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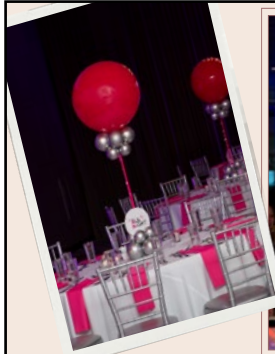
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Editor & Publisher: Shirley Nigri Farber
Marketing Director: Scott A. Farber
Copy Editor: Susie Davidson
Web Designer: David M. Farber

Contributors:

- Rabbi Katy Z. Allen
- David Bernat, Ph.D.
- Rabbi Moshe Y. Bleich
- Sandra Lilienthal, Ed.D.
- Lewis Finfer
- Rabbi Jonathan Hausman
- Rabbi Stanley Helinski, Esq.
- Rabbi Shlomo Pereira
- Yosef Rodrigues, Ph.D.
- Richard H. Schwartz, Ph.D.

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Happy Chanukah



Gaby Weisman

As we gather to celebrate Chanukah, we are reminded of the enduring strength, unity, and resolve of our people. As with all Jewish holidays, we have a message to transmit to the next generation. The story of the Maccabees fighting for the right to preserve our religion and the miracle of the oil motivate us to find light even in the darkest of times, to persevere in the face of adversity.

Here in Massachusetts, our Jewish community is a vibrant tapestry of individuals and families who contribute to the richness of this state with acts of kindness, leadership, and learning. As in any other group, our community is non homogeneous. There are people with varying views, and I believe it is important to present them with respect so we can better understand one another. Whether it's through lighting the menorah, sharing meals, learning or giving tzedakah, we continue to embody the spirit of Chanukah, illuminating the world around us with hope and joy.

Collectively, as a community, let us bring out our interior light (wisdom) to empower one another and build a better world for all humanity.

Shalom is only possible thanks to the indefatigable work of our copy editor Susie Davidson, our marketing director, my husband Scott, the financial support of our advertisers and the generosity of our contributing writers.

The vision of *Shalom Magazine* to unite the Jewish communities spread around Massachusetts has been a reality for more than 15 years. We hope that our articles motivate you to reflect on issues related to our community, and encourage you to participate in one of the many local events listed within.

May we continue to count our blessings and witness miracles in our lives. Chag Urim Sameach!

Shirley Nigri Farber - Publisher



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Chelsea Jewish Heritage Day

חנוכה שמח



On September 22, the Walnut Street Synagogue welcomed over 150 visitors to Chelsea Jewish Heritage Day, an event to help celebrate the yearlong 400th anniversary of the founding of Chelsea in 1624. The featured speaker was noted American Jewish historian Dr. David E. Kaufman (photo), who has family roots in Chelsea. The program was funded in part by a Chelsea Heritage Celebrations Grant from the Chelsea Cultural Council.



Chanukah is a Jewish festival commemorating the recovery of Jerusalem and subsequent rededication of the Second Temple that occurred at the beginning of the Maccabean Revolt against the Seleucid Empire in the 2nd century BCE.

Some of the customs of this festival are to eat friedfoods such as *sufganiot* (fried jelly donuts) and *latkes* (potato pancakes). Families give small gifts to children and play games including the *dreidel*, which they spin.

This year, the festival begins with lighting the first candle of the nine branch candelabrum (*Chanukiyah*) on Wednesday, December 25, and will end with the lighting of all eight candles on eve of January 1, 2025. (It is important to note that on Friday evening, Dec 27, the Chanukah candles should be lit before the Shabbat candles.)

The *Chanukiyah* is traditionally placed near a window or another visible location to publicize the miracle of Chanukah.



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OUR COMMUNITY



The first free Jewish Communal Professional Retreat was held at Isabella Freedman in Falls Village, CT in September.



On September 22, the Wellesley-Weston Chabad inaugurated their mikvah with a beautiful event that gathered women from many areas. In the photo, Chabad shaliach Geny Bleich (R) with designer Marina Shekman.



The Amplify ALX100 Honoree Celebration took place at the Museum of Science on October 10. Lino Covarrubias, CEO of the Jewish Family Service of Metrowest and Shirley Nigri Farber, Shalom Magazine editor and JFS Board Member have been recognized by Amplify LatinX in their 2024 ALX100 list as top Latin leaders in Massachusetts. To identify these exceptional leaders, Amplify LatinX reached out to its network of over 16,000 members and asked for nominations. Photo: Farber with Senator Edward Markey at the event.



Happy Chanukah

from

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Rabbi Mendel Barber hosted an evening with Kassy Akiva a local journalist for DailyWire at the Beverly Salem Chabad on November 15.

Photos: Scott Hayes



Jews and non Jews showed their support for Israel as they stood out against a ceasefire resolution that Brookline Town Meeting members tabled on November 19. In Brookline, Quincy and Plymouth, the group has been instrumental in defeating three ceasefire proposals and in demanding the release of hostages from captivity .



The funeral of Rabbi Zvi Kogan, who was murdered by terrorists on November 21 in the United Arab Emirates, took place in Kfar Chabad, Israel. The Chabad-Lubavitch emissary to Abu Dhabi, Kogan, 28, was the nephew of Rabbi Gabi and Rivky Holtzberg, Chabad emissaries murdered by terrorists in Mumbai 16 years ago, in November, 2008. A few days following the killing, UAE authorities announced the arrests of three Uzbek nationals in connection with the kidnapping and murder of Kogan.



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YACHAD

Liz Offen with her husband Ethan Mascoop.

On November 10, the New England community came together for the annual Yachad New England Gala honoring the remarkable contributions of Liz Offen. After 12 years of transformative leadership, the outgoing executive director of Yachad New England and national director of strategic partnerships at Yachad has retired.



MA'YAN TIKVAH

Ma'yan Tikvah's Rosh Hashanah services were held in the woods at Nobscot Scout Reservation in Sudbury and led by Rabbi Katy Allen, Rabbi Suri Krieger, and Arielle Sabot.



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Photo: Bruce Wahle



Jewish Federation of Central Mass Executive Director Steven Schimmel in conversation with IDF Reconnaissance Commander Alex Rosenberg on October 7 at the Worcester JCC.



Shalom Magazine publishers spent an afternoon exploring the rich history of Cape Verde and the migration of its people to the United States at the Cape Verdean Museum in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, thanks to the insightful guidance of Museum Director Joe DaMoura and collaborator Carlos Spinola. The museum also sheds light on the fascinating history of Jews in Cape Verde. The museum will be closed for the winter, for more information, visit www.capeverdeanmuseum.org.



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Eight Candles in Nature

By Rabbi Katy Z. Allen

The world abounds in light in a multitude of different forms. Consider these eight kinds of light found in nature, and messages connected to the Hanukkah theme of rededication they can provide.

Candle 1 - Sunlight

The ultimate source of all we need physically, the sun is a massive reservoir of visible light and invisible infrared energy. The solar waves it steadily sends forth reach the Earth, 93 million miles away, in just 8½ minutes. During the darkness of the winter as we light the first Hanukkah candle, the short but increasing hours of sunlight can remind us to rededicate ourselves to the Source of All, however we may understand it.

Candle 2 - Lightning

The sudden, brief, and bright, bolts of lightning we witness during storms result from powerful electrical discharges. The atmosphere usually acts as an insulator between electrical fields within a cloud, or between two clouds or a cloud and the ground. When strong enough, these electrical fields overpower the insulation between them, and ZAP! Lightning happens.

As we enjoy the light from two candles on our hanukkiah, may we rededicate ourselves to embracing the lightning bolts of ideas, energy, and compassion that can strike us.

Candle 3 - Aurora Borealis

Sometimes awe-inspiring displays of bright, colorful streams of light seem to dance across the northern night sky, the result of energetically charged particles carried by solar winds being magnetically drawn to the polar region. There they interact with gaseous atoms and molecules and release visible energy, the Northern Lights, also known as Aurora Borealis.

On this third night of Hanukkah, may the magnetism of the burning lights inspire us to rededicate ourselves to creating awe-inspiring displays of love, friendship, and connection.



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Eight Candles in Nature

Candle 4 - Fireflies

The bioluminescence of fireflies is cool light that results from chemical reactions in the insects' abdomens. The fireflies' bright sparks in the summertime evenings help them attract mates and prey and deter predators. Each species has its own unique pattern of flashes that helps the fireflies find each other.

The fourth candle can remind us to recognize the importance of the small bits of light in our lives that help us find our way toward each other.

Candle 5 - The North Star

The North Star, or Polaris, rests almost exactly above the Earth's celestial north pole, giving it the appearance of staying in the same place in the night sky while other stars move around it. In earlier times, the North Star was a guide for finding the way at night for explorers and mariners, as well as for the freedom seekers on the Underground Railroad.

After you light the candles on the fifth night of Hanukkah, step outside and see if you can find the North Star. Let its position of constancy help you rededicate yourself to being a beacon for others.

Candle 6 - Moonlight

The moon shines brightly in the sky only because its surface reflects the light of the sun. Sometimes in the nighttime sky, it seems especially bright, its luminosity enhanced by its position in its orbit around the earth, yet it still only reflects a small fraction of the sunlight that strikes it.

As we enter Rosh Chodesh Tevet and the Moon begins again to wax, we light the sixth candle. May these candles and the growing light of the Moon remind us that the good we bring into the world is reflected beyond us, and though we may not, from where we stand, perceive it, it brings light to others.

Candle 7 - Sun or Moon Halo

As the light of the sun or moon passes through ice crystals in wispy, high altitude cirrus clouds, it changes direction, creating a circular halo around the sun or moon. The crystals act like tiny prisms and separate the white light into colors, making the halo look like a very pale rainbow.

As you watch the candles burning on the seventh night, take a moment to acknowledge and appreciate your ability to pivot and change direction when moving from one environment to another.

Candle 8 - Rainbow

The unanticipated emergence of a rainbow in the sky can fill us with an overwhelming sense of wonder. With raindrops of just the right size, the white light of the sun is bent and separated into a spectacular arc of concentric bands of all the colors of the spectrum - a magical rainbow.

On this last night of Hanukkah, with all the candles blazing before us, may our memories of the rainbows we've seen when the sun broke through remind us of our ancestral memory of the bow in the sky as a reminder of G-d's covenant with us and the Divine promise to never again destroy the Earth. May these memories energize us, reminding us to uphold our part of our relationship by keeping our sacred planet in mind with all that we do, each and every day.

Happy Hanukkah!

Rabbi Katy Z. Allen is the founder and spiritual leader of Ma'yan Tikvah - A Wellspring of Hope, which holds services outdoors all year long. <https://www.mayantikvah.org/>

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ILLUMINATING HOPE IN CHALLENGING TIMES

By Yosef Rodrigues, Ph.D.

As we approach Hanukkah, we face a global landscape filled with profound challenges, particularly for Israel and the Jewish people. The ritual of lighting the menorah, aka *chanukkiyah*, is a powerful metaphor for resilience, teaching us that the spark of hope can ignite enduring light even in the darkest moments. This year, the story of Hanukkah resonates deeply, reminding us to summon courage, unity, and faith – not as ideals but as imperatives for survival and progress.

Hanukkah's roots in the Maccabean Revolt teach us that perseverance against overwhelming odds is possible and necessary. The Maccabees' victory over the Greek-Syrian empire was not merely a military triumph, but a declaration of cultural and religious identity in the face of an existential threat. Similarly, the miracle of the oil burning for eight days against all odds reminds us that hope and divine intervention can sustain us when the material world seems insufficient.

This year, the narrative of Hanukkah inspires us to reflect on enduring faith and resilience. Just as the Maccabees determinedly defended their heritage, we are called to uphold the values of justice and peace, ensuring they endure in a fractured world.

Hanukkah also reminds us of the critical role of leadership and advocacy in shaping the future.

Just as the Maccabees rose against forces that sought to suppress their identity, we, too, must remain vigilant in protecting the values of freedom and justice. In today's political climate, this means holding leaders accountable to uphold democratic principles, ensuring the fair treatment of all, and standing firmly against antisemitism and hate. It also calls on us to champion international partnerships that promote stability, foster dialogue, and counter misinformation.

Celebrating Hanukkah, we reaffirm our role as advocates for truth and justice in an increasingly polarized world.

In addition to its message of resilience, Hanukkah challenges us to actively contribute to shaping a more just and peaceful global

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ILLUMINATING HOPE IN CHALLENGING TIMES

landscape. As antisemitism rises in many parts of the world, the fight for truth and equity becomes more urgent. Governments must prioritize not only the safety of their Jewish communities, but also the promotion of educational initiatives to combat ignorance and hate. The menorah's light reminds us that small acts – fostering interfaith dialogue or advocating for equitable policies – can bring transformative change. We honor the Maccabees' legacy of courage and determination by engaging in political processes and ensuring our voices are heard.

Israel grapples with significant internal and external challenges, reflecting age-old struggles to balance survival with ethical considerations. Questions about identity, leadership, and the pursuit of long-term peace echo the dilemmas faced by the Maccabees. Yet, as in their time, the resilience and resolve of the Jewish people shine as a beacon of hope.

The United States remains a steadfast ally of Israel, rooted in shared democratic values, strategic interests, and a commitment to preserving security. Strengthening the Abraham Accords, fostering dialogue with Arab partners, and addressing malign regional influences remain pivotal goals. This partnership transcends geopolitics, emphasizing the shared ideals of freedom, justice, and peace.

As new leadership emerges, Hanukkah reminds us of the importance of clarity and moral action.

In a politically polarized world, the lessons of the Maccabees – resilience, unity, and defense of values – are more relevant than ever. Their mission was survival and a defense of cultural and spiritual identity. Today, we are called to emulate their bravery, ensuring that light and truth persist.

The global Jewish community must also stand united. Advocacy for Israel's security, support for those rebuilding their lives, and the pursuit of peace remain essential. Just as the menorah's light extends outward, illuminating the darkness, so must our collective voice inspire clarity and resolve.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, of blessed memory, taught us that “A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle.” This wisdom is particularly poignant today, as divisions within Israel and among Jewish communities can sometimes feel overwhelming. From debates over reforms to differing perspectives on modern challenges, unity may seem elusive. Yet the menorah reminds us that light multiplies when shared. Acts of solidarity – whether through financial support, advocacy, or heartfelt prayers – strengthen our collective spirit.

As we light the candles this Hanukkah, let us also remember the teachings of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook: “Darkness cannot be driven out by darkness; only light can do that.” This profound truth inspires us to bring light to a fractured world. We must care for the innocent, support those rebuilding shattered lives, and remain vigilant in defending justice and peace.

The lessons of Hanukkah extend beyond Israel. In the United States, the coming year will bring pivotal decisions that will shape the nation's character for generations. Hanukkah's lessons of resilience and principled action guide us to champion democracy, compassion, and justice in challenging times.

Hanukkah 2024 is more than a commemoration; it is a clarion call to action. The candelabra's flames are a testament to the endurance of the Jewish spirit, a reminder that even in the darkest times, the light of hope persists.

This year, let us channel the grit of the Maccabees. May we be unwavering in advocating for justice, tireless in pursuing peace, and steadfast in our efforts to illuminate the world. Together, we can ensure the flames of freedom, dignity, and hope shine brightly – not just for Jews but all humanity.

Chag Hanukkah Sameach!

Yosef Rodrigues, Ph.D. is the Director of the Portuguese Language Center Camões, I.P. at UMass Boston. He is a faculty member at Boston College and UMass Boston.


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JEWES IN EUROPE: PAST AND FUTURE

By Shirley Nigri Farber

In late October while traveling to Europe, I had the opportunity to engage in three things that I am passionate about: 1. I presented a lecture on Jews of Lebanon at Ca' Foscari University of Venice; 2. I learned more about international Jewish communities for an article in *Shalom Magazine*; and 3. I taped an interview for my *Bate Papo com Shirley* TV show with Antonio Carlos Soares Pinto, a professor and expert on the subject of Brazilian indigenous people.



The workshop at Ca' Foscari University themed *In the Name of the Father? Writing Jewish Masculinities from across the Middle East and North Africa* gathered academics from around the world, including from Israel, Italy, the United States and England, to discuss their research on Jews from Morocco, Iraq and Lebanon, among other places. They also explored issues related to Zionism, migration to Israel, the diaspora, and even homosexuality and fatherhood.

My presentation *Jewish Migration from Lebanon to Brazil: Differences on Age and Gender on Adaptation to the New World* was a result of my continuous research on the topic as it related to my own family history. It is important for me to tell the story of Sephardic Jews, as they call themselves (or Mizrahi Jews, as it is termed in Israel), in academic forums, as within my experience, I have noticed that the field has often been dominated by Ashkenazi themes. It was therefore special for me to finally be among scholars who not only focus on the same area of research, but like myself are able to discuss



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JEWIS IN EUROPE: PAST AND FUTURE



The Levantine Synagogue



The Spanish Synagogue

it from the perspective of personal experience.

We reflected on our backgrounds and how they have impacted Jewish history and the State of Israel. These stories about Mediterranean and Middle Eastern Jews are relevant in the context of antisemitism today, where protesters are on the streets calling Jews white supremacists, colonialists and telling us to “go back to Poland.”

If even Jews don’t know much about the history of Jews in Arab lands prior to 1948, how can we expect Jew haters to understand that not all Jews come from Poland?

While in Venice, I had a chance to visit the Venetian Ghetto and learn more about our ancestors who, beginning in 1516, had been confined to it for more than 250 years. The last time I was in Venice

was in 1986. Venice did not change, but perhaps I did, as now I am more curious to learn about history and more ready to share what I discover.

The tour guide showed us five different synagogues that at the time gathered Jews who originated from a variety of regions: the German, the Canton (French), the Italian, the Levantine and the Spanish. The final two synagogues we saw are open to visitors, while the first one is under renovation. The Levantine Synagogue was constructed by Jews who arrived from the Eastern Mediterranean region between 1538 and 1561, and likely is the only one that has kept nearly all its original features. Construction began

on the Spanish Synagogue, the largest one, in 1555, but it was then entirely rebuilt a century later.

Our guide explained that Jews of that time were restricted to working in only three professions: banking, medicine, and selling used clothing. Due to the dense population forced to live within a confined area and Venice’s strict building height regulations, Jewish residents constructed shorter dwellings with multiple stories, to maximize space without exceeding the height limit.



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JEWIS IN EUROPE: PAST AND FUTURE



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Holocaust Memorial at the Venetian Ghetto

The ghetto also housed three banks, as Jewish moneylenders fulfilled the role of providing loans, a practice prohibited for Catholics due to restrictions on charging interest. Visitors can enjoy the ghetto's two kosher restaurants, Ba Ghetto (milk) and Gam Gam (meat).

After Venice, I traveled to Munich. Like many Jews, I'm somewhat apprehensive about visiting Germany after having learned about the Holocaust since middle school. That applies to Munich in particular, as it was the birthplace of the Nazi (National Socialist German Workers) Party. The invitation, from a good friend who has been living there for many years, convinced me to visit again.

Throughout the day we saw people walking and biking around the city, surrounded by shopping areas, outdoor cafes, parks, and historic buildings. Most

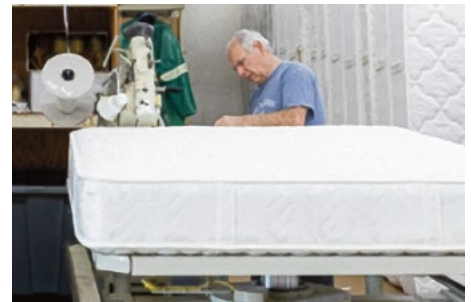
of the buildings constructed during the Third Reich remained in use after 1945, and some were restored. We learned more about how the city is dealing with its troubled past while visiting the Munich Documentation Center for the History of National Socialism, located on the site of the Brown House, where the former Nazi Party headquarters once stood. (The museum will be closed for renovation from December 2024 to May 2025.)

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JEWIS IN EUROPE: PAST AND FUTURE



Brass plaques – Stolpersteine or stumble stones fashioned by German artists can be seen in the pavement in front of houses where Jews lived before being deported and killed.



Ohel Jakob Synagogue, Munich

On my second day in Munich, I had the privilege of attending a stunning Shabbat service at Ohel Jakob Synagogue, marked by a warm welcome, melodious chanting by the chazzan, and heartfelt performances by the adult and children’s choirs.

Opened on November 9, 2006, the synagogue is part of the Munich Jewish Center on Sankt-Jakobs-Platz and sits alongside a Jewish Museum, a school, a kosher restaurant and a community center. This date marked the 68th anniversary of *Kristallnacht*, a poignant reminder of Nazi persecution.

The architecture of Ohel Jakob (Tent of Jacob) synagogue is very symbolic. The outside is made of blocks of stones, and the inside is warmed by wood. The glass panel ceiling resembles the interior of a

tent, bringing in the warmth of the daylight even on a cold winter day. After services we were invited to a delicious kosher kiddush, where my friend and I connected with individuals from Israel and Ukraine and discussed how Jews are coming to Germany to find some respite from the current wars.

I am always amazed to meet Jews from around the world and feel a connection, even if the table seems like a Tower of Babel with people trying to communicate in Portuguese, German, Hebrew, and English.

During the services we listen to the *chazzan* recite the *chadesh yameinu kekedem*, which translates into “renew our days as of old,” and appears in the *Book of Lamentations* (5:21). The phrase expresses a hope for a future that incorporates the best of the past.

I felt a sense of hope as I reflected on the Jewish community’s resilience in this city. I was inspired to write about the fact that even after enduring immense suffering,

Jews were thriving once again there. We could have been in 1930, prior to the war. The choir was celebrating the prayer for the new Jewish month, the congregation was singing along in Hebrew. Our future generation, represented by young children who learn Hebrew at the synagogue, performed brilliantly in front of the congregants. Watching them, I couldn’t help but reflect on the possibility of leaving behind the shadows of dark times and rediscovering the more peaceful days of the past.

Perhaps Munich is moving in the right direction – honoring history, not erasing or reshaping it to assuage collective guilt, but constructing a better future while of course, bearing memory of the past.

Shirley Nigri Farber is an independent researcher and the editor of *Shalom Magazine*.

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THE AMERICAN JEWISH VOTE

By Susie Davidson

Democrats can always count on the Jewish vote, and that was no different during the recent general election. According to the Jewish Democratic Council of America, Jewish Americans voted overwhelmingly for Democrats, with 78 percent of Jewish voters supporting Kamala Harris, while 22 percent supported Donald Trump. The Jerusalem Post has it at 79 percent for Biden and 21 percent for Trump. Further, 88 percent of Jewish women and 71 percent of Jewish men supported Kamala Harris over Trump.

Regarding the 2020 presidential election, according to JTA, the Republican Jewish Coalition found that 30.5 percent of Jewish voters voted for GOP incumbent Donald Trump, compared to 60.6 percent for Democratic challenger Joe Biden. Therefore, in this last election, the Jewish Democratic vote actually increased significantly.

Why is this?

I like to think that it is because Jews possess an inordinate amount of compassion for fellow human beings. And they feel that the Democrats better represent equality and non-discrimination than do the Republicans. Certainly, our history of experiencing inequality and discrimination would make us sensitive to those issues.

Moreover, America has been very good to the Jews. Many, like my grandparents, arrived poor and were able to pull themselves up through hard work alone to become successful. There were no discriminatory barriers to this upward trajectory. Some could conceivably and believably point out that this is because Jews were white, as were the first waves of immigrants in the previous century. But nonetheless, they were able to do this.

Secondly, I would like to think that this is because Jewish people are smart enough to know what is important in life, and value education. Higher education has become a bugaboo in the GOP, which has enacted a platform that deemphasizes attending college in the first place, and aims to eliminate curricula that is indeed part of the college



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THE AMERICAN JEWISH VOTE

experience such as encouraging diversity and learning about the history and cultures of other nationalities, promoting women's equality, and learning about, knowing and accepting those who are not heterosexual by choice.

Jews, I believe, gather their information from varied official sources and not solely from Internet firebrands or inflammatory postings. They look at all sources and make informed decisions.

For example, I identify as a Jewish Democrat, but in the recent election, after much thought, I voted to keep the MCAS and against the minimum wage for servers and the union for Uber drivers, because I felt that there still should be a recognized standard in high school education, and had read that the servers and drivers themselves did not want those changes.

But back to the Jewish vote. We all know about the redlining in Dorchester by greedy landlords and why it was done. We have all heard the expression that they did it in Jewish areas “because the Jews were the only ones who would allow Blacks into their neighborhoods.”

Despite Jews ultimately moving out following this shift, I have always taken that as a point of pride. And it happened again in my home neighborhood of Randolph, where friends whose parents still lived there after Jews had again migrated told me that their parents warmly welcomed their new neighbors.

We can debate neighborhood changes due to outside factors that have always posed extreme challenges for nonwhite minorities in this country. But the fact remains that the Jews were welcoming. They knew what it was like to have to uproot, to encounter unacceptance, and to struggle to make it.

These are the qualities in the Jewish people that are transferred from generation to generation that give us the ability to look at each

person as we would ourselves. Jews know the Golden Rule and by and large, try to live by it.

Next, Jews know *Bereshit* (Genesis) Chapter 1, “In the beginning, G-d created the heavens and the earth...” and *Midrash Kohelet Rabbah*, 1, *Ecclesiastes* 7:13: “When G-d created the first human beings, G-d led them around the Garden of Eden and said: ‘Look at my works! See how beautiful they are – how excellent! For your sake I created them all. See to it that you do not spoil and destroy My world; for if you do, there will be no one else to repair it.’”

Jews know that they are stewards of G-d's earth, and feel that Democrats believe in climate change and are more aligned with caring for the planet.

Lastly, following the Holocaust, most Jews, the current situation in Israel notwithstanding as it is a separate issue, wish to avoid wars and conflict. In the Democratic Party, Jews see the acceptance and the welcoming of all others, the value of higher education, the desire for peacemaking among nations, the caring for the environment, and the focus on opportunities for success among all peoples.

“The Jewish vote held strong for Kamala Harris and Democrats,” the Jewish Democratic Council of America Election report states. “In fact, the Jewish vote represented one of very few segments of the electorate where Donald Trump failed to make meaningful inroads, despite an unprecedented campaign of GOP spending, disinformation, and other efforts targeting Jewish Americans.”

And that is because American Jews, due to our history and teachings, have learned to think for themselves.

Susie Davidson, a longtime contributor to various news outlets, is the copy editor of Shalom Magazine.



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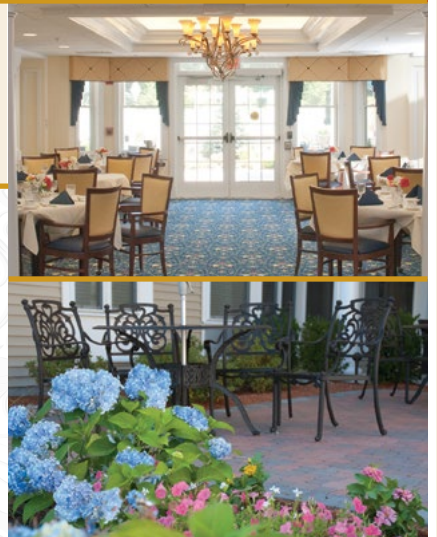
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THE POLICIES OF PROJECT 2025 AND OUR JEWISH VALUES

By Cindy Rowe

Leviticus 19:16 reminds us that we cannot stand idly by when the life of your neighbor is being threatened. Many members of our Jewish community are deeply concerned that Project 2025, the policy blueprint for the incoming federal administration, represents such an existential threat to our neighbors, ourselves, and our very democracy. Indeed, many of the policy prescriptions detailed in Project 2025 run directly counter to our shared Jewish values.

Project 2025's approach to environmental policy is a prime example. The plan would roll back investments in renewable energy, reduce clean air and water protections, and undermine preparedness when it comes to global climate emergencies. Meanwhile, as Jews, we have a profound duty to advocate for responsible stewardship of a healthy environment. Rooted in *Deuteronomy* 20, we adhere to the ethical principle of *Bal Tashchit* (do not destroy), the prohibition of wasteful destruction. *Psalms* 24 (The Earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof.) reminds us of the responsibility to care for our planet in a healthy manner. And the value of *Tikkun Olam* instructs us to "repair the world," and leave our planet in better shape than we found it.

The healthcare proposals in Project 2025 are just as antagonistic to our Jewish values. The plan would increase prescription drug costs, lead to Medicare privatization, and reduce vaccinations for the young and senior citizens.

Meanwhile, we know that every person has a right to the healthcare that they need. *Kavod HaBriyot* (upholding human dignity), *Sh'mirat Haguf* (caring for the body), and *Pikuach Nefesh* (preserving life) guide us on healthcare policy, values that are in opposition to Project 2025.

Education is another area where Project 2025 conflicts with our beliefs. The plan would dismantle the U.S. Department of Education, eliminate the Head Start program, phase out key sources of federal



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education funding, and increase costs on student loan borrowers. We hold that everyone deserves an education. Judaism insists that learning should be made accessible to all and is a communal responsibility. *Proverbs 22:6* states the importance especially of early education: “Train a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

When it comes to labor and fair wages, Project 2025 contradicts Jewish scripture. The plan would make it harder to form and join a labor union, increase dangerous child labor, and harm wages by reducing competition for contracts and eligibility for overtime pay. The Torah explicitly calls for respecting labor and paying due wages. *Deuteronomy 24:14 -15* compels employers to “not take advantage of hired workers” and to “pay them their wages each day... because they are counting on it.” *Leviticus 19:13* further amplifies the message to not “defraud” hired workers of their wages.

On immigration policy, Project 2025 boils down to enacting mass deportations at the core of its vision. This would sometimes be without a warrant, and include the possibility of arrests where U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was not previously active, like at schools and places of worship. Massive detention camps may appear at the border. This, of course, runs directly counter to the Torah’s instructions to “welcome the stranger,” which appear in the scripture no less than 36 times.

These and many other issues – from reproductive rights to civil rights to voting rights – are potentially under fire by the policy proposals laid out in Project 2025. Jewish Americans care deeply about these issues and may be alarmed by the legislative approaches promulgated by the blueprint.

“Train a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

For those interested in taking action to prevent policies that infringe on our shared Jewish values and may harm our families, our neighbors, and our democracy, what can people do?

In mid-November, the Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action (JALSA) held a well-attended community-wide Zoom conversation during which a few central goals were laid out. We have a special responsibility in our state to be an example for what is still possible in our country first by protecting our Massachusetts residents and then protecting people who come into our state. We must also engage on federal issues when we can have an impact, and aid those in other states to help protect their rights.

JALSA will hold an upcoming series of Community Conversations in which you can participate. We want to hear directly from you about your concerns, priorities, and ideas. If you are interested in taking part, or in joining a JALSA issue team, hosting a policy workshop presented by a JALSA organizer, and/or inviting JALSA to give an overview of all of our priorities to your group of friends, community organization, or synagogue members, reach out to us at www.JALSA.org.

We all have an important role to undertake toward ensuring that we are living out our Jewish values and that all people are treated with respect and dignity, with *Kavod HaBriyot*. Again, as *Leviticus 19:16* instructs, none of us can stand idly by in this moment.

Cindy Rowe is the CEO of the Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action (JALSA) which is dedicated to upholding our constitutional rights and civil liberties, and the pursuit of social, economic, environmental, and racial justice based on Jewish values.



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Love and Yearning for Zion in the 1800s

By Rabbi Shlomo Pereira

I. The love for Zion

The love for Zion, the Land of Israel, has been an essential aspect of Jewish identity since the dawn of the Jewish people. Throughout history, this attachment to the Land of Israel has shaped the spiritual, religious, and cultural consciousness of the Jewish people.

The Bible not only names the Land of Israel as a holy place, but identifies it as the “Promised Land,” a sacred gift to the Jewish people. Its significance is deeply woven into Jewish law, where living in the Land of Israel carries specific religious obligations. Additionally, the land is central to the Jewish concept of the Final Redemption, as Jewish prayers and rituals are filled with references to Israel. The Passover Seder and the concluding prayer of Yom Kippur, two pivotal moments in the Jewish calendar, both end with the aspirational words, “Next Year in Jerusalem.”

Not surprisingly, even throughout the second millennium of the Common Era, when traveling to and living in the Land of Israel involved significant difficulties and dangers, immigration flow from the Jewish diaspora never ceased. Many of the greatest rabbis settled with their families and students in the Land of Israel throughout this period. Regardless of the comforts of the diaspora, the Land of Israel was never far from the minds and hearts of the Jewish people.

One may evoke the words of the great poet of the Jewish Golden Age in the Iberian Peninsula, R. Yehuda HaLevi (c. 1075–1141). In one of his many poems, often called *Odes to Zion*, he writes: “My heart is in the east, and I am in the furthest away point in the west. How can I find savor in food? How shall it be sweet to me? ... How easy would it be to me to leave all the good things of Spain, knowing how precious it would be in my eyes to see the dust of the desolate sanctuary.” And he did leave Spain for the Land of Israel. He passed away in Jerusalem in 1141 shortly after his arrival.

II. The coining of the term Zionism

Though the sentiments of Zionism date back to ancient times, the

term Zionism was used for the first time in 1890 by Nathan Birnbaum (1864-1937), an Austrian Jewish publicist. Birnbaum first used the term in his newspaper *Self-Emancipation* in referring to Jewish national identity and a return to the historical homeland. The coining of the term appeared in the context of a movement aptly named *Chochvei Tzion* (Lovers of Zion) that appeared in the second half of the 19th century in Central and Eastern Europe and championed a national revival, resettlement of Jews in their homeland, and revitalization of the Hebrew language.

The term itself originated from the Hebrew Bible. In the strict sense, Zion refers to a hill in Jerusalem. Over time, however, the word Zion gained a broader symbolic significance, representing the Jewish people’s connection to the Land of Israel. One can find references to Zion in this broader sense in Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Yoel, Zachariah, and other Jewish scriptures.

III. Forerunners of modern Zionism

The formation of modern Zionism at the end of the 19th century culminated in a century of intellectual and practical endeavors. Several influential figures were instrumental in laying the groundwork for the movement. They were:

- Rabbi Yehuda Bibas (c. 1789–1852): A Sephardic rabbi from Gibraltar, he was an early advocate of Jewish immigration to Israel. In 1839, he traveled across Europe promoting mass resettlement in Israel and the establishment of a Jewish society.
- Rabbi Yehuda Alkalai (1798–1878): Another Sephardic leader, he advocated for Jewish political independence and settlement in Israel. In his 1834 work *Shema Yisrael* (Hear Oh Israel), he proposed the setting up agricultural colonies and the reviving of Hebrew as precursors to the Final Redemption.
- Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer (1795–1874): He regarded the return to Israel as part of the divine redemption process. His 1862 work *Derishat Zion* (Seeking Zion) called for Jews to take practical steps to prepare for national revival and hasten the Messiah’s rival.

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Love and Yearning for Zion in the 1800s

His ideas linked traditional beliefs with nationalist aspirations.

- **Moses Hess (1812–1875):** A German philosopher and socialist, Hess argued in his book *Rome and Jerusalem*, published in 1862, that Jews constituted a distinct nation and needed a homeland in Israel for cultural renewal. His views resonated with secular Jews seeking a national response to antisemitism.

- **Sir Moses Montefiore (1784–1885):** A British philanthropist, he invested in improving conditions for Jewish communities in Israel, and in setting up agricultural colonies to support Jewish autonomy and self-sufficiency.

- **Leon Pinsker (1821–1891):** A physician from Odessa, he initially advocated for assimilation. Later, after violent pogroms in Russia, in his book *Auto-Emancipation*, published in 1882, he argued that Jews could only find safety through a national homeland.

- **Judah Leib Gordon (1830–1892):** A poet of the Jewish Enlightenment in Russia, he saw Jewish sovereignty in Israel as a solution to persecution and promoted Hebrew and Jewish cultural revival.

IV. The factors behind these early contributions

A range of historical, social, political, and cultural factors influenced the emergence of these early contributions.

- **Historical and religious:** The Jewish connection to Israel was deeply rooted in religious and historical traditions, and despite centuries of diaspora, the spiritual bond with the land was always present.

- **Nationalism:** In the 1800s, Europe saw a rise in nationalist movements emphasizing self-determination for ethnic and cultural groups, an environment that fueled Jewish aspirations for a homeland.

- **Antisemitism and poverty:** For Eastern European Jews, rising antisemitism and living in poverty reinforced the desire for a safe and autonomous Jewish nation where they could build a better future.

- **Emancipation and the Enlightenment:** Western European Jews experienced increased rights and sense of cultural identity. Yet

discrimination remained, which led to questioning assimilation as a viable solution and supporting the notion of a separate Jewish nation.

V. Ideological currents in early Zionism

Reflecting the broad spectrum of views in these early contributions, Zionism, though unified by the aspiration for a Jewish homeland, encompassed various currents:

- **Political Zionism:** Advocated by Theodor Herzl (1860-1904), it aimed to secure international support for a Jewish state. This vision led to the First Zionist Congress in 1897 and created a framework for the Zionist movement.

- **Labor Zionism:** A socialist-inspired movement, it emphasized building the Jewish state through agricultural labor and communal settlements aiming for a just society rooted in collective work.

- **Cultural Zionism:** Led by Asher Ginsburg (1856-1927), it focused on the revival of Hebrew and of Jewish cultural life and identity, envisioning Israel as a spiritual center for Jews worldwide.

- **Revisionist Zionism:** Founded by Ze'ev Jabotinsky (1880-1940), it promoted a militant, nationalist vision, a robust military presence and the expansion of the borders to both sides of the Jordan River.

- **Religious Zionism:** Figures like Rabbi Abraham Kook (1865-1935) viewed Zionism as a sacred duty to restore Jewish life in Israel in preparation for spiritual redemption.

VI. Conclusion

The 1800s marked a transformation of Jewish ancestral yearning for Zion into a structured movement that balanced ancient devotion with modern political aspirations.

A fusion of spiritual yearning, cultural revival, and response to antisemitism, it laid the foundation for the establishment of the State of Israel in the 20th century.

Rabbi Shlomo Pereira is the director of adult education at the Chabad of Virginia, Richmond. He can be reached at shlomo@chabadofva.org.

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Happy Chanukah

SYSTEMIC ISSUES AT CUNY



By Gideon Askowitz

During the past year, college campuses across the country have been beset with protests, violence, threats of violence, and discrimination against Jews.

After Hamas, a foreign terrorist organization, attacked Israel on October 7 2023, New York Governor Kathy Hochul (D) empowered Judge Jonathan Lippman, former Chief Judge of New York and Chief Judge of the New York Court of

Appeals, to review antisemitism and discrimination more broadly inside the City University of New York school system (CUNY). His report, released on September 24, 2024, has raised many eyebrows.

The New York Times coverage of the report focused on Judge Lippman's recommendation for a complete overhaul of the discrimination reporting system at CUNY, but implied that the problem of antisemitism was not - in fact - widespread. That claim is heavily misleading, and ignores the main takeaway of his report.

While Judge Lippman did say that there are "few incidents of physical violence," he very clearly emphasized the seriousness of the pervasive nature of antisemitism at CUNY. For example, Lippman observed that "Some of the schools ... had a significant number of reported incidents of antisemitism," adding later that "schools with backlogs of complaints are more likely to become safe havens for perpetrators of antisemitism and discrimination."

Moreover, his research revealed that the collection methods of the schools studied were so confusing that he and his attorneys had difficulty navigating the discrimination report portal. According to the report, "[i]t is unreasonable to think that the average student, faculty member, or employee can navigate the investigative process on their own." Lippman concluded that given the difficulty in navigating the

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SYSTEMIC ISSUES AT CUNY

system, it is more than likely that reports of antisemitic conduct are underrepresented in the antisemitic databases. Thus, the problem of antisemitism is likely more pervasive than originally thought.

The *Times*' assessment of the report failed to recognize this central takeaway. Moreover, Lippman clearly implicated the major failings of CUNY at the hands of the Chief Diversity Officers (CDO) at each campus, whose responsibility is to investigate antisemitic incidents.

At the same time, the judge reported that many of these CDOs were either unaware of relevant civil rights laws pertaining to Jews, or disagreed with established laws defending Jews. As the report notes, "chief diversity officers must be trained on the requirements of the law and cannot gauge the propriety of conduct based on their personal views of what constitutes antisemitism. They must be guided by what the law applicable to CUNY dictates - even if that involves applications or interpretations of a definition of antisemitism with which they disagree."

This is a shocking takeaway - that the very people whose job it is to know discrimination law are unaware of the law, and disagree with the ways in which it applies to Jews. Lippman further said that "CUNY would be well-advised to consider whether future investigations of hate in any form should continue to reside within individual school diversity offices."

Considering that this June, the US Department of Justice found that CUNY has a history of improperly investigating similar discrimination cases, the judge's observations and advice in this regard are spot on.

Hochul's directive to implement Lippman's suggestions is welcome, but what people think that some formal training on antisemitism will suddenly cause these CDOs to care about our complaints? As the report has shown, many have willfully ignored us and will likely continue to do so regardless of the mandatory training they receive. Chief Diversity Officers are part of the problem, not part of the solution.

Jewish students need help, and with increasing certainty, we know it will not come from our schools. We must now look either to more forceful action from federal, state and local leaders.

Gideon Askowitz is a CAMERA Fellow and an alumnus of the Hertog Political and Constitutional Studies Programs. He also regularly appears on Fox News to discuss politics and antisemitism. This article was originally published in the Algemeiner Journal.

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GLOBAL WARMING IS MY FAULT, AND I'M SORRY

By Isha Yiras Hashem

It's late November, and my kids are complaining that there hasn't been a single snowfall. To them, snow transforms the world into a magical wonderland of sledding, snowmen, and forts. To me, it means icy roads and white-knuckled drives.

I only started driving after our second child was born. Now, as the children search the sky for even a hint of snow, I find myself whispering a counter-prayer: please G-d, not today. Not when I have to drive. Perhaps these prayers are why it hasn't snowed, which would make it my fault. Sorry!

Is there really a change? It's not just their imagination; there's been a real shift. Boston has lost more than 30 days of winter snow cover since 2000. Long winters are long gone.

But not everyone sees this as a net negative. David Friedman, an economist and physicist, suggests that global warming could make some areas more habitable for humans, giving us new spaces to live in. Northern permafrost might melt into fertile farmland, and new regions could become livable. This might be comforting for people anxious about global warming.

Personally, I look for comfort in the Torah's words. After the Flood, G-d promised Noah, "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease." It's a reassurance that while climates shift, the fundamental rhythms of the world remain under Divine care. Through changing climate, we can trust that the cycles of this world are still intact.

And what a world it is!

Theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking once marveled at how the laws of the universe seem perfectly fine-tuned to allow life to exist. For example, Earth sits perfectly in the "Goldilocks Zone." Everything is just right. If Earth were a bit closer to the Sun, we'd overheat like Venus; a bit farther, and we'd freeze like Mars. It's as if an All-Powerful Being carefully positioned Earth exactly where it needed to be.

Our atmosphere is another marvel. Astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson explains that without it, Earth would be as inhospitable as the Moon - baking in heat during the day, freezing at night, and exposed to cosmic rays. The atmosphere does more than sustain life; it protects us from the universe's harsh realities.

And what about the Moon? Without the Moon's steadying influence, Earth would wobble like a spinning top, causing chaotic

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GLOBAL WARMING IS MY FAULT, AND I'M SORRY

and unpredictable shifts in its axis. This would lead to extreme climate changes, making it nearly impossible for complex life to survive. The Moon's gravitational pull keeps Earth's tilt stable, ensuring consistent seasons and a climate balanced enough to support life. It's not just a beautiful fixture in the night sky - it's a critical stabilizing force.

Beneath our feet, Earth's molten core spins, creating a magnetic field that shields us from harmful cosmic radiation. Without it, Earth's atmosphere could be stripped away, turning us into another Mars. This magnetic shield is a quiet protection, but it's absolutely essential for life to exist.

Water, too, is uniquely designed for life. Most substances get denser as they freeze, but water expands, causing ice to float. This floating ice forms an insulating layer, allowing life to survive beneath it during winter. If ice sank, our oceans would freeze solid from the bottom up, and life as we know it might never have emerged. It's one of those little quirks of the universe that makes life possible.

And these aren't just coincidences. They're part of a delicate system, each piece woven into the fabric of our world to sustain life. While it's important to take care of our planet, we can also marvel at the design behind it all. These patterns remind us that this world wasn't an accident.

Snow or no snow, our existence rests on a chain of Divine miracles. And that is the real comfort: the same intelligence that crafted these systems with such precision hasn't stopped watching over them - or us.

Isha Yiras Hashem is the pseudonym of Tzipora Zuckerman, a wife and mother in Boston. Subscribe to <https://ishayirashem.substack.com/> to read more warm and humorous articles about Judaism, family, and spirituality.




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EXPLORE UNIQUE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITIES WITH THE WALNUT STREET SYNAGOGUE

By Tom Barth

Following the High Holidays, the historic Walnut Street Synagogue of Chelsea launched a four-part online series, *Four Lesser Known American Jewish Communities*. The first session, held in November, was a visit to New Mexico to learn about the Crypto Jews who have lived there for centuries. Three programs remain.

The series continues on Wednesday, December 18 at 7 p.m. with a virtual trip north to Alaska. Alaska was purchased from the Russian Empire only 154 years ago, but the Jewish contribution to the development of Anchorage and Alaska in general is remarkable. In fact, the first mayor of Anchorage was Jewish, and also, the decision to purchase Alaska was a Jewish idea.

The local guide will be Rabbi Levi Glitsenstein, who nine years ago joined the team of the Alaska Jewish Campus and Museum in Anchorage, a home for Jewish life, history and culture in Alaska that serves the growing Jewish community.

Next will be an online trip to a warmer climate on Wednesday, January 15 at 7 p.m. with a visit to Hawaii. Jews are first mentioned in Hawaii in 1798, with notable early sugar plantations and commercial activity and King Kalakaua's German-Jewish Attorney-General. Larry Seth Steinberg, who oversees historic records and artifacts at Temple Emanu-El in Honolulu, will be the guide.

The series concludes on Wednesday, February 19 at 7 p.m. with a virtual visit to Puerto Rico. Ernesto Rivera Pardo will speak about how a few families who connected by shared customs and a profound spiritual bond to Torah, came together to reclaim their Jewish identity. Ernesto was born and raised in Puerto Rico and is a leader of Abraham Shalom Synagogue in Ceiba.

This series is made possible by a grant from the Congregation Ahabat Shalom Religious Fund and other generous donors.

The Walnut Street Synagogue was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1993. All are welcome at no charge, but advance registration is required. For more information and to register, please visit walnutstreetsynagogue.com/u-s-travel-series. Contact the synagogue by email at info@walnutstreetsynagogue.com with any questions.

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WHY WE RALLIED FOR THE CEASEFIRE RESOLUTION

By Arnaud Amzallag

My wife and I are parents of four in Brookline, Jewish and Israeli. We both personally knew people living in the Gaza envelope who were killed on October 7. We also discovered in horror that our teachers, who we hoped were held captive, had in fact been killed that day. But we have known from the beginning that there is no military solution. Indeed, the only procedure that freed a significant number of hostages was a ceasefire and a negotiated hostage exchange.

Also, the scale of destruction in Gaza (unprecedented, especially the number of children killed or amputated, which multiple news outlets and humanitarian organizations have claimed is higher than any in modern history), continues unabated. This is done with American support, with a real influence on the military operations.

That is why we support a ceasefire resolution. It is a humanitarian emergency to stop the massacre in Gaza led by leaders wanted for crimes against humanity by the ICC, who are also destroying our independent judiciary branch in Israel.

The resolution simply calls for a ceasefire, humanitarian aid and the release of the hostages. And so last week, we gathered with The Brookline Peace Coalition around a table of baklava to distribute a flyer explaining our support for the resolution.

We have been called names for this, accused of being terror supporters, or paid by a foreign entity to promote an antisemitic agenda, or useful idiots of antisemites. It has opened our eyes to the Islamophobia and the anti-Palestinian racism around us.

It may be more difficult for our Muslim neighbors to fend off the baseless accusations of antisemitism that we, as Jews, can brush off as ridiculous and due to a bigoted ideology that we are fundamentally different from our Muslim neighbors, not part of the same (American) people.

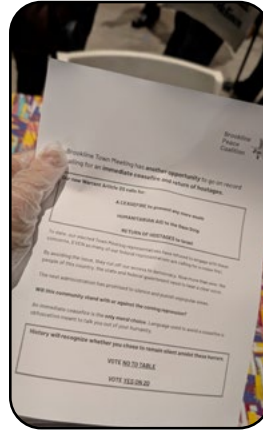
The argument that a debate at Town Meeting would be divisive is playing into this bigotry over discussing the trauma and distress of

some of our constituents – as if we can only think in a tribal way, in Brookline, Massachusetts, based on our background or religion.

The BPC is proof that we are better than this, capable of compassion and complex thoughts. And therefore, we should not remain indifferent to the astonishing scale of suffering inflicted on innocent civilians, and call on our elected officials to act within their powers to stop the ongoing war.

“As a Jew whose mother grew up witnessing her father desperately try to get relatives out of Europe to escape the growing horrors the world would soon know as Nazi death camps, I could not remain silent about the horror unfolding in Gaza.” Shoshanna Ehrlich of Brookline

Flyer distributed by Brookline Peace Coalition that included the return of hostages



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THE GIFT OF FREEDOM



By Rabbi David Starr

A few scattered thoughts as I wait for the pumpkin pie to be served.

Ironically, or not, oftentimes the people with the least possess the greatest capacity for giving thanks. Precisely because they recognize how precious life is. The fact that there is something rather than nothing, the fact that we woke up today, the fact that we have health and that we live in a time when medical science does so much to preserve our quality of life, the list goes on and on of the blessings we receive.

Judaism recognizes that by gently reminding us that the first thing we pray when we get up in the morning is to say thankful am I for the gift of life G-d gives to us.

Personally, I am thankful not just for the blessings of life or health of family and friends, but also the blessing of being Jewish. Recently my congregation celebrated my rabbinate. My own journey to the Jewish people began at a dark time in my life, following the death of my father and the illness of my mother.

Out of that loss and hardship and trauma emerged opportunity. I found community, which did not replace my parents, but it added something of infinite worth to my life professionally and personally. I became a rabbi because I realized that I loved the Jewish people and that I wanted to spend my life working with and for them. That gift enriches my life. I always feel that the Jewish people have given me much more than I have given it.

I'm also thankful for and mindful of the gift of freedom. Not everyone on this planet is free, but I am in terms of social class and also in terms of the country in which I live.

This month of Kislev contains the beautiful holiday of Hanukkah, which commemorates a specific moment in Jewish history, the struggle of the Maccabees to resist extreme assimilation and anti-Judaism at the hands of the Syrian Greeks. More generally, it celebrates the centrality of freedom in life.



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Freedom sounds good, but like most good things it takes a lot of work to understand and to live. My freedom means that I must acknowledge the freedom (or lack of it) of others. We've just been through a painful election in America that shows on one level the enduring power of freedom, but it also shows how difficult it remains for many of us to acknowledge the legitimacy of other people with other points of view.

Judaism, like any vibrant civilization, struggles with notions of unity and diversity. Some of us believe that the Jewish people in the state of Israel matter the most in Jewish life. Others of us believe that the Torah and Judaism matter the most. It's not easy to love and embrace fellow Jews, as brothers and sisters, even as we passionately disagree with them. Loving and fighting: we need to do both at the same time.

Since I'm a historian I'll end on a historical note. We can all work harder to become more grateful. History promises us nothing. If we look back a century to 1924 we see that we have gained so much by way of medicine, science, technology and politics. We should also remember the remarkable creation and success of the state of Israel in 1948.

Here in America, remember that a country that still observed Jim Crow segregation in 1924 not so long ago elected its first president of color, and that our country in general is much more diverse today than it was prior to World War II.

On the other hand, our challenges feel deeper and more dangerous and resistant to solutions. Our planet is warmer and sicker than it was a century ago. Our children spend more time with technology than they may with one another. Democracy and freedom remain fragile and hard to sustain.

All of which reminds us that we will have to continue to work hard to take best advantage of our freedom. The struggle to build a better world fit for the G-d who gave us life continues.

Happy Hanukkah.

Rabbi David B. Starr, Ph.D. is the rabbi at Congregation Mishkan Tefila, Brookline.



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HANUKKAH: A STORY OF LIGHT, RESILIENCE, AND SERVICE

By Lino Covarrubias

The story of Hanukkah resonates deeply with me as a veteran of 22 years in the U.S. Navy. And it is a story that not only reverberates within the Jewish community but also as a universal tale of resilience, faith, and the triumph of light over darkness.

This eight-day celebration commemorates the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem by the Maccabee warriors – an extraordinary group of individuals who, against all odds, stood up for their beliefs, reclaimed their sacred space, and reasserted their right to live as Jews. Their victory over the vastly superior Seleucid army is a testament to the enduring spirit of those who dare to fight for their values, faith, and freedom.

Drawing inspiration from my recent Veterans Day message (read the reflection at JFSMW.org) and trip to Normandy, France, I see profound parallels between the story of the Maccabees and the service and sacrifices of military veterans, both ancient and modern.

Standing on the shores of Omaha Beach, where 770 Allied soldiers gave their lives on the first day of the D-Day landings, I was struck by how acts of extraordinary courage ripple through history, creating opportunities for peace and renewal. Just as the victory of the Maccabees ensured the survival of Jewish traditions, the sacrifices made at Normandy laid the foundation for a world striving toward freedom and justice.

Hanukkah's themes of light, faith, and resilience carry a timeless message of hope. At Jewish Family Service of Metrowest (JFS), we draw upon these values to guide our mission of service. Jewish tradition calls us to remember the experience of being strangers in a foreign land - a history that binds us to the plight of immigrants, refugees, and marginalized communities. Like the Maccabees, who sought not only to reclaim a physical temple but also to protect their

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HANUKKAH: A STORY OF LIGHT, RESILIENCE, AND SERVICE



spiritual identity, JFS works tirelessly to empower vulnerable populations, helping them find safety, dignity, and a renewed sense of belonging.

The menorah's light, rekindled through the miraculous eight-day burn of a single day's worth of oil, symbolizes the persistence of hope even when resources seem scarce. Today, JFS strives to be a beacon of light for those facing hardship, from immigrants and asylum seekers to veterans adjusting to civilian life to older adults needing care and to Jewish families needing assistance. Just as the

Maccabees demonstrated courage and faith, JFS stands committed to advocating for those whose struggles echo the historical search for safety and freedom.

Hanukkah reminds us that every act of service, sacrifice, and compassion contributes to building a world illuminated by hope and peace. As we light the menorah, we honor the bravery of the Maccabees, the sacrifices of those who fought on the beaches of Normandy, the continued conflicts to bring peace to Ukraine and Israel and the ongoing work of creating a community where all can thrive. Let us carry forward the light of Hanukkah, embracing our shared duty to bring hope and resilience to those in need.

To a Hanukkah of light, hope, and peace.

Lino Covarrubias is CEO of the Jewish Family Service of Metrowest.

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Clockwise: Lucy and Joe Press Food Pantry; welcoming a family at the airport; a volunteer delivers a Passover meal; Build-a-Backpack participants at Temple Shir Tikva, Wayland; a Patient Navigator volunteer escorts a client to a medical appointment.

Learn about the many ways JFS supports our neighbors in need at JFSMW.org.



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May the Lights of Hanukkah Shine Brightly through the Darkness

Wishing You a Safe and Happy Holiday!

From the Board and Staff of Jewish Family Service of Metrowest



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HISTORY OR MEMORY



By Rabbi Jessica Lowenthal

Throughout my life I have often heard the phrase “Jews don’t have history – we have memory.” It is our intense memory of events that occurred thousands of years ago that has allowed us to maintain our culture, even as we have continuously been scattered around the world.

There is a Napoleonic legend about our long memory. The version most often told is that Napoleon was passing by a synagogue on Tisha B’av and heard such intense wailing that he sent his aide to see

what was going on. His aide returned and explained that the Jews were mourning the destruction of their Temple.

Napoleon was outraged and asked when and where this took place. The aide said that they lost their Temple in Jerusalem on this day 1700 years ago. Napoleon was quiet for a moment and then responded, “certainly a people which has mourned the loss of the loss of their Temple for so long will live to see it rebuilt!”

While this probably never happened, it reflects the importance we have long placed on embodying our history. Our entire Passover Seder is an experiential education program, where we use our senses to come as close to the story as possible. Sukkot asks us to remember our years of wandering by living within a hut, even sleeping in it if possible. All of these are tried and true methods to keep our stories alive within us and pass it from generation to generation.

Hanukkah, however, is different.

While we all know the basic story of Hanukkah – a small group of Jews rose up against their oppressors and, against all odds, won



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HISTORY OR MEMORY

back their independence – our tradition does not attempt to enhance that story. We do not re-enact the battles, we do not read about the martyrs. The books of the Maccabees were purposefully excluded from the Jewish Bible, and the Talmud barely mentions the fighting. We created a new story, one where the miracle did not necessarily take place on the battlefield but within the Temple.

Our discomfort with this piece of history seems confusing at first glance. We have other holidays that commemorate rebellion where we do not shy away from the messy reality of war. So why is Hanukkah so different?

The Rabbis who decided the Canon of the Hebrew Bible and those who began the Talmudic process were all still living under Roman rule. Promoting a rebellion against an existing empire who still holds your community's fate in its hands is a very bad idea. In fact, many Rabbis of this generation tried their hardest to get their communities to ignore the holiday. But much like today, Hanukkah had taken root in people's memories and refused to let go. Perhaps even more so because of their continued occupation by Rome.

The failure of the Rabbis to erase Hanukkah led them to compromise, to minimize the war as much as possible and promote a G-dly miracle that was safer. Thus the story of the oil was promoted to the main stage with the rebellion on the side.

Even when it was dangerous, the Jewish memory held firm against diminishment and erasure. Our community's determination to celebrate shows in almost every generation. The dreidel itself was invented as a distraction for the illegal study of Torah. Whenever the soldiers would come to make sure no studying was going on, the students would hide the Torah under their dreidel game, pretending they were just gambling.

We hear tales of converso families who had forgotten their roots but still had the tradition of lighting their heirloom candlesticks on Friday night. I study with students who have only one Jewish grandparent, were raised without any religious connection, but who immediately connect with Judaism once they are exposed. It is as if their soul wakes up from a deep sleep, yearning for something they didn't know was missing.

I truly do believe in the Jewish soul, that somewhere in our core are the memories of our ancestors. That the reason we so often feel a deeper connection to our history is because we are carrying those memories down through the generations. Our Jewish pride, and pain, feel fresh no matter how many centuries have passed.

This Hanukkah, let us embrace the holiday not because it is "Jewish Christmas" (which it absolutely is not) but because it is Hanukkah, a holiday that has enlivened our communities since the very moment the battle was won. Light the candles, fry everything you can think of, and embrace the tradition of rebellion, especially when we probably shouldn't.

Rabbi Jessica Lowenthal was ordained in June 2019 from Hebrew College. She now serves as the Rabbi at Temple Beth Shalom in Melrose.



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DAILY ROLLERCOASTER

By Julie B. Mendelsohn

Rakevet Harim. This is how you say rollercoaster in Hebrew. It describes the feeling of daily life in wartime, getting good news followed by horrible news, seeing tragedies and then miracles. In the days of *insta* everything, 420 days may be too long to hold the attention of people who aren't actually living it. But we are still in the middle of a full-fledged war, and unimaginably, our 101 hostages are still in captivity, so let me give you a sense of life in Israel today.

The day begins as you check the news, praying there won't be any announcements from the IDF spokesman that begin "Allowed for Publication" and end with the names and pictures of beautiful young (and not so young) soldiers who were killed the day before in Gaza and Lebanon. Sometimes there are civilian casualties on the home front, from all religions and ideologies, Israelis, foreign workers, and tourists. Each one is an entire world. Sometimes you know them personally, or you receive an email from your son who says the soldier was a friend. On *Erev Rosh Hashanah*, my son lost three fellow soldiers. Three families who had already set the table for the holiday received the worst news of all. Some days we have great achievements on the battlefield and other days unbearable losses – often both in one day. We have lost so many good people. Their sacrifice must inspire us to be a better and stronger nation.

In many places, the daily routine involves taking cover from a barrage of incoming rockets several times a day. The firing zone has expanded since I last wrote, and we are now in it. The first time I heard a siren, it was a shock. Of course, I knew about the sound, but when you actually hear it, it sends your body into fight or flight mode, trying to remember what to do, and how quickly. The genius of the Home Front Command app is that it is very precise. If you are in an area that might be hit by a drone or a missile or shrapnel from our interceptor, your phone starts lighting up and shaking and a siren sounds. You have between 15 to 90 seconds to get to shelter. The first



IN THIS TIME OF RISING ANTISEMITISM AND ANTI-ISRAEL HATE, WE ARE ALL MACCABEES

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"Wishing you and yours a happy Hanukkah filled with light, hope, love and peace."
-State Senator Paul Feeney

DAILY ROLLERCOASTER

time, the dog didn't come in, but stood outside the blast door barking for ten minutes. Now, he hears the siren and runs straight into the safe room – imagine – a dog who knows how to follow the Homefront Command's instructions.

A siren *during* the shofar blowing at Rosh Hashanah sent us running for the exits – the small safe room in the synagogue was enough for the elderly and the moms with little kids. The rest of us sprinted to the public shelter, while looking up at the booms and smoke in the sky. The next few sirens happened as we were waking up – a rude alarm clock. When the Iranians attacked with 300 ballistic missiles (twice already) the entire country sat in shelters for an hour. Miraculously, no one was harmed.

In our area (unlike the pummeled and evacuated far North), people try to get on with life. Children walk to school, laughing, eating popsicles, talking on their phones or discussing the Talmud. Haredi kids, secular kids, everyone together. There is no place in the country that the rockets can't reach, but we keep going.

The other day, I was cooking for soldiers (still) when my phone starting blinking and buzzing. In the safe room, my husband and I talked about our crazy reality. We agreed that America would tolerate this for about 10 minutes before blowing up whatever country the rockets were launched from. We too pray that we can defeat our enemies completely, preferably with the help of the civilized world. It's a lot for one tiny nation to handle the world's evil alone.

Exiting the safe room, it was time for tennis carpool. I hoped there wouldn't be a siren while I was driving. Then you have to pull over carefully and get out, run 10 meters away and lie flat with your hands on your head for 10 minutes. People do this on the highway – every day, with little babies. My soldier son tells me projectiles hit the ground and shoot up at a 45 degree angle so lying on the ground is very safe. Good to know.



I have a roller coaster of emotions. I can rightfully be angry at everyone who made decisions in the last 15 years – the intelligence services, army leaders, prime ministers past and present. Their decision to ignore emerging threats means that my children and their friends must now fight this fight. I'm so proud of our kids. Their generation has spent the last 400 days on duty, with little rest and difficult conditions. And if I get angry then what about G-d? I know that nothing happens without a reason. G-d has a plan and I might not understand it. This is an integral part of my faith.

I get in my car. I feel steady. I will do my best in every situation to react calmly for myself and others. There is no other option. I have to rely on my *emunah*, my sense of humor and infinite bits of wisdom I've collected throughout my life from ancestors ancient and modern, from the words of the holy Torah to that little rock on my grandmother's desk that said "G-d give me serenity to accept the things I cannot change." Somehow, even with all the challenges, we feel safe and secure because unlike a thief who has to sneak around, we Israelis are 100% confident in our right to be here, from Biblical times through today. This is our land. We walk proudly, sporting Jewish symbols, laughing in Hebrew, celebrating holidays and performing mitzvot.

I hope that soon I'll be writing about peace with Saudi Arabia or Lebanon, or the end of the axis of evil. In this season of miracles, anything is possible.

Julie B. Mendelsohn lives in Israel and Vermont. She has degrees from the University of Michigan, Harvard Law School, Johns Hopkins University and the University of Haifa. In addition to raising a family, spinning and weaving, she also works as a lawyer for Holocaust survivors, and studies the Daf Yomi (daily Talmud page). She made Aliyah in 2009.

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A SURPRISINGLY CRUCIAL ADVOCATE FOR PUBLIC MENORAH DISPLAYS

By Susie Davidson

As we enter the season of latkes, jelly donuts and menorahs both small and giant, accompanied by outdoor nightly candle lighting ceremonies, guess who we just might have to thank for that last one. Hmm...some group of rabbis that lobbied lawmakers to allow them to be publicly displayed? No. A Jewish organization that pushed for the same cause? Nope.

Would you believe, Bernie Sanders?

Indeed, it was. A Chabad.org blog post entitled *Some More Info on Bernie Sanders and Judaism* details how Sanders, while mayor of Burlington, Vermont from 1981-89, allowed and defended Chabad's menorah to be displayed. Very nice, but was that the end of it? Nope. The matter wound up going all the way to the Supreme Court.

"Sanders' involvement in a Vermont case may have had a significant role in the 1989 US Supreme Court decision to allow Chanukah menorahs to be displayed on public property across the US, research conducted recently by Chabad-Lubavitch reveals," a 2016 Jerusalem *Post* article recounted during Sanders' presidential run.

"In the 1980s and early 1990s, Chabad-Lubavitch emissaries introducing public menorah displays faced opponents claiming that the Jewish displays violated the US Constitution's separation of church and state clause," the article explains. That happened in Burlington in December, 1983, after Chabad emissaries to Vermont Rabbis Yitzchak and Zeesy Raskin went to Sanders's office to request permission to light an 8-foot-high menorah on the steps of City Hall. Raskin also invited Sanders to light the menorah, and he accepted.

"The Sanders administration welcomed these requests, and granted full permission, but was immediately confronted by the American Civil Liberties Union, which complained that the menorah in a public space violated the Establishment Clause of the US Constitution, which prohibits placing religious symbols on public property if it results in promoting religion," the *Post* continues.



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A SURPRISINGLY CRUCIAL ADVOCATE FOR PUBLIC MENORAH DISPLAYS

The executive director of the ACLU's Vermont chapter then threatened to sue the city, stating that "such religious symbols should not be displayed in front of public buildings, because they give the impression of government endorsement of religion." City Hall received calls that suggested that since Sanders, as well as then-governor Madeleine Kunin were Jews, they were likely more in favor of a menorah than a creche. McNeil denied that charge.

The ACLU suit went through in June of 1988, and Sanders and his administration defended their position in court.

And a miracle happened there. Just days before Chanukah 1988, US District Judge Franklin S. Billings Jr. ruled in favor of the Burlington menorah.

"Sanders and his administration's involvement in the case contributed to opening the path for the US Supreme Court decision in the *Allegheny v. American Civil Liberties Union* case, in which the court considered the constitutionality of two recurring holiday displays located on public property," the article continues, as it then adds another angle to Sanders' somewhat surprisingly robust backing of the Chabad cause.

"The Chabad-Lubavitch research showed Sanders had expressed, back in the 1980s, strong admiration for Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the last Lubavitcher Rebbe, who died in 1994," the Post article reveals. "Sanders joined the national Education Day held annually on Schneerson's Hebrew birthday, and proclaimed the Education Day in Burlington in honor of the rabbi's 81st birthday in 1983, and 83rd birthday in 1985."

And Schneerson wrote a letter thanking Sanders for that decision, which Chabad.org retrieved. "In the letter, addressed to 'The Honorable Bernard Sanders,' the rabbi wrote: 'I sincerely appreciate your thoughtfulness in designating this Education Day in honor of my birthday. I trust that your action will stimulate greater awareness of the vital importance of education, not only among all your worthy citizens, but also in the State of Vermont.'"

"The research sheds new light on Bernie Sanders' role, as mayor of Burlington from 1981-1989, in defending Chabad's menorah, which in turn garnered an extraordinary amount of media and advocacy attention to the menorah cause, helping to catapult the public menorah and the Chanukah holiday to great prominence in the U.S.A. and even abroad," the Chabad blog post states.

"Sanders recited the blessings and lit the Menorah's candles at Burlington's first-ever public Chanukah Menorah lighting. Defying significant pressure from political peers, Sanders strongly supported the Chabad-Lubavitch Public Menorah and directed his administration to defend it in court. The early and strong support from the Sanders administration played a significant role in the now widespread phenomenon of public Chanukah Menorah celebrations countrywide."

Susie Davidson, a longtime contributor to various news outlets, is the copy editor of Shalom Magazine.

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'TIS THE SEASON, OR NOT?

By Lew Finfer

December is always a good month for family and holiday events like Chanukah. But it's also been grim on so many other fronts – the election, Gaza, Israel, Lebanon, Ukraine, Sudan, to unfortunately name just a few.

We know our country is very divided, but hopefully it will not be hopelessly so forever. Many fear what President-elect Trump will do, after his narrow victory, to deport immigrants, pass untold benefits for the rich, cut programs for the poor, persecute the media, his opponents, LGBTQ and trans people, and others among his targets.

Yes, we must talk to Trump supporters and hear why they support him and how they are hurting. And see if we can have them consider all the things he promised to do, and ask if they believe those are all the right things to do.

Regarding the situation in Israel, Hamas killed 1200 on October 7, mostly Jews, but also some Palestinians, Muslims and Christians. 728 Israeli soldiers have died since then, and there are 97 remaining hostages. Some 200,000 Israelis have been displaced from their homes in the north and south because of Hezbollah's attacks and continuing Hamas attacks. All of this suffering will reverberate for generations.

However, 44,000 Palestinians have been killed and 104,268 wounded of which two thirds are civilians, including women and children. Most buildings in Gaza have been demolished or battered, and thus, Israel has created over 1 million homeless Palestinian refugees in their own home areas. Food and humanitarian aid have also been scarce.

And there have been countless attacks by West Bank settlers upon West Bank civilians (according to the Nov. 16, 2024 Times of Israel, settler violence has killed over 716 West Bank Palestinians since Oct. 7, 2023), and yes, some Palestinian attacks on West Bank settlers as well. As of this writing 3500, including 271 children, have died in Israel's war in Lebanon; some are Hezbollah fighters, but a lot are not. This is all shameful.

Because of these statistics, Israel is now seen as a pariah state by many citizens and countries around the world. The damage resulting from how so many view Israel and Jews will last for generations. Antisemitism is never, ever justified. But, let's face it, Israel's conduct in these wars has created an increase in antisemitism, which ultimately victimizes Jews.

Meanwhile, half of Sudan's people, some 25 million, have experienced severe food shortages. Over 11 million have been displaced by their civil war. We can't forget the 2003-2005 genocide in Darfur in Sudan which, according to the online Holocaust Encyclopedia, resulted in an estimated 200,000 civilian deaths. Terrible times have risen again there, and in other parts of Sudan.

Reuters reports that as of Aug. 31, 2024, the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine has documented at least 11,743 Ukrainian civilians killed and 24,614 wounded since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion, although these numbers are likely far higher. Despite Putin's relentless war crimes, Russia now seem headed toward a hard peace, with Putin getting what he wants. President Trump will not give Ukraine the support President Biden has.

'TIS THE SEASON, OR NOT?

Out of its population of 41 million, only about 150,000 Jews live in Ukraine at present (prior to World War II, there were 2.7 million Jews in Ukraine). We know what happened in World War II, and that's why there are so few there now. A grandfather and three uncles of Ukraine's valiant President Zelensky fought against the Nazis in World War II.

To me, the war in Ukraine bears some similarities to the Spanish Civil War of 1936-1939. With the backing of Hitler and Mussolini, General Franco's army coup against the elected democratic Spanish government won, while Britain, France, and the US sat it out.

Delegations of people from many countries volunteered as soldiers to defend the Spanish government and people. They included the Abraham Lincoln Brigades from America, and almost one-third of them were Jews. The US Army called those Americans who fought in the Spanish Civil War "premature anti-fascists" – but it is never premature to fight fascism.

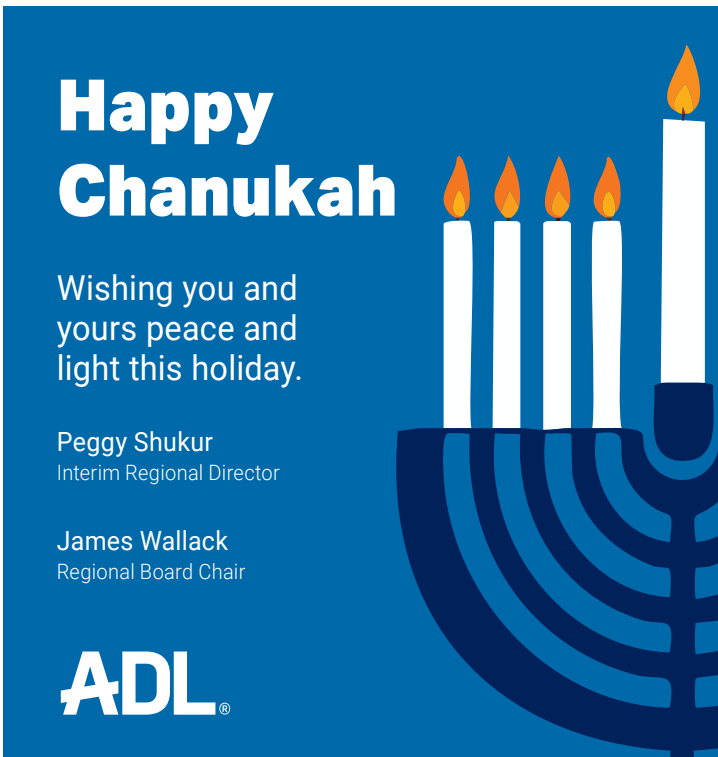
In his preface to *L'Espagne Libre* (1946), the French novelist and French Resistance member Albert Camus said, "It was in Spain that [my generation] learned that one can be right and yet be beaten, that force can vanquish spirit, that there are times when courage is not its own recompense. It is this, doubtless, which explains why so many, the world over, feel the Spanish drama as a personal tragedy."

Of course, even amid the current global situation and especially in this season, many can still find happiness and friendship, and countless acts of caring and heroism.

Lew Finfer, a Harvard University affiliate and former leader of the Massachusetts Community Action Network, is a Dorchester resident and current Director of the Massachusetts Action for Justice.



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Chanukah by Wellesley-Weston Chabad
December 26, 6:30 p.m., at the Weston Shooters Club, 8 Sibley Rd., Weston. \$36 cover charge. RSVP rabi@wwjewish.org.

Menorah Lighting by
Chabad Jewish Center of Cape Ann.

All events are free and open to all

Thursday, Dec. 26, 5 p.m., at Barletta Park (corner of Mt. Pleasant and Broadway), Rockport.

Sunday, Dec. 29, 5 p.m., at bottom of Town Hill (Market St. and Main St.), Ipswich. Followed by an indoor celebration at Gathr (42 Market St.).

Monday, Dec. 30, 5 p.m., at the Community House (284 Bay Rd, South Hamilton).

Menorah Lighting at Boston Common
Wednesday, December 25 at 4 p.m.

Join Chabad of Downtown Boston for the 41st annual Menorah lighting on the Boston Common, as we kindle the Giant 22' Menorah, one of New England's tallest Menorahs. Greetings from dignitaries, local elected officials and community leaders. Live music and entertainment. Where: Boston Common, Brewer Fountain near Park Street T Stop (opposite the State House).

Faneuil Hall Chanukah Celebration

Thursday, December 26 at 4:30 p.m. Faneuil Hall Quincy Market Place Rotunda, 206 South Market St., Boston.

Grand Seaport Chanukah Celebration

December 29 at 4:30 p.m., at 60 Seaport Blvd. next to Kings Bar. Kindling the giant 9 foot Menorah with live music, Chanukah treats and fun for the whole family. RSVPs appreciated at www.chabaddowntownboston.org.

Katherine Clark
FOR US CONGRESS



Wishing you a happy Chanukah!
May the holiday season bring love, peace, and light to you and your loved ones.

- Congresswoman
Katherine Clark

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Happy Hanukkah



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Events by Chabad of Canton
 No charge, but donations appreciated.
 RSVP www.Jewishcanton.com/events

Sunday, December 29, 12:30-2:30 p.m. Chanukah Block Party at Canton High School, 900 Washington St.

Saturday, December 28, 6:30 p.m., across from Canton Town Hall. Giant menorah lighting, fire show, and gelt drop.

Sunday, December 29, 6 p.m., giant menorah lighting and gelt drop at Norwood Town Common.

KI Community Hanukkah Celebration in Brookline

December 31 at 4 p.m. Join the fun and schmooze with live music from Jacob's Ladder, nosh on latkes and light eats, partake in a special candle lighting ceremony, experience an uplifting dance set, and a tasty dessert reception. All are welcome. <https://congki.shulcloud.com/form/kiche>

8 Lights at the Corner by Shaloh House

Final night Menorah Lighting at the Cobb Corner Shell Gas Station Stoughton, on **Wednesday, January 1 at 6 p.m.** Fun Children's Gelt Drop from high atop the Bucket Truck, music, warm latkes, donuts and hot cocoa. Demonstrate your Chanukah pride. Sponsored by the Abington Bank, a division of North Shore Bank.

XXVII Annual Artistic Chanukah Festival

The Miracle of Lights Holiday Festival

Sunday, January 5, from 4 – 6 p.m.

Doors will open at 3:30 p.m. Charles E. Brown Middle School, 125 Meadowbrook Rd., Newton. The program will include a concert with performances from Ukrainian, Azerbaijanian, Lithuanian, Israeli, and Russian Jewish communities around Boston. Free admission. Please register in advance at www.centermakor.org.

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Sunday, January 12, 1 p.m.-3:30 p.m. at Congregation Shirat Hayam, Swampscott. Join us to support Israeli artisans. All proceeds will be sent directly to the artists. Admission is free. Family-friendly event. Details at <https://shirathayam.org/>

The Wedding Jester

Sunday, February 9 at 2 p.m. at the Yiddish Book Center, 1021 West Street, Amherst. Cost: \$12 / \$15. The performance by author and comedian John Feffer will be 60 minutes, followed by a 30 minute Q&A. More information at yiddishbookcenter.org or 413-256-4900.

Leket event

Gilad Skolnick is giving talks about Leket, food insecurity in Israel and challenges beyond the headlines at Swampscott's Shirat Hayam on **Saturday, January 11** at Shabbat services, at Newburyport's Congregation Ahavas Achim on **February 8** Shabbat services; at Washington Square Minyan of Brookline on **January 18**, Kerem Shalom of Concord on **February 2**, and Brookline's Temple Beth Zion on **February 22**. All are welcome to join. Reach out to Gilad@Leket.us for more info.

Sandra Seltzer Silberman HBI Conversations Series Featuring Kerry Wallach, author of *Traces of a Jewish Artist:*

The Lost Life and Work of Rahel Szalit

January 22, 7 p.m. Online

Join the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute/HBI as we speak with Professor Kerry Wallach about Rahel Szalit (1888-1942), graphic artist, illustrator, painter, and cartoonist who was among the best-known Jewish women artists in Weimar Berlin. After she was arrested by the French police and then murdered by the Nazis at Auschwitz, she was all but lost to history. Free and open to all. Register: <https://bit.ly/HBIEVENTS> Contact: tbrownpreuss@brandeis.edu.

Sandra Seltzer Silberman HBI Conversations Series Featuring Tova Mirvis, author of *We Would Never*

February 26, 4 p.m.

Hybrid: In-Person at HBI/Brandeis and Online

Join the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute/HBI as we speak with Tova Mirvis, author of *We Would Never*, a gripping mystery, an intimate family drama, and a provocative exploration of loyalty, betrayal, and the blurred line between protecting and forsaking the ones we love most. Free and open to all. Register: <https://bit.ly/HBIEVENTS>

CORRECTION

In our last issue, we published an article by longtime Brookline resident and former Select Board Member Zvi Sesling that included a mislabeling of the relationship between Congregation Kehillath Israel and Congregation Mishkan Tefila.

Sesling had included a statement that the two synagogues had merged. In fact, they had not merged in any legal or organizational way but rather, the word "merge" was intended to convey that the two congregations share space in the same building.

Moreover, the article implied that 2Life Communities Brown Family House, which is adjacent to the synagogue, was also officially connected to KI. Again, although the buildings are adjacent and even share an indoor passageway, they are separate entities.

Shalom Magazine apologizes for and regrets these errors.

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