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EDITION 48



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# PURIM CELEBRATION



*Purim celebration at Ahavat Torah  
Congregation in Stoughton*

## #BringThemHome

On October 7, 2023, Hamas terrorists carried out the deadliest attack on Jews since the Holocaust, killing 1200 and taking 240 hostages. On March 19, 2025, about 40,000 Israelis gathered in Tel Aviv's Habima Square to protest Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's decision to resume to war in Gaza and dismiss his top intelligence officer. They accuse Netanyahu of abandoning the 59 hostages still in Gaza by ending the ceasefire with Hamas.

We pray for the safe return of all hostages and for the end of the war and bloodshed on both sides.

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# פסח כשר ושמח

## *Pesach Kasher Vesameach Kosher and Happy Passover*



The holiday of Pesach, or Passover, falls on the Hebrew calendar dates of Nissan 15-22. Pesach 2025 (Passover) begins before sundown on Saturday April 12, and ends after nightfall on April 20.

The Seder feast is held on the first two nights of Passover (just on the first night in Israel), after nightfall.

The *Yizkor* prayer service will take place on Sunday, April 20. Passover is celebrated by eating, among other traditional foods, matzah (unleavened

bread) and *maror* (bitter herbs). For the duration of the 8 (or 7 days in Israel) days of Passover, which celebrates the emancipation of the Hebrews from Egyptian slavery, *chametz* (leaven) is strictly avoided. During the eight days of the holiday, observers eat matzah, avoid any leavened products (*chametz*), and commemorate the Israelites' exodus from slavery in Egypt through Seder rituals such as eating the matzah as well as *charoseth* and bitter herbs, hiding the *afikomen*, drinking four cups of wine, asking the four questions and reading from the Haggadah (guidebook detailing the story of the Exodus).

Jewish families and friends gather for festive meals, and many synagogues organize community seders. Be sure to check with your local synagogue for details on community events.



*Happy Passover*

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Please contact the organizer before attending any event.

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Gaby Weisman

As we prepare to gather around our Seder tables this Passover, we reflect on what it truly means to be Jewish. The Haggadah teaches that "in every generation, each person must see themselves as if they personally left Egypt." This is more than a historical account – it is a call to empathy, a reminder that the struggles of our people, past and present, are deeply connected to our own.

Today, there are many ways to live a Jewish life – different levels of observance, traditions, and perspectives. Yet beyond these differences, Judaism is rooted in community and responsibility. Jewish organizations must do more than reach out to donors; they must extend their arms to those who feel forgotten. Widows, struggling families, and individuals facing mental health challenges often feel isolated.

True leadership requires stepping outside institutional comfort zones to uplift every Jew in need. Fortunately, many of our community organizations do just that in their missions, as the need is certain to continue.

Education must also be a priority. With antisemitism on the rise, we cannot afford complacency. We must invest in teaching our history and values - not just to our children, but to the world. Ignorance fuels hatred, and knowledge is our strongest defense. I believe we should use all forms of media to share our message.

Passover is not only about commemorating redemption, but embracing our duty to one another. Freedom is not just about breaking physical chains; it is about ensuring that every Jew feels safe, valued, and connected. As we retell the Exodus story, let's commit to building a community that is inclusive, compassionate and strong, where no Jew is left behind.

Chag Pesach Sameach!

*Shirley Nigri Farber - Publisher*



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# PURIM CELEBRATIONS



*Israeli-American Council (IAC) Keshet program celebrating Purim*



*Yachad members celebrate Purim with a Megillah reading and costume parade*



*Purim celebration at Temple Sinai, Brookline*



*Enjoying a festive Mexican-themed meal in honor of Purim at Wellesley-Weston Chabad*

*Happy Pesach!*  
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## ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE



*The ADL (Anti-Defamation League) held a panel conversation on preventing and responding to antisemitism in K-12 schools featuring the Attorney General of Massachusetts Andrea Joy Campbell, Counsel to the U.S. Attorney for the District of Massachusetts; Mary Murrane, First Assistant U.S. Attorney; and Becky Shuster, Principal of Home Ground Consulting, LLC. The event took place at the John Joseph Moakley Courthouse on January 30 and was attended by 200 supporters from across Massachusetts.*

*The panel featured Campbell, who pledged to build economic prosperity and stability for all residents, prioritize the mental health and well-being of children, stop cycles of incarceration and violence, and ensure that people across the state have access to the Attorney General's Office regardless of their zip code, language or ability.*

## JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE OF METROWEST

*Jewish Family Service of Metrowest Senior Director of Innovation and Community Engagement Adam Smith and Amira Elamri, JFS's Housing Specialist served on a panel with Jeffrey Thielman, CEO of the International Institute of New England (IINE) at the Beaver Country Day School, Chestnut Hill. The February 27 panel was part of an innovative "accelerator program" that combines math and history, challenging students to apply interdisciplinary skills to real-world issues like immigration, refugee resettlement, and global displacement. The students brought incredible energy and critical thinking to the conversation, analyzing the intersection of policy, economics, and human impact. They explored strategies for addressing the challenges faced by immigrant and refugee communities, asking thoughtful questions about housing, employment, and systemic barriers.*



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## OUR COMMUNITY

### Bar Mitzvah Project



Isaac Patch of Sharon will be having his Bar Mitzvah in January, 2026. As his Bar Mitzvah project, Rabbi Joseph Meszler of Temple Sinai of Sharon and Isaac have teamed up to raise money to paint bomb shelters in Israel to help them look less scary for children. Please use the following link to donate to this worthy cause. My Bomb Shelter Painting Synagogues Jewish National Fund-USA Fundraising Page is <https://my.jnf.org/synagoguepaintshelters/temple Sinai>. Donations for Isaac's Mitzvah project will be accepted until January, 2026. We appreciate every donation that is given.



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# OUR COMMUNITY



*Kaplan Estates residents and staff “Go Red” to celebrate Happy, Healthy Hearts!*



*Members of the Jewish Community of Cape Cod gathered for a monthly coffee event at Panera Bread in Mashpee on February 2.*

*Gilad Skolnick of American Friends of Leket Israel speaks at a “Voluntourism in Israel” luncheon for synagogue and day school leaders from across three states on March 4, hosted by Israel’s Ministry of Tourism, the Consulate General of Israel to New England, and Returning the Sparks.*





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## JEWISH ALLIANCE FOR LAW AND SOCIAL ACTION



*To mark the Purim holiday, dedicated volunteers and staff from The Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action (JALSA) delivered hamantaschen to state legislators on Beacon Hill with a message urging them to show the courage of Queen Esther and defend vulnerable and targeted people (just as Queen Esther did in her time) by co-sponsoring The Location Shield Act, important data privacy legislation that will protect religious freedom, reproductive rights, and more.*



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# PURIM CELEBRATIONS



*Purim Carnival and Wicked Spiel at Temple Shalom of Newton*



*Temple Etz Chaim in Franklin held its annual Purim Carnival and a Wicked-themed Purimspiel on March 9 and March 13.*

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## MICRODOSING HAPPINESS WITH ENDOGENOUS SUBSTANCES

*By Rus Devorah (Darcy) Wallen, LCSW, ACSW, CIMHP*

Every day, observant Jews recite the blessing *Asher Yatzar*, acknowledging the intricate wisdom of the human body – its vessels, hollows, and delicate balance that sustains life. In this blessing, we declare that *HaAdam* – the human being – was created *b'chochmah*, with wisdom. But what does this wisdom refer to? Is it Divine wisdom in creation? Is it that G-d was wise in making the human? Or perhaps it reflects that Hashem designed the human body with an innate, built-in wisdom for health and well-being.

This divine wisdom, which sustains life, includes not just survival mechanisms but innate systems that enhance well-being – particularly, the body's natural neurochemicals. These endogenous substances, such as dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin, and endorphins, serve as the body's happiness hacks, helping optimize mood, connection, and health through intentional activities.

By understanding how simple behaviors can activate these neurochemical systems, we can naturally “microdose” happiness. This involves small, intentional actions that tap into the body's inherent wisdom, enhancing our joy, resilience, and vitality.

### *Unlocking the Power of Neurotransmitters*

Each neurotransmitter plays a key role in well-being, and through simple actions, you can activate them to “microdose” happiness.

#### **Dopamine – The Reward Driver**

Dopamine motivates and reinforces behaviors, encouraging goal achievement. It's released when we complete tasks, celebrate small wins, or indulge in a treat like dark chocolate. Setting small, achievable goals creates a positive feedback loop, reinforcing satisfaction.

#### **Serotonin – The Mood Stabilizer**

Serotonin helps regulate mood, sleep, and emotional well-being. Boost serotonin by spending time in the sunlight, practicing gratitude, or engaging in activities like knitting. Research shows that sunlight increases serotonin, improving mood and reducing depression risk.

#### **Oxytocin – The Bonding Hormone**

Oxytocin is central to trust, emotional closeness, and social bonding. It reduces stress and fosters a sense of belonging. Acts like hugging, petting a dog, or expressing gratitude trigger oxytocin. Research indicates that oxytocin enhances empathy and strengthens interpersonal relationships.

#### **Endorphins – The Natural Painkillers**

Endorphins relieve pain and elevate mood. They are released during physical activity, laughter, or pleasurable stimuli like music. Laughing with friends or engaging in a brisk walk are great ways to trigger endorphins. Even spicy food and dark chocolate can help boost endorphin levels.

#### **GABA – The Calming Neurotransmitter**

GABA promotes relaxation and stress reduction by calming neural activity. Deep breathing, stretching, or sipping green tea (which boosts GABA) can elevate levels. Meditation and progressive muscle relaxation are also effective for GABA enhancement.

#### **Norepinephrine – The Energy Booster**

Norepinephrine increases focus and energy. Engage in morning exercise, take cold showers, or enjoy stimulating activities like



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# MICRODOSING HAPPINESS WITH ENDOGENOUS SUBSTANCES

competitive games to increase norepinephrine. Tyrosine-rich foods like poultry and nuts can also support its production.

## Anandamide – The Bliss Molecule

Anandamide, the “bliss molecule,” influences mood and appetite. Running, spending time in nature, and consuming dark chocolate are natural ways to boost anandamide. This “runner’s high” demonstrates the body’s ability to self-generate euphoria.

## Practical Application: Microdosing Happiness

Small, intentional activities can significantly impact mood and well-being. For instance, the Havening Techniques,<sup>TM</sup> a psychosensory method involving self-soothing touch, can boost oxytocin and reduce stress. Similarly, savoring uplifting music or engaging in mindful exercises can activate multiple neurotransmitters simultaneously.

## Microdosing vs. Macro dosing

Microdosing involves small, deliberate actions – like hugging or writing a gratitude note – while macrodosing might include larger events like spending an afternoon with friends. Both contribute to a resilient, joyful life.

## Daily Dosing

Even in a busy world, small actions like hugging, celebrating small wins, or walking in nature can significantly boost well-being. Whether you’re microdosing with a single hug or macrodosing at a celebration, these actions enhance life’s joy and connection.

## Conclusion

The science of happiness doesn’t require complex interventions. By microdosing happiness through small, intentional actions, we harness the body’s natural capabilities to create a balanced, fulfilling life. Whether through a hug, a moment of laughter, or a mindful walk, these small actions can transform our emotional landscape. Let’s begin today, choosing joy – one microdose at a time.

## Happiness Hacks

**Dopamine:** Set and achieve small goals, celebrate wins, engage in rewarding hobbies.

**Serotonin:** Get sunlight exposure, exercise regularly, practice gratitude.

**Oxytocin:** Hug loved ones, engage in acts of kindness, practice empathy.

**Endorphins:** Exercise, laugh, eat dark chocolate, engage in creative arts.

**GABA:** Practice deep breathing, yoga, meditation, and drink calming herbal teas.

**Norepinephrine:** Exercise, engage in goal-oriented tasks, drink.

**Anandamide:** Run, spend time in nature, enjoy dark chocolate.

**Rus Devorah (Darcy F.) Wallen, LCSW, CIMHP, PC** is a clinical consultant, social worker, psychotherapist and motivational entertainer. For free relaxation exercises, visit her website [www.toratherapeutics.com](http://www.toratherapeutics.com).

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## Happy Passover

From the Board and Staff of  
Jewish Family Service of Metrowest



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# BREAKING FREE



By Yosef Rodrigues, Ph.D.

Pesach transcends mere historical remembrance; it encapsulates a profound spiritual journey that elucidates the intricacies of freedom, faith, and moral responsibility. The Torah's narrative of the Exodus from Egypt is foundational. Still, rabbinic literature – including the Talmud, Mishnah, Midrash, and Kabbalah – clearly indicates that this redemption is not confined to a single historical occurrence. Instead, it represents

a continuous, layered process that is both collective and individual.

As we approach Pesach in 2025 amid global turbulence, sociopolitical transformations and evolving ethical paradigms, the lessons drawn from this narrative serve as essential tools for understanding genuine freedom and our responsibilities within the sociocultural framework.

The Torah mandates: “You shall tell your child on that day, saying, ‘It is because of this that G-d did for me when I went out of Egypt.’” (*Exodus* 13:8). The Talmud (*Pesachim* 116b) elaborates that every generation must identify itself as if personally experiencing the Exodus. Mainly, Egypt (*Mitzrayim*) functions as a multifaceted symbol, representing a geographical entity and various forms of constraint – political, social, or psychological. In our current milieu, we grapple with modern *Mitzrayim* characterized by political unrest, economic precarity, social injustices, and individual personal animus such as anxiety and self-doubt, compounded by the pitfalls of technological overconsumption.

The Mishnah (*Pirkei Avot* 6:2) emphasizes, “There is no free person except one who engages in Torah.” This suggests that true emancipation extends beyond mere physical liberation; it includes the capacity for spiritual engagement and ethical clarity. The Midrash



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(*Shemot Rabbah* 2:4) states that the Israelites' redemption hinged on their perpetuation of identity, language, and faith under duress.

This narrative carries significant implications in a rapidly globalizing world where cultural identities often amalgamate and dissolve. Pesach compels us to retain our core values and identities while navigating societal change with integrity.

On the other hand, Kabbalistic teachings further amplify this dialogue, viewing the Exodus as a historical artifact and a significant cosmic transformation. The Zohar explains that leaving Egypt dismantled the spiritual "shells" (*kelipot*) that inhibit divine illumination. Each individual's journey mirrors this existential undertaking: breaking through egoic barriers, overcoming materialism, and confronting existential fears en route to achieving spiritual clarity.

At the Seder, the consumption of matzah – referred to as the "bread of affliction" – serves as a complex symbol of faith. For example, the Talmud (*Berachot* 17a) describes faith not as a passive concept but as an active reliance on divine architecture.

In an era often characterized by skepticism, Pesach invites us to cultivate a nuanced understanding of faith that is proactive rather than a simplistic acceptance; it urges moral action grounded in purposeful engagement. Much like the Israelites' courageous step into the Red Sea before its parting, we are encouraged to take bold actions, even in uncertain outcomes – applying this principle to personal and societal dilemmas.

Additionally, Pesach articulates the intrinsic responsibilities that accompany genuine freedom. The Exodus narrative is not merely about liberation from Egypt; it is equally about the subsequent acceptance of the Torah at Sinai and the commitment to a transcendent ethical framework.

The Gemara (*Shabbat* 88a) illustrates that the Jewish people "stood at the foot of the mountain," signifying a collective acceptance of obligation. Freedom devoid of purpose is intrinsically hollow; true liberation necessitates an intertwining with moral responsibility. As we find ourselves in 2025, where rights and liberties face contentious debate, Pesach serves as a token that true freedom is not simply a matter of individual autonomy but also a means to activate positive change in the world.

The Haggadah's imperative, "In every generation, one must see themselves as if they left Egypt," is a directive for active participation. The Jewish experience embodies a continuum of individual, collective, and global redemption. In confronting the rise of antisemitism, navigating technological evolutions and addressing societal fractures, Pesach serves as a poignant reminder that we remain in a constant process of exiting Egypt. The culmination of redemption has yet to be realized, but progress toward justice, kindness, and faith brings us closer to this goal.

In a context marked by global uncertainty, Pesach in 2025 is not merely a commemorative act but also a vital framework for navigating contemporary challenges. The insights patented from the Torah and those from our sages and Kabbalistic thought coalesce to affirm that redemption is not a discrete event but an ongoing journey imbued with responsibility. We are engaged in a transformative passage from bondage to liberation, darkness to illumination, and chaos to divine order.

As we gather at the Seder table to recount historical miracles, we must critically engage with the question: How will we embody the ideals of redemption in our lives and within the broader world?

**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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# LEARNING EMOTIONAL REGULATION

By Brian Cohen

The saying goes that schools are microcosms of society. If so, then in students and classrooms we can see the dramatic impacts of macro social factors such as AI and social media, a recent pandemic, and both national and international political changes. For Jews in particular, add to this all of the complexities of the post-October 7 world. This all has a destabilizing effect on the ability of individuals and communities to keep their emotions regulated, leading to breakdowns in the way we interpret and communicate with one another. There is a way to overcome these factors.

Current neuroscience research allows us to learn and thereby explicitly teach our students (not to mention ourselves) how human brains and bodies are wired to work, and how to mitigate their thoughts and actions to maximize wellbeing. To me, this is a critical component of a well-rounded education, and not a “nice to have.” Jewish children need these skills to navigate relationships like anyone else, but also to know how to promote and manage civic discourse that may be unsettling.

One key is to focus on improving emotional intelligence – the ability to maintain trusting relationships with whom we interact. To do this we need to be able to regulate our emotional responses and recover when dysregulated.

This begins with understanding the brain. The limbic system in our brains triggers automatic responses to actual or perceived stressors. It includes both the Sympathetic nervous system (fight or flight and shutdown), and the Parasympathetic nervous system (rest and digest). We want to be in the Parasympathetic system as much as possible.

The limbic system includes the Amygdala whose job it is to change things quickly in our body without us knowing to protect us. Yet, it may be a disservice in many cases, so we have to study our physical body’s current behaviors to intervene and calm our body and mind down.



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# LEARNING EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Here is an example of how a “facilitative listening/discussion” between a trained staff member and an upset student might sound: (abbreviated)

Staff: You look upset. What led you to leave the classroom?

Student: I made a comment in class and heard some chuckling from peers, so I got upset and walked out.

Staff: Instead of talking about what happened right now let's focus on your body. What do you notice is happening?

Student: I notice that my forehead and shoulders are tight and that I'm breathing quickly. I want to scream.

Staff: I'm sure that was really upsetting to hear. Let's take some deep breaths together and focus on relaxing our facial and shoulder muscles (to calm the amygdala and move from sympathetic to parasympathetic nervous system).

Staff: Now some questions for you to answer. First, can you help me to understand what happened from your perspective?

Student: (student explains in more detail)

Staff: I want you to know that I hear you. I am going to reflect on what I think I heard you say...(include their words, and also address what they seem to need or value). It also seems that you..."

Staff: Why do you think it's upsetting to have something like this happen? Let's do a process to interrupt your current thoughts called "spheres of time and likelihood." Tell me if this has happened before and what it felt like.

Student: When this happened before I felt like a loser, like everyone was laughing at me and I couldn't be taken seriously. Or that I felt stupid and stopped speaking up in class.

Staff: Let's think of future scenarios. What is a 'bad' future scenario?

Student: People will think I'm stupid now, and no one will want to hang out with me.

Staff: What is a 'neutral' future scenario?

Student: It was just a moment. It doesn't have to be a big deal.

Staff: Is there a possible 'positive' future scenario?

Student: Maybe they were giggling at something else, not me and no one thinks any differently of me.

Staff: So then it's possible we don't even know why they were giggling, and it might not have had anything to do with you. And that might mean your body is being defensive, but you can let it go.

Student: I feel calmer now and ready to move on with my day.

Staff: Good. I will still follow up with the teacher, and then those two students if need be.

Our brains have plasticity. We can train them to heal or respond differently to ingrained emotional responses based on previous experiences (fears) in life. We can even prepare our brains if we know we are heading into particular situations that are consistently frustrating. The key is to slow down the amygdala from jumping into action. Also critical is to study "cognitive distortions" that can blur our thinking and force us into emotional responses.

We need to be regulated to think clearly and interact productively and cooperatively with others. Most problematic thinking and behaviors occur when people are in a state of dysregulation. Approaches like this, whether internally in our minds or in guiding another person, can help greatly. It's incumbent upon us all to learn, practice, and teach these understandings and practices.

**Brian Cohen is the Head of School at MetroWest Jewish Day School in Framingham. He received his Masters degree in School Leadership from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.**

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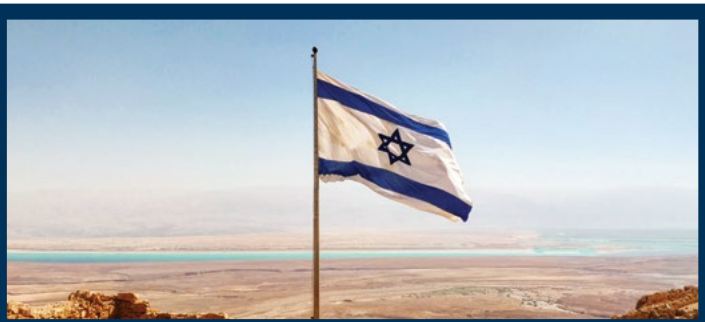
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## THE DAVID AND GOLIATH ILLUSION



*By Josef Kay*

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the word “complicated” are closely linked. This descriptor is appropriate for a geopolitical conflict that has evolved over the course of more than a century and elicits a host of competing narratives.

Unfortunately, the complexity of the conflict does not always prompt rigorous study of the region. Instead, sometimes recognizing nuances dissuades certain people from studying key dimensions of the conflict. In addition to a complex history, the media landscape is intimidating and requires significant time and energy to navigate.

This reality leads some people to be complacent with understanding the Middle East as just “complex.” A surface-level recognition of nuances risks the creation of an intellectual vacuum that makes even well-intended individuals susceptible to disinformation about the Middle East.

Too often, bad actors successfully present the David and Goliath illusion. In the Israeli-Palestinian context, this fallacy presents Israel as an invincible aggressor that oppresses Palestinians. It dismisses Israel’s security needs while conveniently overlooking the Iranian Regime’s terror network. To fully grasp the complexity of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is crucial to understand how Iran and its proxy network influence and impact the conflict and region as a whole.

Proponents of the David and Goliath illusion justify their viewpoint by presenting metrics like Hamas-reported casualty numbers to create a narrative that is often misleading if not false. This strategy seeks to lay the ideological foundation for more people to reject Israel’s expressed security concerns.

Adopters of the David and Goliath illusion are prone to buy into conspiracies. Those who subscribe to this misleading narrative often

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# THE DAVID AND GOLIATH ILLUSION

claim the Jewish State's security concerns are a facade to distract the world from unjustifiable behavior.

Aside from false evidence and conclusions, the David and Goliath illusion intentionally omits how other players in the region fan the flames of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Chief among these actors is the Iranian Regime.

Throughout the current war, Tehran has made tangible security threats against the Jewish State. Through its proxy network, Iran unleashed a multi-front war against Israel. In the last 15 months, the Jewish State has been attacked not just by Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, but also by Iranian proxies like Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthis in Yemen, and terrorists in Iraq. The Regime has also directly attacked the entirety of Israel twice.

Meanwhile, Tehran can produce an atomic bomb within weeks. This capability warrants genuine alarm given the Regime's history of espousing genocidal rhetoric against the Jewish State.

Subscribers to the David and Goliath illusion argue Israel has paid little to no price in defending itself. This claim is far from the truth. While the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) has had some ingenious successes, many hostages are still held by terrorists in Gaza. Israelis are still grieving the 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals Hamas and its allies murdered on October 7, 2023. The Houthis continue to attack the Jewish State by firing ballistic missiles.

The Iranian Regime has also caused immense suffering for Iranians and Arabs throughout the region. Tehran faces serious economic challenges while it funds its proxies with hundreds of millions of dollars. In addition, the Regime has committed many human rights abuses that include the use of torture and unjustifiable cases of capital punishment. Due to these factors, it is no surprise that over 80% of Iranians oppose the Regime.

When in power, the Tehran-backed Assad regime murdered hundreds of thousands of Syrians. Yemeni activist Luai Ahmed notes

how the Houthis "sank Yemen further into poverty and isolated it internationally" by hijacking the Arab Spring. Hezbollah has been violating Lebanese sovereignty. Tehran has strengthened the terrorist group Hamas, which has used Gaza's civilian population as human shields.

While some anti-Israel activists wave the Hezbollah and Hamas flags, others do not openly embrace the Regime's terror network. Whether they glorify or ignore the Regime's violence, they undoubtedly support Tehran's goals. Just read the Regime's message last May where the Supreme Leader welcomed anti-Israel activists into the "Resistance Front."

Discussing Iran-sponsored terrorism will not likely change those who waive Hezbollah flags. However, to the bystander who suspects that the Middle East is complicated, but struggles to articulate this complexity, education on Iran's proxy network is crucial to avoid falling for the David and Goliath illusion.

More generally, those who wish to be informed global citizens should avoid exclusively anchoring their conception of the Middle East in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Many countries are shaping the current reality in the region, including the destabilizing Regime. If one wants to reveal the true reality of the Middle East, the complicated dots between the many state and non-state actors must be connected. Scholars, journalists, and professors are responsible for understanding and communicating the interplay between these forces. Nonetheless, this work is possible for anyone who cares for a better and more peaceful future in the Middle East.

*Josef Kay is a CAMERA on Campus fellow and student at Brandeis University. Josef is the legislative director of the Brandeis Israel Public Affairs Committee and conducted original research last summer about how Israeli discourse has developed since October 7, 2023. He is studying International and Global Studies and Near Eastern and Judaic Studies.*



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## FROM THE NARROW PLACE

By Rabbi Jessica Lowenthal

As a mother of two young boys, traveling from place to place can be one of the most challenging parts of my day. Somehow, no matter how many 5-2-1 minute warnings, my children are continually shocked when I say it's really time to leave. Be it the house, the park, a playdate, or the car, leaving is hard.

For children, moving from one space to the next can be difficult. Even though they know where they are going, the desire to continue doing what is making them happy in this moment is overwhelming. Change is hard.

The story of Exodus is a constant chorus in Judaism. Not only do we read the story each year in the Torah cycle and embody it each year for the holiday of Passover, but we reference it each day in our prayers. Multiple times a day we recite a quotation attributed to G-d, "I brought you out of Egypt to become your G-d". Even more than the *brit* (covenant) between G-d and Abraham, the core of the Jewish people's relationship with G-d comes from this moment, when G-d changed the Israelites' reality from slavery to freedom.

We also know that change was hard for the Israelites, and many stayed behind in Egypt. Even those who did leave often complained that they were being brought to the wilderness to die and they should have stayed in Egypt, where at least they understood their reality.

Today, we look at the story with clarity – it was unequivocally good to leave Egypt. But that was not the experience of the people themselves, and leaving was much more complicated than we would like to think.

Perhaps this is why we remind ourselves so often through our liturgy that we were correct to take a leap of faith and trust in G-d, trust in change. Change is still hard, but it is what our religion is based upon. If we had stayed, if we gave into our fear of something different, we wouldn't be here today. If the Rabbis never escaped to Yavneh and continued the change from sacrifice to prayer, we wouldn't be here today. If we hadn't had the ability to change with the world, we wouldn't be here today.



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## FROM THE NARROW PLACE

The word for Egypt in Hebrew is מצרים (Mitzrayim). There are a few explanations for where this name came from, but the Zohar says that the word comes from the root צר ('tz', 'r', 'r'), meaning confined or distressed. Today, we often translate *Mitzrayim* as "the narrow places." When we were slaves in Egypt, we had to give up so much of who we were. We gave up autonomy, aspirations, and hope for a different lot in life. For many, this narrowness shut out their belief in the Divine, needing Moses and G-d to prove their Truth before the Israelites believed that G-d really was listening to their cries.

When we are stuck in one place, doing one thing, whether we are enjoying it or not, it is as if we have blinders on. We cannot see the possibilities that are close by but require serious change. I look at my children and sometimes envy their intense focus. It is as if the world has fallen away and they are locked in the book or activity they are engaged in. But the moment they are forced to look around and notice the rest of the world, they need time to adjust. It's as if the world has interrupted them and it is overwhelming. It might be easier to stay in that narrow place, but we as parents force them to experience other things and explore the amazing world around them.

Normally, they are thankful and completely forget how loudly they protested. But the next time it is the same argument, as if their minds have forgotten the lesson that change can be good. There is something deeper that resists, something that we continue to work on as adults.

As we prepare for Passover this year, may we take a moment to explore what narrow place we have been in and how we can push past it. Where do we need to let change wash over us and take a leap of faith? How can we notice when we are stuck, who can we rely on to help us see ourselves more clearly? This year, let us remember G-d's words, "I took you out of the Narrow Place to be your G-d" – we can only truly feel G-d's presence when we are out of our own narrow places.

*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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## Visit the Jewish Communities of the Far East with Walnut Street Synagogue

**By Tom Barth**

After completing the successful *Four Lesser Known American Jewish Communities* online series in February, the historic Walnut Street Synagogue of Chelsea has launched another online travel series, *Jewish Journeys to the Far East*.

This series begins on April 9 with a visit to the Jewish community in South Korea. This session will be guided by Anna Jo, who is part of the first generation of Jews in South Korea to establish a Jewish history and community there.

The series continues on May 7 with a trip to Taiwan. Taiwan's Jewish community began in 1955 on a military base, and is now deeply rooted in the life of the island. Leon, an artist who co-leads the Taiwan Jewish Community together with the 102-year-old Rabbi Einhorn, will be the speaker.

On June 11, the series continues with a stop in Indonesia. The Jewish community in Indonesia is reemerging. Community members are united in rediscovering their identity and developing a minhag from Sumatra to Papua. Rabbi David Kunin will be the guide. He works along with his wife Shelley and colleague Rabbi Shoshana Kaminsky with the vibrant Jewish community in Indonesia.

The series concludes on July 9 with a visit to China. The program will explore the three places in China with the most relevant historical presence of Jews: Kaifeng, Harbin and Shanghai. The guide, Pablo Faivel Levinton, who is originally from Argentina, is a fluent Yiddish speaker currently studying a Master's degree in China, where he runs a popular travel YouTube channel.

New to this series for those in the Chelsea, Winthrop, Revere and East Boston areas, an in-person opportunity to watch the series on a large screen in Winthrop may be available. Please contact the Walnut Street Synagogue for more details.

This series is made possible in part by a grant from the Congregation Ahabat Shalom Religious Fund.

The Walnut Street Synagogue was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1993. All are welcome, but advance registration is required. For more information and to register, please visit [walnutstreetsynagogue.com](http://walnutstreetsynagogue.com) or at [info@walnutstreetsynagogue.com](mailto:info@walnutstreetsynagogue.com).

Please watch for an announcement in the spring for a screening of the film *Shared Legacies*, about Black-Jewish cooperation during the civil rights movements of the 1960s, at an in-person event in Chelsea. In addition to the film, the program will provide an opportunity for discussion with speakers who had ties to the movement.

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# An Outdoor Haggadah

By Rabbi Katy Z. Allen and Arielle Sabot

The Passover seder is one of the most repeated and reimagined rituals in Jewish practice. Hundreds if not thousands of *Haggadot* (plural of Haggadah) have been designed for the Passover seder. For a Passover experience inspired by the more-than-human world beyond the walls of our homes, you can use the simple Haggadah outlined below. This may be your complete Seder, or you can bring recordings and reflections with you to your more traditional Seder to share with others.

The following steps invite you to take a walk in nature with your family, or by yourself, and observe the natural world through the lens of the Passover Seder. Find things to symbolize each step. You can record what you find in a notebook, take photos, draw pictures, or bring bits of nature home with you – being careful not to damage or destroy any plants or the landscape. You may also choose to record why you chose each item.

## The Nature Haggadah

*Bidikat hametz* • בדיקת חמץ - Searching for bread

Find something that reminds you of the things in your life from which you want to be free, or want to get rid of in your life.

*Kadesh* • קדש - Sanctify

Find something unique and special to symbolize welcoming everyone, no matter what their various identities, to the Seder and your community.

*Urchatz* • ורחץ - Wash your hands

Can you find a natural cup that holds water?

*Karpas* • כרפס - Spring vegetable

Search for a delicious wild edible or something that symbolizes spring. You might find dandelion greens or Japanese knotweed.

*Yachatz* • יחץ - Break the middle matzah

Find something that breaks down to fertilize the soil.

*Maggid* • מגיד - Storytelling

What can you find that symbolizes a modern day plague or freedom?

*Rahtzah* • רחצה - Wash your hands

Where in nature do you see water?

*Motzi* • מוצה - Blessing over bread

Find something that brings you comfort either by taste or smell.

*Matzah* • מאייד - Unleavened bread

Find something that shows the passage of time

*Maror* • מרור - Bitter herbs

What can you find in nature that looks or feels bitter to you?

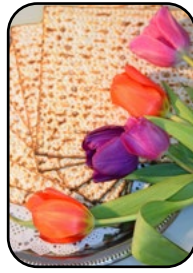
*Korech* • כורכך - Hillel sandwich

Search for two things that combine to create something different and greater

*Shulchan orech* • שולחן עורכך - The festive meal

Find something wild animals enjoy eating.

*Tzafun* • צפון - Afikomen



Identify something you want to share with friends and loved ones.

*Baruch* • בָּרַךְ - Blessing after meal

What do you see around you in nature for which you are grateful.

*Hallel* • הַלֵּל - Songs of praise

Find something you want to sing about.

*Nirzah* • נִרְצָה - Ending

What's something you want to learn more about or remember from your outdoor Seder?

When you finish your nature Seder, perhaps you want to create a collage of all the times you collected or pictures you took.

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



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# On the Origins of the Pesach Seder and the Haggadah

By Rabbi Shlomo Pereira

The Pesach Seder and the traditional *Haggadah shel Pesach* are further examples of the foundational and long lasting nature of the literary, legal, and liturgical legacy of the Jewish sages of the Land of Israel from the early centuries of the Common Era.

Few rituals in Jewish tradition are more widely cherished and celebrated than the Pesach Seder. Few Jewish books have seen more printings over the centuries than the associated *Haggadah shel Pesach*. But where did these cherished traditions of a ritual Pesach meal and its script come from? Where did they originate? When were they established?

## 1. The oldest known description of the Pesach Seder

The compilation of the Mishnah was completed c. 200 by the sages in the Land of Israel under the leadership of R. Yehudah HaNasi. The Mishnah codifies Jewish law as it was developed and applied in the Land of Israel after the Destruction of the First Temple and until its completion.

The last chapter of *Pesachim*, one of the sixty-three tractates of the Mishnah, includes a brief but comprehensive description of the Pesach Seder, the meal celebration conducted to fulfill the Biblical obligations for this holiday, such as eating matzah and retelling the story of the Exodus.

The Mishnah mentions many of the emblematic components of the Seder: the four cups of wine, the four questions, the recitation of the biblical narrative in Deuteronomy 26:5-9, the recitation of the *Hallel*, the *Affikoman*, etc.

The text echoes the period in which the Temple stood, i.e., until 69 CE, as well as the decades immediately thereafter when the hopes of rebuilding the Temple remained high, a fact reflected in the details provided by the Mishnah.

In reference to the four questions, the Mishnah refers to the difference between this and other nights, since we only eat unleavened

bread, we only eat bitter herbs, we only eat roasted meat, and we dip vegetables twice. Three of the four questions are familiar. But what about the roasted meat? The reference to only eating roasted meat but not cooked or boiled is directly connected to the Temple service and the Pesach Offerings. This question would eventually be replaced by a fourth question on why we recline and not just sit, a practice itself mentioned in the Mishnah.

Another emblematic section of the Seder is the reading of Rabban Gamliel's passage, "One who has not said these three words, Pesach, Matzah, and Maror, has not done his duty." In the Mishnah, the reference to Pesach evoked the eating of the Pesach Offering, while nowadays, we use it to evoke the festival observance.

After a brief explanation, the text continues with the recitation of "In every generation..." and "Therefore, it is our duty..." passages recited verbatim to this day.

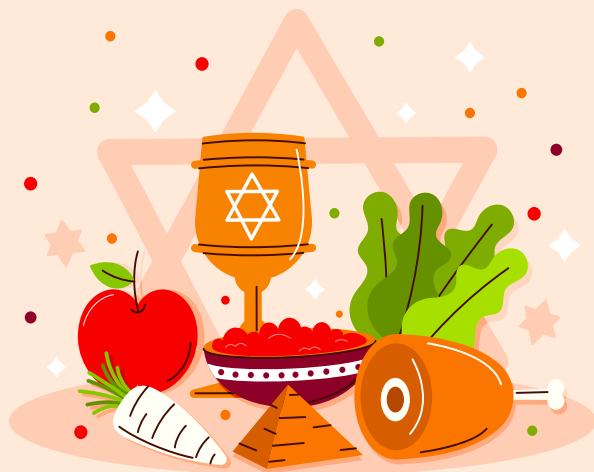
The Mishnah then instructs the recitation of the *Hallel*, psalms of praise. It mentions the debate between the House of Hillel and the House of Shammai on what exactly was to be recited at the Pesach Offering in the Temple as well as the views of Rabbi Tarfon and Rabbi Akiva as to the exact formula of the concluding blessing "The Redeemer of Israel..."

Finally, the Mishnah refers to the prohibition of eating anything at the meal after the *Afikoman*. Here, the *Afikoman* refers to the meat of the Pesach Offering, whose taste was to linger in one's palate without extraneous interference. Nowadays, the *Afikoman* refers to the last piece of matzah eaten during the Seder, which evokes exactly that ancient idea.

Naturally, over the centuries, other beautiful and meaningful passages have been added to the Seder. The core elements, however, were in the Mishnah, compiled by the sages of the Land of Israel just a little short of two millennia ago to record the practices of the Jewish people over the previous centuries.

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# On the Origins of the Pesach Seder and the Haggadah

## 2. The oldest known *Haggadah shel Pesach*

Although we know that the Mishnah contains the earliest reference to the Pesach Seder and its details, it is less apparent when the corresponding *Haggadah shel Pesach*, as a separate self-contained text, came into existence. According to Jewish tradition, the core text of the Haggadah was compiled during the Mishnaic and early Talmudic periods.

In fact, the contents of the Haggadah itself shed light on the timing of its origin. The text mentions several rabbis by name. They are all known as *Tannaaim*, that is, sages from the first and second centuries of the common era. Rabbis Eliezer, Yehoshua, Elazar ben Azariah, Akiva, and Tarfon participate in a night-long Seder in Bnei Brak, which ends with their students reminding them the time has come to recite the *Shema*. R. Yehudah gives us a mnemonic to remember the plagues. Rabbis Yosei, Elieser, and Akiva compete to multiply the actual number of plagues. Rabban Gamliel tells us the three things we need to fulfill the mitzvah of Pesach.

Chronologically, the last of these rabbis is R. Yehudah bar Elai, a fourth-generation *Tanna* and a student of rabbis Akiva and Tarfon. Accordingly, c. 170 is understood as the earliest possible date for a complete Haggadah to have appeared.

In some views, the core of the Haggadah was compiled during the lifetime of R. Yehudah HaNasi [135-217], a fifth-generation *Tanna* who was a student of R. Yehudah bar Ilan and the final compiler of the Mishnah. Possibly, it was compiled by R. Yehudah HaNasi himself.

Others argue that such could not have been the case since, as reported in the Talmud, c. 230, Rav and Shmuel, both students of R. Yehudah HaNasi and then prominent leaders of Babylon Jewry, seem to be discussing its very compilation.

Regardless, *Talmud Pesachim* 116a mentions that the compilation of the Haggadah was completed by the time of Rav Nachman. This



would mean either ca. 280 or ca. 360, depending on the exact identity of this Rav Nachman, Rav Nachman bar Yaakov, or Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak, respectively. Confirming this time frame and strengthening the earlier attribution of c.280, in a Talmudic passage, Rava (c. 280 – 352 CE) refers to the Haggadah as a self-contained book of which people had individual copies.

Naturally, over time, other passages were added to the core of the Haggadah. Unquestionably, not only was the core of the Haggadah itself compiled by the late 300s, but many of the later additions also came from sources predating its initial compilation. Such is the case of the passage of the four sons, which comes from the *Mechilta*, as well as the lengthy elaboration on Deuteronomy 26:5-9, which comes from *Sifrei*. The *Mechilta* (on Exodus), along with the *Sifra* (on Leviticus) and the *Sifrei* (on Numbers and Deuteronomy), forms the core of Midrash Halacha and was foundational for later Talmudic discussions on Jewish law.

Some of the oldest surviving Haggadah texts were discovered in the Cairo Genizah. The earliest findings are fragments dating from the 9th century and include an almost complete Haggadah from around 1000 CE. These texts, which were part of a more comprehensive prayer book, the Saadia Gaon Siddur, compiled c. 860, are strikingly similar to the later standard version. In turn, the Haggadah as a standalone book would become popular in the 13th century.

Be that as it may, the Pesach Seder and the traditional *Haggadah shel Pesach* are yet another example of the foundational and long-lasting nature of the literary, legal, and liturgical legacy of the Jewish sages of the Land of Israel from the early centuries of the Common Era.

*Rabbi Shlomo Pereira is the director of adult education at the Chabad of Virginia, Richmond. He can be reached at [shlomo@chabadofva.org](mailto:shlomo@chabadofva.org).*

*Photo: Sassoons Haggadah/Israel Museum*

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*Jewish Federation of Central Mass Purim event at  
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## Keeping Traditions Alive

*By Batia Shems*

With Purim and Passover fast approaching, I stopped to think about why I look forward to the holidays so much! Of course, it's a time when families gather around the table to partake in a special meal and share their latest adventures. But for me, the holidays mean it's time to recreate the meals and customs from my childhood.

Leaving my home in Beirut, Lebanon as a newlywed, settling in a foreign country, starting a new life with a new language and of course new customs, it became very important to me to keep our culture and traditions alive. I felt that the best way to honor our background was through my cooking.

During the first year in the United States, I started craving anything that would remind me of home and my childhood. What started out as a need to feed my husband and then my children ended up becoming a challenge to recreate the meals that were the aroma of my childhood, especially the special dishes for the Jewish holidays.

Honoring my Sephardic heritage, I trusted my memories of meals and flavors of home as I recreated these special dishes. Sephardic cooking is a blend of Spanish, Greek and Turkish cuisines, with an assorted mix of Middle Eastern aromatic spices. These flavors are a direct link to my mother's Turkish heritage and my father's Syrian background.

### *Passover and the Wandering Jew*

We are reminded during Passover of our exile from Egypt, wandering the desert for 40 years. The dishes served at the Seder are symbolic of the challenges that our forefathers encountered. A good example is the charoset we serve. It almost looks like the mortar that the slaves used to build the pyramids. But don't worry, it tastes better than it looks! The charoset is made of a blend of raisins, dates and sweet wine, all simmered together and later blended into a purée. Sprinkle the dish with walnuts and, Voilà! Without the modern appliances of today, we young girls had to squeeze this mixture by hand! The juice was then served to the young children instead of wine. Charoset was

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## Keeping Traditions Alive

a main staple eaten throughout the week of Passover.

All our meals during the holiday are symbolic of our background and culture, such as the lamb that is served as a main course and is a reminder of the pascal offering. Because rice is a staple in Sephardic cooking, we continue to include it in our Passover recipes. For example, family favorites include an assortment of stuffed vegetables such as zucchini filled with meat and rice cooked with dried apricots, and stuffed onions cooked in pomegranate molasses and of course, stuffed grape leaves. Any Sephardic holiday would be incomplete without kibbe, made with a mixture of matza meal and meat, stuffed with ground beef and pignolis and deep fried.

### *Purim – A Time of Celebration*

While Chanukah is one of the most popular holidays in the U.S., in Lebanon, Purim was even more highly celebrated by the entire Jewish community. In addition to carnivals and costumes, children enjoyed receiving money from their parents to buy firecrackers to light up the streets and scare off Haman. Wives often received a gold coin on the holiday and mounted it onto a piece of jewelry to wear proudly.

The custom of exchanging sweets with friends and family was also an important tradition. While we didn't have the custom of baking hamantaschen, our mishloach manot instead included mamoul - cookies stuffed with dates or nuts, sesame cookies, and butter cookies with pistachios. The poor and needy were especially provided for during Purim by giving tzedakah.

Tradition is a major part of Sephardic culture and perpetuating the flavors of home is one way to share my culture with my children and grandchildren. While many Sephardic Jews from Arab lands were uprooted from their homes, they were able to bring with them the traditions and culture that continue to be celebrated with their families today.

*Batia Shems resides in Wayland, where she delights her family and friends with her stories and Lebanese cooking.*



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## NAZIS OF COPLEY SQUARE

By Charles Gallagher, S.J.

In the previous issue of *Shalom*, Shirley Nigri Farber wrote a beautiful piece on her fall trip to Europe to give talks on Jewish history at Cá Foscari University in Venice. In the final paragraph of her article, Shirley mentioned that she was wary about rounding out the trip with a visit to Munich. What broke the ice was that an old friend lived in Munich, and promised to take her around.

As Shirley put it, Munich's "troubled past" was made a little more palatable due to the warmth of an old friendship. 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," was a final stop on the way back to New England.

New Englanders would not have known it at the time, but there was a Nazi SS official whose office was located in the Brown House who would infiltrate Boston in the late 1930's. Herbert W. Scholz was, as one historian described him, "the central-casting stereotype of a Nazi spy." He would wreak havoc up and down the East Coast setting up Nazi spy rings and recruiting agents from Maine to Connecticut. While at the Brown House from 1932-1934 he kept an office down the hall from Ernst "Putzi" Hanfstaengl, one of Hitler's early press secretaries and Harvard class of '09.

Hanfstaengl and Scholz had their offices upstairs from Hitler's grand offices, where the Nazi "martyr blood flag" (or *Blutfahne*), stained with the blood of those killed during the Munich Beer Hall Putsch of 1923, was displayed.

Scholz was sent from the Brown House to Boston in 1938, presumably at the behest of Heinrich Himmler, the Reichsführer-SS and architect of the Holocaust. (Scholz reportedly had a large

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# NAZIS OF COPLEY SQUARE

framed photo of Himmler on the mantle of his home overlooking the Chestnut Hill Reservoir.)

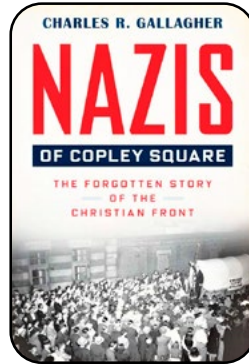
What was made true in the press at the time was that Scholz, new to the profession of diplomacy, made a diplomatic faux pas and was “demoted” to Boston. The circumstances of the diplomatic mistake were never specified, but soon Scholz was named Consul in Boston. In fact, the story about coarse diplomacy was a ruse. Scholz was purposely sent to Boston to run an intimidation campaign against one of Hitler’s longtime foes.

Little-known to Bostonians then and today, the longest-serving Chancellor of Germany during the Weimar Republic (1930 to 1932), Heinrich Brüning, was living in Boston in 1938. Brüning narrowly escaped the Gestapo in 1937 and fled to Cambridge, where he took up a position teaching political science at Harvard.

Initially, he lived as a scholarly recluse. He took no public role, and made few public speeches. But the Kristallnacht of 1938 prompted him to break his silence. He began making public speeches against Hitler, and met variously in Boston with Germans who would one day be tied to Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg’s 1944 plot to assassinate Hitler.

Scholz arrived in Boston in late 1938 to turn the screws on Brüning. When the Harvard professor received a registered letter from Scholz implying that the SS knew the addresses of all Brüning’s relatives back in Germany, the former Chancellor went silent.

It’s no wonder Brüning clammed up. Herbert Scholz was outwardly charming, spoke perfect English, dressed impeccably, and had a Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Leipzig. He was also an ideological Nazi through and through.



Toward the end of World War II, as Germany lay in ruins and with no hope of victory, Scholz petitioned Supreme SS Leader Karl Wolff to write a letter of promotion. “Standartenführer Scholz is the type of leader who in his overall habits represents the straight line of the SS,” Wolff wrote, promoting Scholz to the equivalent rank of brigadier general in 1944.

But it was in Boston from 1938 to 1941 where Scholz did his most prized work. According to a 1946 interrogation conducted by the Department of Justice, Scholz boasted to his captors that his primary secret agent was Francis P. Moran of the Christian Front in Boston.

The 2021 book *Nazis of Copley Square* recounts the secret relationship between Scholz and Moran, the son of Irish immigrants from Dorchester who became one of the most proficient Nazi agents in U.S. history. Until the publication of the book, neither the FBI, U.S. military intelligence, nor any Boston locals knew that Moran was being run as Scholz’s top agent. The book details how Scholz turned a misguided Boston Catholic into a virulent antisemite aligned with Nazi exterminationism.

With its headquarters in the Copley Square Hotel, Moran’s Christian Front organization remained far enough away from the public eye to do Nazi consul Scholz’s dirty work of espionage and intrigue in Boston and around New England. From the Brown House to Boston, Scholz brought Hitlerism to the Back Bay, and did great damage to New England Jewry in the lead-up to World War II.

**Charles R. Gallagher, S.J. is a professor of history at Boston College.**

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## WHEN A RABBINICAL COURT HEARD A VERY UNUSUAL CASE

*By Lew Finfer*

Rabbinical Courts can resolve disputes between Jewish individuals, organizations, or businesses. They are called Beth Din, which means House of Law. They apply Jewish law (*Halacha*) when deliberating these cases. In May of 1968, tenant organizer Ted Parrish organized in 40 very rundown buildings in the South End of Boston owned by three brothers: Joseph, Israel, and Raphael Mindick. They formed the South End Tenants Council, contacted the City of Boston's Housing Inspection Department, and their inspectors wrote up hundreds of housing code violations.

The tenants demonstrated at their office, and then, at their homes. Mel King, the legendary Boston organizer and political leader, also supported the tenants. Word got out that they were going to demonstrate at a service at the Dorchester Temple where one of the Mindick brothers was a Cantor.

Rabbi Judea Miller was Chair of the Social Action Committee of the Massachusetts Board of Rabbis. Upon hearing about the demonstration plan, he visited the Mindick buildings. There, he observed terrible conditions, as the Mindicks were slumlords.

He suggested to the tenant group to take their case to the Rabbinical Court. The Rabbinical Court then worked to mediate the dispute. This had never happened before, where the Rabbinical Court was involved in a social issue, and one involving non-Jews. Many Jewish organizations and synagogues wrote to the Court in support of the tenants, and on August 5, 1968, after 3 months of negotiations, an agreement was signed at the Rabbinical Court. It spelled out the landlords' responsibilities on repairs and tenant responsibilities.

The tenants thought they had won. But then the Mindicks didn't perform the repairs. Finally, on February 14, 1969, the tenants began another rent strike. The Rabbinical Court then fined the Mindicks for not keeping the agreement they signed.

The Mindicks had had enough and sold their buildings to the city agency the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA). What would



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## WHEN A RABBINICAL COURT HEARD A VERY UNUSUAL CASE

happen now to the Mindick buildings? The South End Tenants Council (SETC) met with the United South End Settlements and Greater Boston Community Development and received assistance to set up the Tenant Development Corporation (TDC). SETC convinced the BRA to turn over 56 buildings with 285 units to TDC, to renovate and maintain as affordable housing.

SETC was a strong and creative tenants' organization, and I was able to work with them when I was a young organizer at Dorchester Tenants Action Council. In 1972, tenant, community, and elderly groups spearheaded a campaign that succeeded in getting the Boston City Council to pass, and Mayor Kevin White to sign, a rent control law for Boston. That law regulated rent increases and evictions in buildings of absentee landlords. Part of it remained until 1994, when a statewide referendum repealed control on a 51-49% vote. TDC still manages these buildings today as affordable housing. Three years ago, the group weathered an attempt by an investor involved in the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits program to seize control of their buildings.

The South End, made up of predominantly low income and working-class people in the 1960s and 1970s, then became a high-income neighborhood. Only the housing owned by nonprofits has remained affordable. The original negotiations involved as many as a hundred buildings. TDC acquired 60 or so of them, and is now promoting "The South End 40 Property Project," where the city would revisit the negotiations of the past and make 40 more buildings or land available for affordable housing.

NOTE: Some of the material for this article comes from Boston historian (and my friend) Jim Vrabel, and his book *A People's History of the New Boston*. This book chronicles the history of 20 such neighborhood and citywide organizing campaigns that occurred between the early 1960s and the mid 1980s.

*Lewis Finfer is a community organizer and currently the Director of the Dorchester-based Massachusetts Action for Justice.*

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# THE UNIVERSAL POWER OF THE EXODUS STORY



**By Ed Gaskin**

While the Exodus story is central to Jewish tradition and the celebration of Passover, its themes - freedom from oppression, resistance to tyranny, and faith in justice - have resonated far beyond Judaism. From enslaved African Americans and civil rights leaders to anti-apartheid activists and global struggles for justice, the Exodus has been repeatedly invoked as a

universal symbol of hope and liberation.

## **Leaders and Thinkers Who Cited the Exodus Story**

### **Black Liberation Theology and Civil Rights Leaders**

**Albert Cleage:** "Moses was a revolutionary. He didn't just preach hope; he organized his people to take their freedom."

**Malcolm X:** "Just as the children of Israel had to be delivered out of the land of Egypt... the black man in America has to be delivered out of his land of bondage."

**Rev. Jesse Jackson:** "America, your oppressed people cry out to you, just as the Israelites cried out in Egypt. And we say, 'Let my people go!'"

**Huey Newton:** Co-founder of the Black Panther Party, "Huey Newton saw the Exodus as a revolutionary story - one that called for oppressed people to rise up and take their freedom."

**The Spirituals:** These songs were both prayers and protest songs, expressing hope that, like the Israelites, enslaved Black people would also be delivered from bondage. "Go Down, Moses" became an anthem of resistance.

**Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel:** "The story of the Exodus is the story of every human being who has ever yearned for liberty." Heschel marched with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and saw the Exodus as a moral obligation for Jews to stand with the oppressed.

**Frederick Douglass:** He spoke of America's Pharaoh-like leaders who refused to recognize Black people's humanity, using the Exodus to frame the fight against slavery.

**Fannie Lou Hamer:** She cited the Exodus story in speeches to encourage Black Americans to fight for political rights.

**The Quran (20:47):** "Go to Pharaoh and say: 'We are messengers of the Lord. Let the Children of Israel go with us.'" The Exodus is also central to Islam, where Moses (Musa) is seen as a prophet of justice and liberation.

### **Hispanic/Latino/a Liberation Theology**

**Gustavo Gutiérrez:** "God's liberating action in the Exodus teaches us that faith is not just about the afterlife - it is about justice on earth."

**Jon Sobrino:** He argued that God's promise to free the Israelites must be understood today as a call to free the poor from economic and political oppression.

**Óscar Romero:** "The same God who freed the Israelites is calling us to break the chains of oppression in our land." Romero was assassinated for advocating on behalf of El Salvador's oppressed people.

### **Asian Liberation Theology & Resistance Against Colonialism**

**C.S. Song:** "The Exodus is God's answer to the cries of the oppressed, whether in Egypt, in Latin America, or in Asia. It is God's way of saying: 'You shall be slaves no longer.'"

**Kosuke Koyama:** "The God who led the Hebrews out of Pharaoh's grip is the same God who calls us to resist imperial oppression today." Koyama used the Exodus narrative to critique Western imperialism in Asia, particularly in Japan, Korea, and Vietnam.

Just as the Exodus inspired racial and anti-colonial struggles, feminist and womanist theologians have also drawn from it to challenge gender oppression.

### **Feminist and Womanist Liberation Theology**

**Delores Williams:** "For Black women, the Exodus is not just about Moses - it is about Hagar, the slave woman, who was abandoned but still survived." Williams reinterpreted Exodus through the lens of Black women's survival and resilience.

**Katie Cannon:** She saw the Exodus as a reminder that marginalized

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# THE UNIVERSAL POWER OF THE EXODUS STORY

people must trust in their ability to resist oppression.

**Ada María Isasi-Díaz:** She saw the Exodus as a parallel to the struggles of Latina women, particularly migrant and working-class women fighting economic exploitation.

**Ivone Gebara:** She argued that just as God liberated the Israelites, the Church must actively work to liberate women from patriarchy and oppression.

## The Exodus and Global Struggles for Justice

**Nelson Mandela:** Mandela often compared the struggle against white-minority rule to the Israelites' journey out of Egypt.

**Anti-Colonial Movements:** The Exodus has been invoked in resistance movements across Africa, Asia, and Latin America, inspiring struggles against European imperialism and oppression.

## Indigenous Movements and the Exodus

**Rigoberta Menchú:** "We, too, have been enslaved, forced from our land, and made to suffer. But like the people of the Bible, we continue to struggle for our promised land."

**Subcomandante Galeano:** A key figure in the Zapatista movement in Mexico, invoked the Exodus story to describe the Indigenous fight for land and dignity.

**Chief Standing Bear:** "We, too, have wandered in exile, taken from our lands as the Israelites were driven from theirs."

**Vine Deloria Jr.:** "Just as the Hebrews sought to reclaim their land and identity, Indigenous peoples today seek to reclaim the lands stolen from them."

## Passover as a Universal Call for Justice

Although Passover is a Jewish holiday commemorating the Exodus, many modern Passover Seders have become moments of reflection for all people yearning for justice. Many Seders today include readings on:

**Racial Justice:** Addressing systemic racism and inequality.

**Refugee Rights:** Recognizing the struggles of displaced peoples worldwide.

**Economic Oppression:** Calling attention to poverty and workers' rights.

**Women's Rights:** Acknowledging the ongoing struggle for gender equality and liberation.

Jewish communities around the world recognize that the fight for liberation is ongoing. The Passover Seder reminds participants that no one is truly free until all people are free.

## Conclusion: The Exodus and the Continuing Struggle for Justice

The Exodus story remains a universal call to action, inspiring movements for racial justice, human rights, and liberation from oppression. Whether it is: Malcolm X's radical call for resistance, Rev. Jesse Jackson's demand for civil rights, Harriet Tubman's Underground Railroad, Nelson Mandela's anti-apartheid struggle, Women's movements fighting oppression, the journey from bondage to freedom remains a powerful metaphor. The cry "Let my people go" continues to resonate in the fight for justice today.

From synagogues to protest marches, churches to mosques, the Exodus reminds us that justice is always worth fighting to achieve.

*Ed Gaskin is a minister, the Executive Director of Greater Grove Hall Main Streets, the founder of Sunday Celebrations and a member of Temple Beth Elohim in Wellesley Massachusetts.*

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# A PASSOVER MESSAGE

*By Ted Philips*

Chag Pesach Sameach! As we gather together once again with family and friends to retell the story of Moses and the Exodus from Egypt, we do so mindful of the moment in history in which we are living. As we dig out the seder plate and Haggadahs from our cupboards and cabinets, we know that there are families whose table will not be whole this year. There are still Israelis and Americans in captivity as I write this, and we all pray for their deliverance home just as we celebrate those who made it out of captivity thousands of years ago.

Though antisemitism is an ugly, lingering phenomenon that has existed for as long as the Jewish people, October 7 unleashed a significant and disturbing spike in events across our world, our country, and our Commonwealth. In the most recent available data, Massachusetts experienced a nearly 200 percent spike in antisemitic events from 2022 to 2023, and when data from 2024 becomes widely available, we do not expect any kind of reduction or drop-off.

As a member of the Great and General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, I am heartened to report that we did not take the implications of this data lightly when it was presented to us. Under the leadership of House Speaker Ron Mariano, Senate President Karen Spilka, House Ways & Means Chair Aaron Michlewitz, and Senate Ways & Means Chair Michael Rodrigues, we invested a record \$5.25 Million into the nonprofit security grant program to make sure that every citizen of Massachusetts feels safe in whichever house of worship that they attend.

We continue to work on the implementation of our landmark genocide education bill from 2021. And as part of the Commonwealth's Fiscal Year 2025 budget, we created a Special Commission on Combatting Antisemitism to investigate the aforementioned spike in antisemitic incidents across the state and come up with recommendations for actions that will reduce the prevalence of said events.

Under the deft and capable leadership of Representative Simon Cataldo of Concord and Senator John Velis of Westfield, the commission has now held multiple hearings to receive and digest a wide variety of views and opinions from stakeholders across Massachusetts into causes, impacts, effects, and even how we talk about antisemitism in our classrooms and other public spaces.

Soon, the committee will pivot from its schedule of hearings to begin drafting their report, and I look forward to seeing their recommendations and working with my colleagues to act on those that might involve the passing of legislation.

So watch this space, as you'll hopefully see in a future issue of Shalom not only what the commission has recommended, but what we're doing to implement those recommendations. Until then, I wish you and your families a safe, healthy, and blessed Passover season.

*Edward R. "Ted" Philips is the Representative for the 8th Norfolk District in the Massachusetts House of Representatives*

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# MY LAG B'OMER WEDDING

This story is excerpted from *100 Jewish Brides: Stories from Around the World*, edited by Barbara Vinick and Shulamit Reinharz, Indiana University Press, 2024. Ariella Tishler grew up in Geneva, Switzerland, where her wedding took place. Her husband, Carl, is from Boston, where his father's family has lived for generations.

## *My Lag B'Omer Wedding* By Ariella Tishler

For both sides of my family, as well as for my husband and me, our wedding date had particular significance. Under the chuppah, the past, present, and future swirl together; they certainly did that day in May. According to our *luach* (Hebrew calendar), it was the eighteenth day of the month of Iyar, the holiday of Lag B'Omer. On each of the forty-nine days between Passover and Shavuot, we count the *omer*, a practice dating back to the Temple period, when an *omer* (a measure of grain), was brought as an offering. In subsequent years, this period became marked by sorrow. The Talmud tells us that all of Rabbi Akiva's students died during the first part of this period, often attributed to their lack of respect and consideration for each other. Traditionally, therefore, Jews do not hold weddings during the counting of the *omer*, nor listen to live music or do other things that we associate with joy.

But for Ashkenazi Jews like us, *Lag B'Omer* is an exception. The students stopped dying on the thirty-third day. (The Hebrew letters for thirty-three are *lamed* and *gimmel* which together spell out *Lag*.) On this day you can be married; on this day you create joy, you commemorate understanding between people, you look to unite and to celebrate together. This is a particularly special day for my family because my father's ancestor, Rabbi Moshe Isserles (known as the "Rema"), declared in the sixteenth century that Ashkenazi Jews could, in fact, be married on Lag B'Omer. And on my mother's side, my grandparents were married on Lag B'Omer in Budapest, 1937.



Sixty-one years earlier, my grandmother, sitting close to me, was married on this very day.

Both my husband's family and mine are communally active and inclusive. A beautiful Chassidic custom is to invite everyone – the whole community – to a wedding, and this is what we tried to do. Making our wedding a communal celebration, especially on Lag B'Omer, was very important to us. One thousand miles away in Budapest, my maternal grandparents had a similar idea. They were grateful for being able to invite the community, but they wanted to go a step further. Specifically, they wanted the orphans of the community to share in the *simcha* (celebration). So they arranged to

have the wedding celebration in the orphanage! I have always thought that was an incredible example of generosity and good will.

Ours was a traditional Orthodox Ashkenazi wedding. My husband wanted a *tisch*, a traditional gathering of the groom and his well-wishers, prior to the *bedeken* (veiling) ceremony when the groom enters the room where the bride has been waiting, checks that she is the right person, and lowers the veil over the bride's face. This part was very emotional for me.

While much of the religious ceremony would have been similar, if not identical, to those conducted elsewhere throughout the world, there is a further secular aspect to marriage in Switzerland. Here, you must have a civil ceremony in addition to a religious one. Ten days earlier, we had a civil wedding ceremony in Geneva's former town hall, a beautiful building close to where I grew up.

The two ceremonies – civil and religious – formed a composite experience that was local as well as transcendent, rooting us in a time and place while at the same time connecting us to generations past and emerging. Gratitude is the great enabler of joy.

**Photo: Carl lowers Ariella's veil at the *bedeken* ceremony.**

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF BLACK, JEWISH ALLIANCE AGAINST HATE

*By Colette A.M. Phillips*

In a world increasingly marred by hate and division, it is essential for communities to unite against the rising tides of anti-Blackness, antisemitism, and all forms of bigotry. As we approach Passover, one of my favorite holidays, I am reminded of the profound lessons it imparts – not just about the Jewish experience of enslavement and liberation of the Israelites in Egypt, but also about the shared struggles and resilience of the Black and Jewish communities. This holiday serves as an annual reminder that our histories, though distinct, are intertwined by the common threads of suffering and triumph.

The significance of Passover lies not only in its historical narrative, but also in its universal themes of liberation and the enduring strength of the human spirit. It reminds us that despite our different backgrounds, we have all faced challenges that threaten our dignity and humanity. This shared experience of overcoming oppression must inspire us to forge alliances across our communities, particularly in the face of rising hate.

Today, we witness a disturbing resurgence of white nationalism and neo-Nazi sentiment that seeks to drive wedges between our communities. Those who benefit from our division – whether through political power, social influence, or economic gain – are counting on us to remain fragmented. However, just as in any relationship, be it marital, familial, or professional, disagreement on certain issues does not preclude us from finding common ground. Our common ground lies in our collective opposition to hate and our shared commitment to justice.

Personally, I strive to heed the admonishment of the Prophet Micah who calls us to “do good, seek justice and walk humbly with G-d.”

The historical relationship between Black and Jewish communities has been rich and complex, dating back over a century. Organizations such as the NAACP and the Urban League were founded on principles of mutual respect and solidarity. In the 1930s and 1940s, Black colleges were among the few institutions that welcomed Jewish scholars and academics, creating spaces for collaboration and shared learning. Later during the civil rights movement, Jews and Blacks came together to advocate for equality and civil rights for Black Americans. These alliances have produced significant social change and have shown that together, we can amplify our voices against oppression.

In recent times we have seen notable figures including Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Shaquille O’Neal, Van Jones and Drake stand up against antisemitism, particularly in response to Kanye West’s



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## THE IMPORTANCE OF BLACK, JEWISH ALLIANCE AGAINST HATE



*Phillips with TV personality Van Jones, who recently spoke at a Black Jewish Dialogue hosted by the Redstone Family Foundation.*

harmful rhetoric. And in Cincinnati, Black residents confronted and drove off neo-Nazi demonstrators, waving large swastika-emblazoned flags, out of the community. These actions exemplify the power of solidarity and the importance of speaking out against hate, even when the media may be slow to highlight such alliances.

Unfortunately, the news media often focuses on sporadic insensitivity and inflammatory comments within certain communities, overshadowing the meaningful ways by which we have supported one another.

Today, as we confront the cancer of hate that threatens to engulf our society, we must remember that our strength lies in unity. The fight against anti-Blackness and

antisemitism is not just the responsibility of those who are directly affected; it is a collective struggle that requires the participation of all who value justice and equality. By standing together, we can challenge the narratives that seek to divide us and create a powerful coalition against hate.

*Colette Phillips is CEO and Founder of Colette Phillips Communications, Inc. and Get Konnected! a cross-cultural networking organization. She is the author of The Includers: The 7 Traits of Culturally Savvy Anti-Racist Leaders, an AJC board member, member of Congregation Kehillath Israel, Advisory Board member of the Lappin Foundation, and member of the Community Engagement Advisory Board for the Holocaust Legacy Foundation.*

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## A PASSOVER MESSAGE

Passover is traditionally known as a time of renewal, redemption and marking the Exodus to freedom. However, this year as a Jewish community worldwide, we are still not fully free.

Since the terror attack of October 7 2023, we have been collectively gathering in person at rallies and vigils, lobbying our elected officials for support, wearing "Bring Them Home" dog tags and yellow pins, praying each Shabbat, and awaiting the release of ALL of the hostages.

Unfortunately, as I write this, there will still likely be another empty place setting at the Seder representing the hostages who are not yet home. On a lighter note, as a local Jewish elected official, I have truly seen our community come together more out of the horrors of the past 500 plus days.

Regardless of political affiliation or denomination, it has been heartwarming to see people stand together and support each other. Now more than ever we need to stand together in particular as a Jewish community, especially with the rise of antisemitism across our country and even here in Massachusetts.

In our tight-knit community of Sharon, there have luckily only been a small handful of antisemitic acts, but even one incident is too many. I remember specifically over the summer, one of our synagogues, which proudly and publicly displayed a US-Israel banner outside their property, was vandalized and stolen. This was quite upsetting to learn about, that even in our town, there could be hate and intolerance.

Since then, our law enforcement have done an excellent job continuing to partner with all of the houses of worship, monitoring as best as possible, hosting interfaith briefings and training also in partnership with the CJP Security Initiative. At the state level, there's a newly formed Special Commission on Combatting Antisemitism in Massachusetts, which has begun holding meetings and having hearings. It makes me hopeful that we can learn from what others have unfortunately experienced throughout the years, and more importantly, we can look as a state to educate those who may not know or realize that their actions and words can have powerful consequences.

I feel so fortunate and grateful to have both Senator Feeny and Representative Philips as partners, friends and allies to the Jewish community. They consistently show up whenever invited to gatherings, whether it's a social justice meeting, Shabbat service, event honoring volunteers, or by standing with us after October 7 at Lake Massapoag, when I helped our clergy put together a community-wide vigil.

We need more legislators and leaders to have this type of local level collaboration with the Jewish community, not only in Massachusetts, but also across our country. If there isn't a willingness to learn and reach out to connect, then we will continue to see this unfortunate rise in Jewish hate, which is deeply concerning. I'm grateful for the Foundation to Combat Antisemitism and the creation of the hashtag blue square pin (which I almost always have on). This is another example of how we must educate and continue to bring awareness to the non-Jewish community. Representative Philips also wears his blue square whenever I see him. The pin makes for a great conversation starter as well!

So, perhaps this Passover, you'll invite neighbors or friends who aren't Jewish to the Seder table, where they can learn, ask questions and experience what the holiday is all about and gain a better understanding of our community. I wish all of the readers Chag Pesach Sameach; may it be a peaceful holiday.

*Hanna Switekowski is a Sharon Select Board Member.*

## BOOK REVIEW

### *Biblical Judgments: New Readings in the*

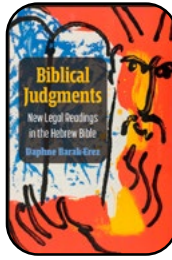
*Hebrew Bible, by Daphne Barak-Erez*

*Book Review by Denise J. Karlin*

Daphne Barak-Erez is a Justice of the Supreme Court of Israel. She has served on that Court since 2012, and prior to being appointed to the Israeli Supreme Court, she was the Dean of the Law School of Tel Aviv University and was a law professor before becoming Dean. Barak-Erez was actually born in the United States and lived in Brookline during her early years, while her father did post-graduate studies at MIT. She has authored a new book on how Biblical stories can be used to illustrate modern day legal issues. While each of its 127 chapters are quite short at only a few pages long, they are each full of weighty ideas that will take much time and thought to fully digest. I was challenged and I was provoked, but I was certainly never bored. This book far exceeded my original expectations regarding its impact.

Barak-Erez arranges the book into six overarching topics: Law and Government, Judging and Judges, Human Rights and Social Justice, Criminal Law, Private Law, and Inheritance Law. She draws from both the familiar stories of the Hebrew Bible such as Sodom and Gomorrah or Joseph's interpretations of Pharaoh's dreams, to the more esoteric ones like the Daughters of Zelophehad, the trial of Jeremiah, or the story of Naboth. Barak-Erez discusses such important current issues as immigration, health care, food insecurity, separation of powers in government, corruption of government officials, right to a fair trial, minority rights, and women's rights, to name a few, in the context of these Biblical stories. Even those who are extremely familiar with the Hebrew Bible will find a story that they might not know or have an insight they might not have had.

Here is an illustrative example of how Barak-Erez approaches the issues. In the story of King Solomon and the two mothers, two women each claimed they were the mother of the same baby and went to wise King Solomon to adjudicate their dispute over the baby. The King, after hearing the women tell their stories, rules that the baby will be



cut in half and each woman will get one half of the baby, a fair distribution. One woman says that is fine with her, while the other woman says that she does not want to see the baby dead and that the other woman should get the baby. The King then awards the baby to the woman who protested because the real mother would be more concerned about the life of her child than about herself.

In the book, Barak-Erez discusses how this case is illustrative of the tension that judges all face in the balance between trying to get a just result and providing due process. For most readers of the story, they are impressed by how King Solomon was able to manipulate the result by issuing an absurd ruling instead of providing the parties with due process where they could each present outside evidence and call witnesses and then rule impartially based upon the evidence.

While most find the result satisfactory, Barak-Erez explains that it is not truly a satisfactory result in that no due process was provided. What, for example, if the judge's motivations are not as noble as King Solomon's were? It is important to have an impartial judge and let due process be the controlling force in the decision making. Barak-Erez wrote, "Fair procedure does not guarantee a desirable outcome, but it nonetheless increases the chances of its attainment. In addition, it bolsters public confidence in the legal system."

This book is not light reading by any measure. It is weighty and makes you think. It also makes you want to investigate the broader issues raised in each chapter. This is not the type of book that you can just skim through and think that it was fun. This book, in my opinion, is best read in the context of a discussion group, a book club or a synagogue-wide reading project, facilitated by a study leader.

The book's theses incorporate both Biblical stories and social and legal issues. And each chapter lends itself open to differing interpretations, given the broader social issues of today.

*Denise J. Karlin is a retired attorney who worked in state government for nearly 40 years. She lives in Brookline and is Recording Secretary of the Board of Trustees at Temple Ohabei Shalom and President of its Sisterhood.*

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## THE SIX FOLD PATH

By Isha Yiras Hashem



I'm not a world-class baker. But every Friday, like clockwork, I make challah from scratch in honor of the holy Sabbath, when G-d rested from creating the world.

The truth is, I don't really taste the difference between most things, so seasoning and flavor mostly escape me. My husband, however, can detect even the slightest missing ingredient – especially salt – so I try to pay attention.

I grew up in New York, where it's easy to buy cheap challah, but now I live in Boston, where making it myself is actually a significant savings. Besides, it sounds good to tell people I'm baking fresh bread. I like the idea of people picturing me as Isha Yiras Hashem, whipping around the kitchen in a floury apron. I wish I were more like that – really. So, please, picture me that way.

My kids like to eat it, and any leftovers go to the chickens. My recipe has exactly six ingredients, and I make it on Friday, the sixth day of the week: water, yeast, salt, sugar, oil and flour.

At around 6 a.m., my Bosch mixer and I – just a sample of a human made on the sixth day of creation – get to work.

### Hafrashat Challah

Once the dough has risen, I perform the *mitzvah* of *hafrashat challah*, setting aside a small portion of the dough in remembrance of the Biblical commandment.

When the Temple stood, this portion wasn't small – it was a gift to the priests, who worked in the Temple and didn't have land to grow their own wheat. Since we don't have a Temple today, we take just a little, wrap it, and burn it. This reminds us that all food comes from G-d and that we must support those who devote themselves to G-d's work. When the Temple is rebuilt, we will give it again to those who serve there.

The blessing is: Blessed Are You, Lord our G-d, King of the Universe, Who sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to separate *challah*.

Most people braid their *challah*, but if I did, I'd never get around to making it. Long ago, I accepted that I can only manage lumps of dough. I call them lumps. Really, they are balls – or oval balls.

If I'm feeling particularly impressive as a Jewish mother, I'll paint them with eggs and sprinkle on sesame seeds.

### The Merit of 40 Women Goes Meta

There's a custom for 40 Jewish women to make challah together in the merit of something. Since childhood, I've had issues with the idea of merit being fungible, so I usually refused to participate – except when someone guilted me into it.

But recently, I had an idea. People are always struggling to find 40 women. Why don't we go meta?

So today, I said that this challah is in the merit of all the people who need 40 women to complete their set of 40.

Actually, I should take this meta approach further – find 39 women who agree to this structure of spiritual merit and commit to it weekly. Then no one will have to scramble to find participants ever again. Let me know if you're interested in joining.

*Isha Yiras Hashem is the pseudonym of Tzipora Zuckerman, a wife and mother in Boston. Subscribe to <https://ishayirashashem.substack.com/> to read more warm and humorous articles about Judaism, family, and spirituality. She can be reached at [ishayirashashem@gmail.com](mailto:ishayirashashem@gmail.com).*



# HAROSET FROM AROUND THE WORLD

**By Ronit Treatman**

Passover is a time of cherished traditions and foods. It is also an opportunity to learn how diverse Jewish cuisine is. Haroset is the mixture of fruit and nuts that represents the mortar used by the Israelites while they were slaves in Egypt. It is the perfect medium with which to explore diverse Jewish communities. Generally inexpensive and easy to prepare, it is composed of the local ingredients of each particular community. You can start by making Ashkenazic Haroset from Eastern Europe.

## Ashkenazi Haroset

3 large Granny Smith apples

1 cup walnuts

Sweet Kosher wine

Sugar and cinnamon to taste

Peel and core the apples. Chop up the apples and nuts. Stir in some sugar, cinnamon, and wine to taste. Mix the Haroset until it becomes a paste.

Sampling a Sephardic haroset, from North Africa, Iraq, Iran, or Afghanistan, is an interesting contrast.

## Sephardic Haroset

2½ cups pitted dates

1½ cups water

1 cup walnuts

Sweet Kosher wine

Cinnamon

Place the dates in a small pot. Add the water and bring to a boil. Simmer for 60 minutes. Let the dates cool to room temperature. Add chopped walnuts, wine, and cinnamon to taste. Mash them into a paste.

The *Conversos*, or forced converts to Catholicism, came to the New World to escape from the Spanish Inquisition and gain the freedom to return to Judaism. The Spanish and Portuguese Jews of Curacao transformed the haroset into fruit-nut balls that are so delicious that they named them “garosa balls,” or “gluttony balls.” This recipe

includes peanuts. Peanuts are *kitniyot* (legumes). They are kosher for Sephardic Jews. Ashkenazi Jews can replace them with the tree nut of their choice.

## Garosa Balls

1 cup pitted dates

1 cup pitted prunes

1 cup raisins

1 cup dried figs

¼ cup grated orange peel

4 cups unsalted peanuts

¼ cup orange juice

Sweet kosher wine

Brown sugar

Honey

Cinnamon

Grind the dried fruits and nuts together. Add juice, wine, sugar, and honey. Mash them into a paste. Form into walnut-sized balls. Roll in ground cinnamon.

*Ronit Treatman is the author of Hands-On Jewish Holidays, <https://www.handsonjewishholidays.com>*



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## EVENTS

### *Shakespeare & Company*

This fall, Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, Mass. introduces the *Jewish Play Festival: Dynamic Staged Readings, October 10 – 12*. Friday through Sunday, four readings will be presented – *The Price* by Arthur Miller, *Sisters Rosenweig* by Wendy Wasserstein, *Here There Are Blueberries* by Moises Kaufman, and *Roz & Ray* by Karen Hartman, featuring Tony-nominated actor John Douglas Thompson (The Gilded Age).

On **Sunday, Oct. 12 at 6 p.m.**, author Rachel Kadish will talk about her critically-acclaimed novel *The Weight of Ink*, winner of the National Jewish Book Award, followed by excerpts of a theatrical adaptation being developed by Kate Kohler Amory and Tamara Hickey. Tickets are on sale now at [shakespeare.org](http://shakespeare.org) or by calling the Box Office at 413.637.3353.

### *Memorial Day Service at Pride of Lynn Cemetery*

On **Sunday, May 25 at 10 a.m.**, Pride of Lynn Cemetery will honor the Jewish War Veterans for their service. All are welcome. To donate to the JWV, please visit <https://www.prideoflynn.org> or email [polcemetery@gmail.com](mailto:polcemetery@gmail.com).

### *Leket Israel*

Join Congregation Beth Jacob, 8 Pleasant St. Plymouth on **June 2, at 5 p.m.** for an inspiring presentation on how 95,000 people from across the globe volunteered in Israel over the past year to help during the country's worst food crisis ever.

Gilad Skolnick, New England Director of American Friends of Leket Israel, will share inspiring stories from beyond the headlines about Israel's national food bank. Believed to be the world's largest gleaning operation, Leket Israel is providing 415,000 Israelis every week with rescued meals. Learn more at [www.Leket.org/en](http://www.Leket.org/en).



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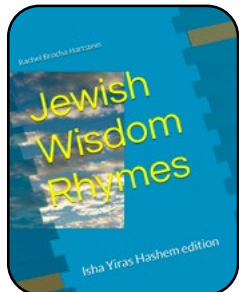
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## *Jewish Wisdom Rhymes – A Delightful Blend of Torah and Classic Nursery Rhymes*



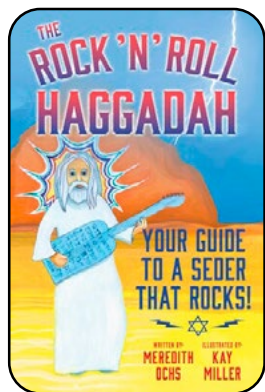
*Jewish Wisdom Rhymes* beautifully intertwines classic nursery rhyme charm with the depth of Jewish teachings, making it a treasured read for children and adults alike.

Authored by Rachel Brocha Hartstein and expertly edited, illustrated, and partially authored by Isha Yiras Hashem, the pseudonym of Tzipora Wacholder Zuckerman, this book brings Jewish values to life in a way that is both engaging and accessible.

Through playful rhymes and captivating illustrations, young readers are introduced to fundamental Jewish concepts, mitzvot, and timeless stories, all while fostering a love for Jewish heritage. Whether teaching lessons on kindness, the beauty of tradition, or offering a fresh take on beloved Torah narratives, this collection provides an enriching and joyful reading experience.

Perfect for bedtime, classroom learning, or as a unique gift, *Jewish Wisdom Rhymes* is sure to become a beloved staple in your home. Bring joy, wisdom, and the warmth of tradition to your bookshelf with this delightful compilation!

The book is available on Amazon.



## *Rock Your Seder Review by Susie Davidson*

If you'd like to host a seder that rocks, check out *The Rock 'N' Roll Haggadah* by Meredith Ochs and Kay Miller, just released on the Simon & Schuster imprint Simon Element. The entire traditional service is there in English, Hebrew and transliteration, with lots of rock references, anecdotes, and takeoffs such as "Maror: What is It Good For?" and "Enjoy Every Hillel Sandwich." Ochs had her bat mitzvah at the Western Wall

and went on to become an NPR commentator, the first female editor of Guitar World Magazine, a *Rolling Stone* contributor, and host of the *Freehweelin'* Sirius XM show. Miller, who has a fine arts degree, is a rocker from Ohio who was active in the late-70s New York punk scene. (The Haggadah includes a drawing of Joey Ramone [Jeffrey Hyman] as taller than the pyramids!) We'll be using it at our seder -- rock on in at yours! For more information, Google *The Rock 'N' Roll Haggadah* or visit [simonandschuster.com/books/The-Rock-N-Roll-Haggadah/Meredith-Ochs/9781668047446](http://simonandschuster.com/books/The-Rock-N-Roll-Haggadah/Meredith-Ochs/9781668047446).



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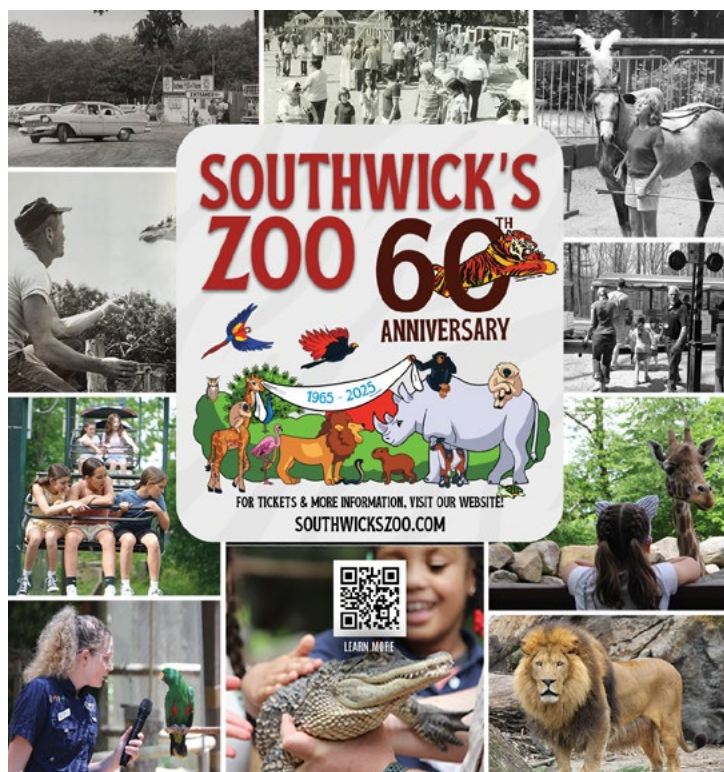
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## EVENTS

### *Yom Ha'atzmaut at Temple Emeth*

*Yom Ha'atzmaut* (Israel Independence Day) falls on **Wednesday, April 30**, and Brookline-based *Hakesher* (The Connection) is presenting *Without an Evil Eye* (בלי עין הרע), a one-man play performed by Asaf Ben-Shimon at Temple Emeth, Brookline - followed by live Israeli music and dancing with the Kafkafim band, a raffle, vendor tables and great food. In the play, which was named a "Best Play" by ASSITEJ International network of artists and global organizations and received an Award for Excellence by the Ministry of Education, Ben Shimon tells the story of losing his vision (from a genetic disease) and becoming an actor. Produced by Tel-Aviv-based Nephesh Theatre. For tickets, visit [tinyurl.com/apr30hakesher](http://tinyurl.com/apr30hakesher), or call (617) 738-5038.

### *Yom HaShoah*

Boston's Community Holocaust Commemoration of Yom HaShoah will take place on **Sunday, April 27 at 10:30 a.m.** at the State Room, 60 State Street, Boston. Join the Greater Boston community to remember, reflect and help ensure that the memories and lessons of history will continue through generations. This event, which includes a candle lighting, community and keynote speakers and student essay contest award recipients, is organized through the JCRC Holocaust Commemoration Committee and made possible by partners and sponsors who include the American Association of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, ADL New England, AJC New England, Boston 3G, Center Makor, CJP, the Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany to Boston, the Consulate General of Israel to New England, Facing History & Ourselves, Hadassah Northeast, IAC, JF&CS, JFSMW, the Lappin Foundation, and the New England Friends of the March of the Living. For information, please contact JCRC at [info@jrcrboston.org](mailto:info@jrcrboston.org).

### *Cape Cod*

Members of the Jewish Community of Cape Cod will host an "Its Almost Summer" get together at Cape Cod Winery, 4 Oxbow Road Falmouth on **Sunday May 18 at 3 p.m.** For more info email Wendy at [wsbornstein@gmail.com](mailto:wsbornstein@gmail.com).

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