balfour declaration at a conference of the new League of Nations. They declared in 1922 at a conference in San Remo, Italy, that the Balfour Declaration was to be embedded in international law, recognizing the Jewish right to settle their national homeland anywhere between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

That San Remo resolution was endorsed by the U.S. government and the U.S. Congress in 1925.

San Remo, along with all resolutions of the League of Nations, was adopted by the new United Nations in 1945. All Arab nations who were then members of the UN voted to adopt the San Remo resolution as well.

Following the 1948 war, Jordan annexed Judea, Samaria and the Old City in Jerusalem in 1950, forbidding Jewish legal rights and even Jewish religious practice in all areas under Jordanian control. It was a capital offense for a Jew to step foot in Judea, Samaria and the Old City in Jerusalem from 1950 until 1967, despite UN decisions that guaranteed Jews access to places of worship. Instead, all 57 synagogues in the Old City in Jerusalem were burnt to a crisp, and access to Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem and the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron was forbidden to Jews.

These Jordanian moves, however, were not recognized by the UN or the international community as having attained legitimate sovereign

rights over Judea and Samaria and Jerusalem. Only the UK and Pakistan recognized the Jordanian occupation.

Following the 1967 war, Israel gained full control over Judea, Samaria, Gaza and the Old City of Jerusalem. Ever since, the future of areas acquired by Israel in 1967 has been the subject of passionate debate.

The subject of where Israel would settle its citizens is a political issue, not a legal matter. Therefore, the legality of Jewish rights in Judea, Samaria, Gaza and Jerusalem is not in question.

The political debate over Israeli rule over all of the land of Israel has been a bone of contention since the genesis of the Jewish State.

After the Rhodes cease fire accord which essentially ended the Israeli War Of Independence, Israel was under constant fire for settling Jews in the areas of Palestine that were not allocated by the November 29, 1947 Resolution 181 - Jerusalem, the Upper Galilee and the Western Negev. Until the 1967

war, the U.S. questioned the legality of Jewish settlement in the cities of Beer Sheva, Ashkelon and Ashdod. Israel never formally annexed the Upper Galilee and the Western Negev, allowing "facts on the ground" to create policy.

What has been lost from the media coverage of the U.S. recognition of the legal right of Jews to live in all parts of the land of Israel is that the U.S. government not only recognized Jewish sovereignty in Judea and Samaria. This was the first time that the U.S. government recognized Israel's right to settle Jews in the Upper Galilee and Western Negev regions of Israel. All this occurs at a time when numerous Israeli Arab advocacy groups have introduced legal claims to areas of the Upper Galilee and Western Negev regions of Israel.

David Bedein is an investigative journalist, director of the Israel Resource News Agency (www.israelbehindthenews.com) and the Center for Near East Policy Research (www.cfnep.com).



Map of locations target by Gaza terrorists



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ACCELERATING SOCIAL, ACADEMIC AND HEALTH EQUITY

Is a Support Group Right for You?

By Malka Young, LICSW, CCM

It's normal to feel overwhelmed when you or a loved one has been diagnosed with a serious illness or someone close to you has died. You may be struggling to cope, feeling sadness or uncertainty, and maybe guilt as well. Feeling alone or isolated in your grief or worry may make your situation feel even harder.

Support groups can help. These bring together people who are going through a similar experience, whether it is illness, injury, grief and bereavement, or the ravages of dementia, the stresses of caregiving, or addiction in its many forms.

There are many different kinds of support groups. A professionally facilitated group is led by an expert, such as a social worker or therapist, who keeps the discussion on topic, encourages interaction and makes sure no one person dominates the session. A peer support group has no designated leader, but is run by the members; this is the model used famously by Alcoholics Anonymous. There are online groups too, both ongoing and time-limited, which offer an alternative to people who are crunched for time, have limited choices in their location, or prefer anonymity. A simple Google or Facebook search will lead you to a myriad of options. Educational groups focus heavily on information sharing and feature a guest speaker and are often sponsored by associations (such as the Alzheimer's Association), hospitals, and assisted livings or universities.

The benefits of support groups are well documented. Talking openly and honestly can relieve stress and anxiety. Members develop a clearer understanding of what to expect. Group members are able to get (and share) practical advice from others in the same situation.

If you're not sure which kind of support group is best for you, try out a few. I also recommend going more than once before deciding whether or not this is the group for you.

Jewish Family Service of Metrowest will be partnering with other local organizations to offer two different support groups this fall:

Alzheimer's Support Group for Family Caregivers at the Natick Community Senior Center (117 East Central St, Natick) - Meets on the 3rd Wednesday of every month, 2 to 3 p.m.

Bereavement Support Group at Temple Shir Tikva (141 Boston Post Rd, Wayland) - Meets twice monthly on Monday evenings, 7:30-8:45 p.m.

If you need help finding or selecting a support group, please call me at 800-655-9553 or email me at myoung@jfsmw.org.

Malka Young is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker and a Certified Care Manager. She is the Director of Allies in Aging JFS Elder Care Solutions.



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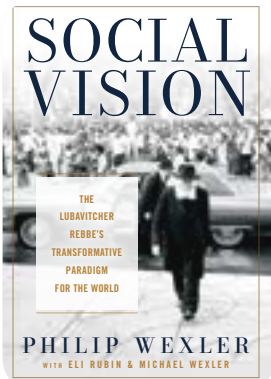
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Social Vision: The Lubavitcher Rebbe's Transformative Paradigm for the World

By Philip Wexler, Eli Rubin, Michael Wexler.
Published by Herder & Herder



Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994), known to many simply as “the Rebbe,” was one of the most remarkable personalities of the 20th century. In 1994, he was posthumously awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in recognition of his “extraordinary life and work.” Despite the Rebbe's fame as the inspiring leader of a global movement, *Social Vision* is the first book to seriously explore his social ideas and activism, persuasively demonstrating that he was a keen social analyst whose ideas are as original as they are practical.

Schneerson's engagement with the American counterculture of the 1960s, his vocal and controversial championship of a cabinet-level Department of Education, his advocacy for criminal justice reform, and his ecological philosophy all bear directly on current policy debates in the 21st century.

Social Vision is a breakthrough work of scholarship by Professor Philip Wexler, a leading sociologist and expert on education. Wexler distills Schneerson's voluminous public teachings, letters, and private conversations to make his ideas accessible to the general reader, and demonstrates the enduring relevance of Schneerson's teachings to the manifold crises of modern life, politics, and culture.

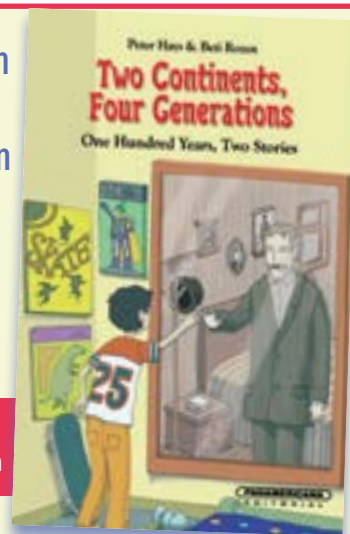
Wexler delves deeply into the ways that religious ideas seminally shape society. Juxtaposed with what Max Weber called “the spirit of capitalism,” Schneerson's Hasidic worldview is compellingly framed as a practical path that can help us create a better future for all humanity.

Schneerson was not simply a religious figure, but also a great philosopher who boldly upended conventional polarizations between tradition and progress, religion and science, mysticism and society.

Social Vision tells the story of how Schneerson not only channeled his ideas into a global Jewish renaissance in the aftermath of the Holocaust, but also articulated a universal vision whose influence continues to shape better policymaking for a better world.

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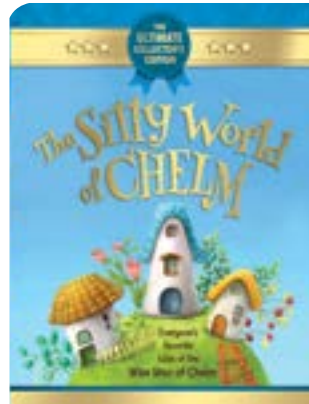
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Happy Chanukah

The Silly World of Chelm

The Horse and Wagon



Once upon a time, in the little village of Chelm, the innkeeper had to go to Minsk to purchase some wares. Shloima, the Wagon Driver, happened to stop off for some refreshment and said he would be more than happy to take the innkeeper to Minsk for ten kopecks, since he had to deliver some fruits and vegetables to Minsk.

The innkeeper was very pleased. He packed his little sack and got on the wagon. No sooner did they ride a few feet when they came to a steep hill.

"Please, forgive me, my friend," exclaimed the wagon driver, "but this hill is much too steep for my poor old horse to climb. Would you mind getting off and help me push the wagon up the hill?" The innkeeper got off the wagon and the two of them began to push. When they got to the top of the hill both got back in the wagon and once more they rode a few feet.

"Just as I thought," exclaimed the wagon driver, "the other side of this hill is much too steep for my horse to control the wagon and ourselves. We will have to get off and hold back the wagon as the horse goes down this hill."

The two men got off the wagon and, trudging through the mud and rocks on the hill, they tried to hold back the wagon to help the horse control the load.

When they reached the bottom of the hill, the wagon driver thanked the innkeeper, and both got on the wagon once more. Again, they went a few feet and came to an area where it had rained. "That's what I was afraid of, mud," exclaimed the wagon driver. "The load is much too heavy for us to pass through. We will have to get off the wagon and each of us carry a few sacks to lighten the load for the horse, or we will be stuck here for weeks."

The two men got off the wagon. Each took two sacks of the fruits and vegetables, and began to walk through the mud to help the horse get the wagon through the soft terrain.

And so it went all the way to Minsk. They would ride a few feet, and then something would go wrong and they would have to get off the wagon to help the horse.

Finally, they arrived in Minsk. The innkeeper thanked the wagon driver and handed him the ten kopecks. As he started to leave he asked the wagon driver, "Tell me, you had to come to Minsk to deliver these fruits and vegetables. I had to come here to purchase some wares for my inn, but why did we have to drag the poor horse along?"

The wagon driver nodded in agreement and said they would discuss the problem with the Old Sage of Chelm when they returned.

After the Old Sage heard the story he issued a decree - "From now on, when anyone has to go to Minsk on a horse and wagon, the horse is to be left behind."

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

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