

FREE

Shalom

Magazine

ROSH HASHANAH / FALL 2023

EDITION 43

**Local Events
Articles
Opinion**

**שנה טובה
Shana Tovah**



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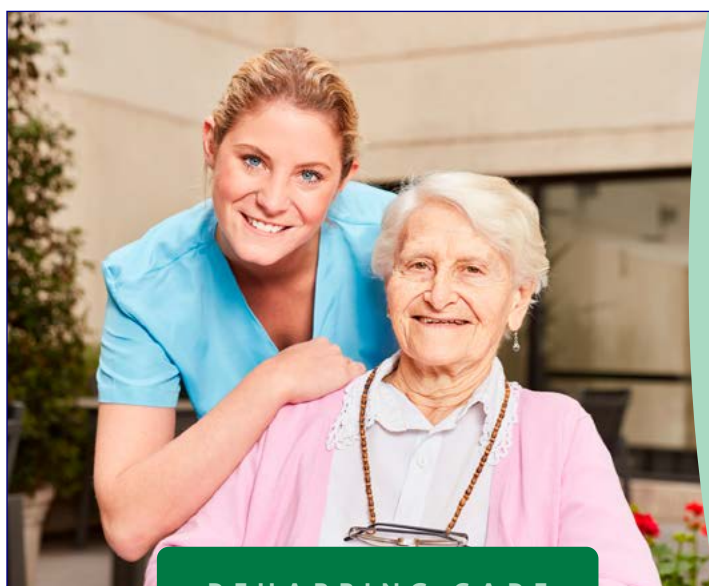
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The Symbolic Foods of Rosh Hashanah

Our sages teach us that symbols have significance. Apples and honey are historically symbolic foods of the Jewish New Year, but there are other symbols, (*Simanim* in Hebrew).

Challah and Honey

On Rosh Hashanah, the challah is specially baked in a round shape to represent the unending cycle of life and creation, a cycle in which there is no beginning or end. Some people even add raisins to make it sweet. It is our custom to dip challah into honey instead of dipping it in salt for the blessing of *hamotzi* at the start of the meal to signify our hope for a sweet New Year.

Apple and Honey

Dip a piece of apple into honey and say the blessing:

Y'hi ratzon milfanecha, Adonai Eloheinu v'Elohei avoteinu, shetchadesh aleinu shanah tovah umetukah

(May it be Your will, Eternal our G-d, that this be a good and sweet year for us.)

Fish Head

Rosh Hashanah means literally the “head of the year,” and we have a custom to keep a fish head at the table as a reminder. It represents our hope to be as a head, and not a tail.

Dates

It is generally agreed that when Israel is called “a land flowing with milk and honey,” the Torah is referring to date honey. Dates, like pomegranates, are one of the Seven Species of Israel.

Pomegranate (*Rimonim*)

Pomegranates have many seeds. These seeds symbolize the *mitzvot* (good deeds) we hope to perform in the new year.

New Fruit

On the second night of Rosh Hashanah it is customary to eat a “new fruit,” one that has not been eaten in a while. Before eating the fruit, we say the *Shehecheyanu* blessing.

There are also customs to eat carrots, beets, leeks and black-eyed peas.

שנה טובה ומתוקה



*Shana Tovah
Umetukah
A Happy and Sweet
New Year*

Jewish high holiday 2023 schedule

Rosh Hashanah

Begins sunset of *Friday, September 15, 2023*

Ends nightfall of *Sunday, September 17, 2023*

Shofar blowing on *September 17, 2023*

Tashlich recited *Sunday, Sept. 17, 2023*

Yom Kippur

Begins sunset of *Sunday, September 24, 2023*

Ends nightfall of *Monday, September 25, 2023*

Yizkor is recited on *Yom Kippur, Monday, September 25*

Shofar blowing at the end of Yom Kippur

Sukkot

Begins sunset of *Friday, September 29, 2023*

Ends nightfall of *Friday, October 6, 2023*

Shemini Atzeret & Simchat Torah

Begins sunset of *Friday, October 6, 2023*

Ends nightfall of *Sunday, October 8, 2023*

Shana Tovah!

from

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Shana Tovah

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Gaby Weltman

The month of Elul on the Hebrew calendar is a time of reflection, when we prepare ourselves for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. This preparation comes in different forms for different Jews. Some will hear the sound of shofar and say the prayers to ask for G-d's forgiveness. Others will work on the festive meal so they can gather their friends and family, some will look for a synagogue to join services, and some make a mental account of Jewish and spiritual actions to present to G-d.

Here in *Shalom Magazine*, my preparation consists of gathering news about the local Jewish communities with articles that will inspire my readers. I am always thankful and happy to see more and more organizations, community leaders and businesses choosing to participate in *Shalom Magazine*. I am also forever grateful to my contributing writers and photographers who share their knowledge, analysis and skills with readers.

I hope that the pages of this magazine will help you connect with the Jewish community and Judaism on any level and form, and unite you with other like-minded individuals who share the love of our culture.

In this edition you will find a wide variety of articles ranging from analysis of the proposed judicial reform in Israel to talking about G-d to children, to reflecting on the meaning of Sukkot and Rosh Hashanah, the history of Jews in the Boston area, the Jewish presence in the land of Israel, and much more.

As I look back on 14 years of my work with the Jewish community in Massachusetts from when I started Shalom Magazine in 2009, I must thank G-d for the blessed opportunity to combine my career of journalism with my passion for Judaism. I'm grateful for all the people I have met along the way who support Jewish media as a pathway to make us stronger and united.

I wish you all a happy New Year, a Shana Tovah, and that we should all be inscribed in the Book of Life.

Shirley Nigri Farber - Publisher



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Rosh Hashanah

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ISRAELI JUDICIAL REFORM PROTESTS IN BOSTON



Protests against the Israeli judicial reform happened in Boston and Brookline during the summer



Shana Tova

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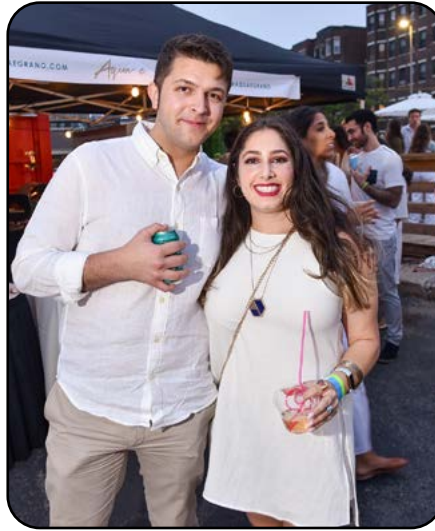
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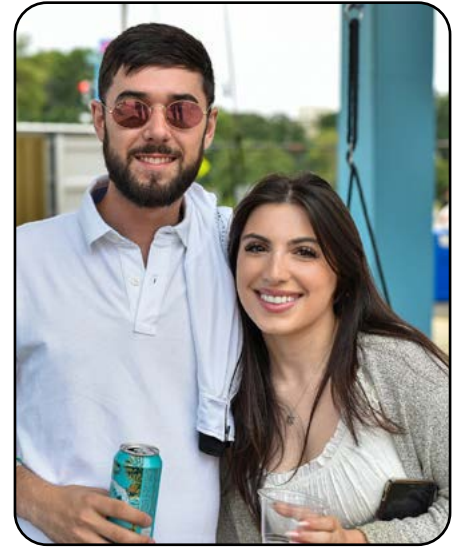
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The Snyder Family of Newton learned that they had won the regional Fly With Us competition on July 18. At the reception hosted by IAC New England, they received four Delta Premium Select tickets for a direct flight from Boston to Tel Aviv from Delta Airlines, four Explore Israel Tourist Passes from the Israel Nature and Parks Authority, and \$5000 for an Israeli family vacation.

The Snyder family's video submission was nominated by IAC New England to advance to the final round of judging in the New England competition, where they were ultimately selected for the grand prize.

Fly With Us was cosponsored by the Consulate General of New England, Delta Airlines, the Israel Ministry of Tourism, and Returning the Sparks, and run in partnership with IAC New England, Jewish Alliance of Rhode Island, Jewish Communities of Vermont, Jewish Community Alliance of Southern Maine, Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts, Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven, Jewish Federation of Western Massachusetts, Jookender, and the United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien.



Consul General of Israel to New England, Amb. Meron Reuben, with Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey for the Proclamation of Jewish American Heritage Month in May

ISRAEL | The Consulate General of Israel to New England

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The Consulate General of Israel to New England Wishes You a Happy and Sweet New Year!

שנה טובה ומתוקה!



YACHAD NEW ENGLAND



Visit to the Aquarium



Matzo Bowl league at Boston Bowl



Backyard Buddies program

Yachad New England is a year-round program known for high quality staffing that provides fun, social support and skill development. This summer was jam-packed with classes and dinners at the Yachad Community Center, community outings to the Red Sox, Aquarium and Museum of Science, the Matzo Bowl league at Boston Bowl, and home visits through the Backyard Buddies program. From cooking to music and art, improv and games to exploring the city and local parks, Yachad was the place to be this summer! For more information or to get involved, volunteer or donate, email NewEnglandYachad@ou.org or call 617-209-6799 x1.



Backyard Buddies program



לשנה טובה



Shana Tova

Wishing you and yours a sweet, happy, healthy and inclusive New Year!

From all of us at Yachad




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The children of Y'ladim BaTeva (Children in Nature) planted crops and prepared garden beds at the Framingham Community Farm, which gives all of its produce to the A Place to Turn food pantry in Natick.



The Jewish Climate Action Network of Massachusetts and the North Shore Rabbinical Council held a Tisha B'Av service at the Beach Bluff Park in Swampscott as the sun set on July 26. Clergy officiating were: Rabbi Katy Allen, Jewish Climate Action Network, Rabbi Michael Ragozin, Congregation Shirat HaYam of Swampscott, Cantor Howard Stern, Temple Sinai of Marblehead, and Rabbi Alison Adler, Temple Beth Abraham of Beverly.



A 10th Grade camper chants V'ahavta from Deuteronomy with a Star Wars lightsaber yad at URJ 6 Points Sci-Tech Academy



11th Grade campers in the Sci-Techkun Olam workshop reconstruct technology into art at URJ 6 Points Sci-Tech Academy



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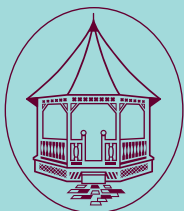
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The Hornstein Jewish Professional Leadership Program celebrates the class of 2023. Brandeis faculty and students joined together to honor 12 graduates who are beginning their professional leadership journey in the Jewish community.

Young Activists Assemble Backpacks for Immigrants



On August 17, the Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action (JALSA) and Jewish Family Service Metrowest (JFS) came together at Democracy Brewing in Boston for a night of young professionals socializing and taking part in social justice, doing both direct service activities and engaging in public policy change. Twenty-and thirty-something Jewish activists first assembled backpacks full of classroom materials for immigrant students in need ahead of the start of the school year. They then sent thank you letters to legislators for supporting universal school meals for all school children. Pictured: Participants assembling backpacks, and JALSA Organizer Andrew Steinberg addressing attendees about opportunities to put their Jewish values into action.



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Havurat Shalom Announces High Holy Day Observances

Rosh Hashanah - September 16

9 a.m. - Community Social Hour w/light refreshments

10 a.m - Services Begin

Location: Andover, Massachusetts Senior Center
30 Whittier Ct, Andover, MA 01810

Capacity: 100 persons plus streaming live on Facebook to increase accessibility
<https://www.facebook.com/HavuratShalomMerrimackValley/>

Tickets: There is NO Charge for tickets but they must be reserved to avoid over-crowding

Visit: havurat-shalom.org

Yom Kippur - September 25

9 a.m.- Community Social Hour

10 a.m. - Services begin with Kol Nidre theme by Cameron Sawzin, cellist

Location: Andover, Massachusetts Old Town Hall, second floor (elevator available)
20 Main St, Andover, MA 01810

Capacity: 300 persons (also streaming live on Facebook to increase accessibility)
<https://www.facebook.com/HavuratShalomMerrimackValley/>

Tickets: There is NO Charge for tickets but they must be reserved to avoid over-crowding

Visit: havurat-shalom.org



Havurat Shalom is a Reconstructionist, multigenerational congregation committed to supporting a modern Jewish lifestyle with education, social activism and spiritual practice for all its members at whichever level of participation they choose. We are an inclusive, welcoming, and engaged community focused on the spiritual and cultural development of all its members, and support for each other and the larger community in which we live. Multi-faith couples are welcome as are folks exploring Judaism for the first time.



As a congregation, we seek to engage with other faith communities that embody and advance our values. Along with being a member of the Jewish Reconstructionist Movement, Havurat Shalom is a member of the Merrimack Valley Jewish Federation, which includes Reform, Conservative, Modern Orthodox and Chabad congregations as well as Reconstructionist; and of Welcoming Faiths, a coalition of LGBTQ welcoming congregations in the Merrimack Valley.

PANEL ON ANTISEMITISM AT THE NAACP NATIONAL CONVENTION



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Governor Maura Healey delivers remarks at the NAACP's opening plenary session in Boston on July 30. Later in the program, Kraft Group President Robert Kraft and recording artist Meek Mill joined NAACP President & CEO Derrick Johnson and historian Henry Louis Gates for a panel discussion led by journalist Joy Taylor on addressing the issues of racism, antisemitism and white nationalism. (Joshua Qualls/Governor's Press Office)

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JALSA ANNUAL MEETING



(l to r) : Award recipients Imari Paris Jeffries, Ann Houston and Joe Rettman



(l to r) : Hillel New England Executive Director Miriam Berkowitz, Blue, JALSA President & CEO Cindy Rowe, Keshet President & CEO Idit Klein, Boston JCRC CEO Jeremy Burton

The Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action (JALSA) held its Annual Meeting on June 20 at the The Lyric Stage in Boston. At the event, JALSA bestowed its Distinguished Leadership Award on Joe Rettman, President of NEI General Contracting, and its Community Leadership Award on Imari Paris Jeffries, Executive Director of Embrace Boston, and the entire team at Embrace Boston. JALSA also presented Lifetime Recognition Awards to Jack Cooper of the Massachusetts Union of Public Housing Tenants, Joe Flatley of the Massachusetts Housing Investment Corporation, and Ann Houston of Opportunity Communities.



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I join the protests because I love Israel



Israeli rally in Brookline



Rabbi Barbara Penzner (left) at a July Israeli rally in Boston

By Rabbi Barbara Penzner

Ever since I returned from leading a congregational trip to Israel in December, having met with family and friends from across the religious and political spectrum, I have been following the protests in Israel.

Every week, the throngs of peaceful protesters in the streets of Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and across the country, have grown. Filling the streets, waving Israeli flags, they call for democracy. In the past seven months, the protests continue to grow and represent Israelis of every background. Meanwhile the current government takes actions every day that undermine the economy, diminish military preparedness, and attack the basic human rights of Israeli citizens.

When Israelis began protesting here in Boston, I lifted my voice alongside them, and I continue to stand with them.

Israelis are begging Diaspora Jews to support them. They ask us to raise awareness, make their case to the leaders of Jewish organizations, and urge our elected officials to stand against these antidemocratic actions.

Israelis are begging Diaspora Jews to support them.

I join the protests because I love Israel - the land, the people, the culture, the hope, and the promise of its founders and leaders. If you are a lover of Israel, remember what it is you love about Israel and join Israelis in protest.

Do not abandon them in this dark time.

For information about upcoming protests in America and abroad, go to <https://www.unxceptable.org/events>

Rabbi Barbara Penzner retired this summer after 28 years as senior solo rabbi of Temple Hillel B'nai Torah in West Roxbury, where she is now Rabbi Emerita. She served in the AJWS Rabbinic Global Justice Fellowship of the American Jewish World Service, has traveled throughout the world on human rights missions, and was an original board member of the Mayyim Hayyim Living Waters Community Mikveh. She and her husband Brian Rosman have two children, Aviva and Yonah.

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THE BOSTON EXODUS

Why the Jews left Dorchester and Mattapan and the tragedies for them and for the African-Americans who replaced them

By Lew Finfer

In 1968 parts of Dorchester and Mattapan had maybe 30,000 working class Jews. By 1972 maybe about 2000 were left and today there are none in these parts of these neighborhoods. How did this happen?

After Martin Luther King's assassination on April 4, 1968 there were what are variously called riots or rebellions in cities across America including in Boston. Boston Mayor Kevin White and the Boston business leaders were worried what next would happen.

The Boston banks together developed a program called the Boston Banks Urban Renewal Group (BBURG) that would offer mortgages to Black families to buy homes. But they could only buy homes in sections of Dorchester and Mattapan that were next to the current Black neighborhoods and they could only get FHA insured mortgages and not conventional mortgages. This is a form of redlining as these Black families could not get mortgages for all the other neighborhoods in Boston and the surrounding suburbs and not get conventional mortgages.

Twelve realtors opened offices in the area and began blockbusting. This means relentless efforts of phone calls, fliers, letters, door knocking to get people to sell their homes by stating that if they didn't sell now they'd get nothing for their homes as more and more Black families moved in. I discovered an article in a 1987 real estate journal called *Confessions of a Blockbuster* where the realtor admitted how they sat around back then making up stories that would scare people to sell.

A group of residents called the Mattapan Organization tried to fight this. They appealed to Mayor White. When his staff asked the banks to make the mortgages available in many more communities, the bankers threatened to end the program and the city backed down. When they asked for support from the Jewish Community Relations Council and Combined Jewish Philanthropies, they were told, "why don't you move? We'll help you relocate to the suburbs." And when this group wanted to sue the banks the establishment Jewish leadership refused to help them because they thought it would make Jews look bad if they were challenging the white financial power structure.



Some people felt the predominantly Jewish neighborhoods were targeted for

this program and not the nearby Irish Catholic neighborhoods because they thought the Jews would be more accepting of Blacks.

Rabbi Gerald Zerlermyer was the rabbi at Temple Beth Hillel at 800 Morton Street in the Mattapan-Dorchester in 1968-1969. On June 27, 1969 he was attacked by two Black young men at his home who threw acid in his face and handed him a note reading, "lead the ___ (swear word) Jewish racists out of Mattapan". The youth did not rob him but just ran off. I will go to my grave believing that these youth were likely paid by the blockbusting realtors to do this to increase fear amongst Jews so they'd sell their homes.

Three temple leaders without consulting their membership arranged to sell the temple buildings that summer and to merge it with Temple B'nai Torah in West Roxbury. A disappointed member got into a fist



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THE BOSTON EXODUS

Why the Jews left Dorchester and Mattapan and the tragedies for them and for the African-Americans who replaced them

fight with one of those temple leaders on the High Holidays in the sanctuary after that announcement. It was a devastating blow to the stability of the community for a Rabbi to be violently attacked and his synagogue to close soon after. And it worked to add to the exodus of Jews.

This was a tragedy for several thousand Black families who began their American Dream of homeownership in what was at first a solid working class area. With FHA insured mortgages, inspections were supposed to be done to require needed repairs on major systems of houses. These were not done. They did what we called “window inspections” as in the inspector drove up and checked the paper, “looks good”. This saddled the new homeowners with repair costs they should not have had.

And with FHA insured mortgages the bank could get all the mortgage money back from the federal government if the homeowners fell even two months behind. So they practiced what we called “fast foreclosure.” The federal government was totally unprepared to manage and resell many hundreds of foreclosed homes so many became abandoned buildings. I lived next door to one of them.

Put yourself in the shoes of Jewish residents who felt forced out by the blockbusting harassment and got no support from the Mayor and little from major Jewish leaders.

Put yourself in the shoes of the new Black homebuyers who soon start seeing more and more of the whites move out. Then they see more and more of their new Black neighbors getting foreclosed on and too

many of these buildings becoming abandoned so their neighborhood was now a deteriorated one in many parts of it.

Community groups did learn from this that happened in cities across the nation, not just in Boston. Community groups joined together to get Congress to pass the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act in 1975 and the Community Reinvestment Act in 1977 to give tools to document redlining and disinvestment and to get banks and bank regulators to change these practices.

You can read more about this in the book *The Death of an American Jewish Community* by Larry Harmon and Hillel Levine. I know this history from having worked as a community organizer in Dorchester starting in 1970 and I still live there today.

I offer free tours to organizations and congregations of the where, why, and how this happened. I can tell the whole story on Woodrow Avenue where three former temples across the street from each other still have Hebrew lettering and Stars of David still on their buildings and are now churches.

Lew Finfer is a community organizer with Massachusetts Action for Justice and a resident of Dorchester. He can be reached at LewFinfer@gmail.com.

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THE NEW YEAR: A TIME FOR REFLECTION AND RESPONSIBILITY

Rabbi Jonathan Hausman

Rosh Hashanah is an anniversary. But, of what?

According to our tradition, it was on this day that G-d created Adam. It was the sixth day of creation. No wonder, therefore, that our liturgy takes us back to the dawn of all time. It is in this context that we read the very first question on record in *Genesis 3:9*. It was a question posed by G-d to Adam.

“G-d said to him, “אֵינְכָה” – “Where are you?”

Adam had just eaten the fruit of the forbidden tree. Of course, G-d knows everything. What He implied with “אֵינְכָה” – “Where are you?” was, “Where are you standing? What is your מְדַרְיגָה, your spiritual level? How responsible are you being to yourself and to your future?”

How responsible are we being towards others?

This was followed up by another question one chapter later in Chapter 4. This time G-d posed a question to Cain who had just killed his brother Abel. God’s question was, “אֵי הֲבֵל אָחִיךָ” – “Where is Abel, your brother?”

It was as if to say, “How responsible have you been towards another?” And Cain’s answer was,

“לֹא יָדַעְתִּי” – “I don’t know.”

“הֲשֹׁמֵר אָחִי אֲנִי” – “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

I believe that these questions are as pertinent and relevant to us today as they were to those original dwellers on earth. G-d is saying to each and every one of us “אֵינְכָה” – “Where are you?” Literally, physically, are you too close to other people at a time when you should be respectful? Are you standing at events and in places where the law is being flouted? How responsible are you being to yourself?

In addition, G-d is saying to us “אֵי הֲבֵל אָחִיךָ” – How responsible are we being towards others? If we are neglectful of the workings of our inner-

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THE NEW YEAR: A TIME FOR REFLECTION AND RESPONSIBILITY



most thoughts, strengths and weaknesses during our own stock taking, how will that effect and affect our responsibilities to our respective families, our community and the Jewish nation? Will we pose a risk to the lives of others and the continuity of this great experiment known as Judaism?

Over the High Holy Days, we ask G-d for forgiveness for our sins, our trespasses, and our transgressions during the past year. According to our tradition, for sins between ourselves and the Almighty, we go straight to G-d. However, if we have sinned against others, we must first appease them before G-d will hearken to our prayers.

If this is the case with regard to regular situations, in which we are hurting the feelings of others, offending others, disappointing them, how much more so does it apply to situations in which we might be presenting a threat to their very lives?

As we enter into the forthcoming High Holy Days, we must grapple with the issue of personal responsibility and cognizance – the responsibility that people have towards themselves and towards others. We pray that G-d will bless us all with a שנה טובה – a good, happy, peaceful, fulfilling and most of all a healthy new year. But, this can only happen if none of us ever again gives the shameful reply of Cain:

“Are we our fellows’ keepers?”

Rabbi Jonathan Hausman serves Ahavath Torah Congregation of Stoughton.




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REFLECTIONS ON SUKKOT

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By David Bernat, Ph.D.

In this article, I offer some reflections on how the observance of Sukkot can bring us into a relationship with nature and the environment.

Recently, I was welcoming Shabbat with my son, an undergraduate Forestry major. After completing the initial prayers over the candles, wine and bread, he asked that we acknowledge all the people and processes that brought the food to our table: farmer, bakers, truck drivers, retail workers.

I was impressed by the sensitivity of his request, and noted that it was fully anchored in Jewish tradition. We are taught that humans are partners, *Shutafim*, with G-d in the renewal of Creation, day by day.

***humans were placed
on earth with a sacred
responsibility to the
“garden”***

It also occurred to me that as moderns, we can live our lives fully distanced from both the natural world and the processes by which our food is produced and delivered.

More significantly, and relevant to the celebration of Sukkot, our core texts are at war with themselves regarding our relationship to nature and the environment.

Here are several examples of this internal tension: *Genesis 2:13* teaches that humans were placed on earth with a sacred responsibility to the “garden,” *Le’ovdah uleShomrah*, to tend and guard. Yet in one chapter earlier (*Genesis 1:28*), we are charged to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the land and conquer it and dominate...”

In the same vein, the guidelines for worshipping G-d highlight the following (*Exodus 20:21-22*): “make for me an altar of earth and

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REFLECTIONS ON SUKKOT

sacrifice on it... and if you make for me an altar of stones, do not build it of masoned rock..."

However, this natural simplicity is in direct contrast to the commands in *Exodus 25-40* for the construction of a Tabernacle of precious metal, wood and animal skins.

And most relevant – our sacred calendar includes three major festivals, Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot, each of which is linked to a specific harvest, and includes offerings comprised of the respective season's produce.

That said, in an effort to frame a system of religious practice divorced from fertility and sexuality and linked to the *Brit*, the Covenant between G-d and the Jews, the Biblical authors and the Rabbis of the *Mishnah* and *Talmud* situated the festival celebrations within the Exodus, our peoples' foundational narrative or myth.

Thus, Shavuot and Passover are no longer about a grain harvest; they mark a crucial moment where G-d intervenes on behalf of the emerging nation of Israel. Most germane for the present reflection is the Torah's rationale for building a *Sukkah* (*Leviticus 23:42-43*): "You shall dwell in Sukkot for seven days...in order that your generations will know that that I (G-d) had the Israelites dwell in Sukkot when I brought them out of Egypt."

It is not hard to notice the contrivance. Nobody is migrating through a desert with live-in booths that they have to assemble, disassemble,

carry and reassemble each day. Rather, they use tents, just as we see among nomadic and semi-nomadic Bedouin today. In fact, the *Sukkah* was a direct function of the harvest.

Ancient Israelites lived in walled cities and small villages that were not adjacent to their agricultural holdings. With the intense work required during the fall grape harvest, the farmers needed to be proximate to the vineyards night and day. Thus, they built convenient temporary huts, rather than travel back and forth each night to their homes.

Today, we build our *Sukkot* in our yards, or on our porches. I suggest still that when we build and eat, or even sleep in the huts, we imagine our ancestors and the direct connection they forged each year with the earth and its bounty. And with that awareness and imagination, we can embrace the Torah's dictum (*Deuteronomy 16:14*): *Vesamachta bechagecha* "Rejoice in your festival."

David Bernat received his PhD in Biblical Interpretation from Brandeis, and much of his writing and research has centered on Jewish ritual from antiquity to today. Bernat has held faculty positions at Wellesley College, Hebrew College, and UMass Amherst. He has a background in the wine industry and uses that expertise to lead tastings with a Jewish educational focus.



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ISRAELI DEMOCRACY



By Rabbi Stanley Helinski, Esq.

The American system of government is founded on the principle of the separation of powers, so that one particular person or one particular branch of government is unable to gain too much power or influence over the others. While many would argue that this system has been watered down over the past several decades, most still do believe in the model of

the United States run by its people.

Few governments have integrated themselves with this concept better than the United States. The three branches of government all require one another. While the Legislative Branch makes our laws, the Judicial Branch may strike the laws down. And the judges in the Judicial Branch are chosen by the Executive Branch, but may not be appointed without the approval of the Legislative Branch. The system of government is brilliant, which is likely why it is the longest surviving system of government in the history of civilization.

No matter what the form of government, it cannot work without integrity. Thus, many governments in our history have fallen because of corruption. Corruption is a virus that infects power wherever and however it exists. We have seen our United States government teeter on the edge of failure in recent years – not because of flaws in the system, but in people intent to put their own interests in front of countries' interests.

Israel, a country founded in 1948, has a parliamentary government where the electorate votes for legislators, and the legislators appoint members of the Executive Branch. The Judicial Branch is an entirely separate part of government that is guaranteed by Israel's primary source of law, the Basic Laws.

The Israeli Judicial Branch consists of secular courts and religious courts. There are generally six different kinds of courts in Israel:

the Magistrate courts, which are similar to our district courts, our housing courts and other low-level courts. Magistrate courts handle criminal matters where the conviction is up to seven years in prison, and civil matters, which upon conviction incur up to two and one half million shekels.

Israeli District Courts are mid-level courts involving more serious criminal and civil matters, and the Israeli Supreme Court is an appellate court (with some direct jurisdiction), much like our own Circuit Courts of Appeal and our Supreme Court. These are all secular courts that handle the day-to-day legal needs of the Israeli people.

The religious courts are separate courts that have jurisdiction primarily over marital (and divorce) matters, but also handle matters of religious conversion and appoint leadership positions for four different religions: Jewish, Muslim, Druze and Christian.

The Israeli Supreme Court consists of 15 judges who are appointed by the President of Israel, taken from names selected by the Judicial Selection Committee, which is comprised of nine members: three Supreme Court judges (including the President of the Supreme Court), two cabinet ministers, two Knesset members, and two lawyers from the Israeli Bar Association.

The Israeli Supreme Court has been known as a significant check and balance on the Israeli Executive Branch because, among other reasons, it has always been able to declare a law "unreasonable." Declaring a law or action of the Executive Branch as unreasonable is very similar to the United States Supreme Court's ability to hold a law unconstitutional, except that Israel does not have a constitution.

The present Prime Minister (of the Executive Branch) of Israel is Benjamin Netanyahu. In November of 2019, Netanyahu was indicted for charges including breach of trust, accepting bribes, and fraud. He lost power in 2021 over the scandal before returning to power at the end of 2022. However, after retaking power as Prime Minister (*Rosh*



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ISRAELI DEMOCRACY

Memshelat in Hebrew) in 2023, Netanyahu was instrumental in introducing a new law that was specifically intended to weaken the judiciary. The proposal drew strong opposition and fierce protests, which continue to this day.

The first portion of the proposal was brought to a vote on July 24, and it passed 64-0 (the opposition walked out of the session and did not vote). That portion of the new law is said to have weakened oversight of government actions and policies in Israel but, more importantly, stripped the Supreme Court from any longer striking down laws as “unreasonable.”

This drew the ire of many centrist Israelis and has effectively split the country. Huge protests continue to this writing, involving hundreds of thousands of Israelis fighting against these changes and the watering down of the Israeli Judiciary (and significant strengthening of the Israeli Executive Branch).

Proponents of the law claim that the Supreme Court has become too powerful. Opponents of the law believe, among other things, that Netanyahu proposed the law specifically in order to avoid further prosecution relating to his indictments after over 40 witnesses have testified against him in the prosecution.

Either way, both sides agree that the new law weakens the Supreme Court’s ability to check and balance the government and, while the United States Supreme Court has drawn a lot of attention in recent days for issuing controversial opinions that strike down

decades of precedent, nobody in the United States government has proposed stripping the United States Supreme Court of its oversight and “check and balance” function.

Oversight, most would agree, is a good thing. As we have seen through the centuries, corruption is rampant, invasive and unavoidable in practically every civilization. The first sign of a failing democracy is the emergence of a dictator, which is not to say that Israel is heading for dictatorship.

However, this step towards strengthening one branch of government over another is potentially dangerous, as it removes those checks and balances put in place to avoid corruption.

Hundreds of thousands of those who protest Netanyahu at least weekly (and not just in Israel but all over the world, including here in Boston) argue that Israel is headed toward a dictatorship and that the Heredi in Israel (the ultra-religious) are amassing great power over the country.

Whichever side of the fence you are on, the future of Israel – a young nation – may be in the process of being defined. If an

open-book democracy is an important issue for you, perhaps take a look at what is happening in Israel with these new proposals – one of which has already passed.

Rabbi Stanley Helinski, Esq. is a family law attorney in Massachusetts who practices in most courts of the Commonwealth and also practices law in Framingham.



Protest in Israel photo by Mikie Goldstein

An advertisement for Lake Pearl Weddings & Celebrations. The background is a photograph of a wedding ceremony taking place outdoors under a white canopy. A rabbi in a dark suit and white kippah is performing the ceremony, pointing upwards. A bride in a white dress and veil is being held by the groom in a dark suit. Other guests in formal attire are visible. The text "LAKE PEARL" is prominently displayed in large white letters across the middle. Below it, "WRENTHAM" is written in a smaller font with decorative flourishes. At the bottom, the services offered are listed: "Weddings | Celebrations | Bar & Bat Mitzvahs", along with the website "lakepearl.com", email "sales@lakepearl.com", and phone number "508.384.3003".

“My Gosh, My Goodness, My G-d”

By Brian Cohen

Just last April, as I was wrapping up the day’s lesson with eighth graders on one of the chapters from the first book of Samuel, one student asked if he could pose a question to his peers in the room. I gave him the green light, and he turned to face the room.

“Raise your hand if you believe in G-d,” he said. Several hands in the room went up, and the rest stayed down.

He turned to me and said, “See, Mr. Cohen, people in here don’t even believe there is a G-d, so why do we learn all of this stuff that’s based on G-d?”

I looked around the room and could see the students staring into my eyes intently. They clearly felt their peer had challenged me with a valid and worthwhile question, one that perhaps had the energy to make it into the coveted “stumped the teacher” category. But stumped I was not. In fact, I was feeling curious and excited by the potential of the moment.

I respected the student’s courage to ask what he must have sensed was a potentially troubling question in a Jewish day school. More importantly, I saw an opportunity to explore this question together. It’s not every day that students (or adults) get to speak openly about their beliefs and perspectives on the subject of “G-d”. In fact, for all the mentioning of G-d as a given in prayer, classes, and holiday events, Jewish day schools tend to avoid the conversation of what students think G-d is altogether.

“As I see it, your question creates a false dichotomy for your peers,” I said to him.

“What?” he replied.

“Your question gave your peers only two distinct options: ‘yes,’

or ‘no,’”-- I told him. “It may be fine to use ‘yes/no’ or ‘true/false’ questions in particular contexts, but for a question this vast, you’d need to be more precise about how and what you define as G-d, and then ask your peers to state if they agree or disagree with your perspective on what G-d is,” I said.

“When you asked the question, ‘Do you believe in G-d,’” you did not specify to which G-d you were referring,” I continued. “Not to say that we as Jews believe in multiple gods. We most definitely do not. But the God of the Jews is described in so many ways over time in our writings, and so our very own notions of what G-d is, or why G-d is, or how G-d is, or when G-d is tends to change over time for each of us as we grow.”

“Perhaps,” I said to him, “it would be more interesting to ask your peers what they think of when they think of G-d, or if they don’t feel there is a G-d, then why?”

“See,” I explained, “no one person has the ability to define for another person precisely what or why G-d is, as our human brains lack the capacity to fully comprehend the answers to those questions. So in many ways, anyone’s guess is as good as anyone else’s.”

I asked him to rephrase the question to each student who wished to share, and to ask a clarifying or probing question when appropriate. He did just that, and over the next 25 minutes, I/we gained insight into some of the deepest thoughts and beliefs I have ever heard middle school-aged students express.

The first theme was that most of the students believed in some kind of higher power, whether they called that sense of something “G-d” or not. Some spoke of a supreme being, but others described a “feeling”





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L Shana Tova

“My Gosh, My Goodness, My G-d”

they get at times or an unexplainable belief that there is some larger order to why and how things happen.

Not one of them committed to a full faith in the G-d described in Genesis, a god of love and wrath, of nurturing and destruction, of such personal communication as with Abraham or later with Moses.

The fascinating aspect to me was the difference between the initial survey posed by my student, which seemed to indicate that the great majority of the students “did not believe in G-d,” and the follow up, more nuanced conversation during which students could express their views, indicating a definite sense of something greater. It was as if the students were willing to say, “I believe in a G-d, but not necessarily that G-d presented to me.”

We as humans have a deep need to understand what and why we are. After all, scientifically we are tiny organisms stuck on a pebble flying and spinning through a yet unquantifiable space at a speed we can calculate only relatively to the speed of the other moving objects. It’s often too much for most adult humans to handle, let alone children who are gaining a greater understanding each day of what the world is and is not.

Young people have sophisticated, even if less developed thought processes. They have big questions about life, and if schools fail to open up opportunities to address some of these greater questions, then we are doing a disservice to students. When teaching Jewish kids, we must be sure to make moments to ask some of the quintessential questions of Judaism: “What is G-d to you?” “What does it mean to have faith or to believe?” and even, “What role does G-d play in most Jews’ identities in the world today?”

For me personally in following my childhood, where I was taught to “believe in G-d,” I went through a long period of time when I would have said that I did not believe in G-d. But that was before I realized that my response could be more nuanced: “I don’t believe fully in your description of what G-d is.” Only once I realized that I could be a devoted, practicing, observant Jew according to my deeply held beliefs of what G-d is and how G-d works did I gain a greater interest in many facets of Judaism.

We should be sure to provide such pathways to our young minds in school, at home, and in the community. Young people often don’t like to be told what to do or what to think. If we present them with one option of “the truth,” it is highly likely that many will reject it by their nature alone. We as the Jewish people can not afford this.

The future of Judaism breaks largely into two camps, in my opinion: engaged and disengaged. It is critical that we help young people feel engaged, connected, and valued in our religion, especially at a time when there are so many competing

interests and beliefs. Judaism has a lifetime of guidance, learning, meaning, and connection to offer each and every one of its people.

Shutting students out of the most existential questions might close the door for them to a future imbued with the Jewish people and Jewish religion. We have to have the courage to engage young minds in moments where they can find themselves within the Jewish people and religion, and to form the connectivity that will last them for years even as it changes over time. The beauty of our religion is its ability to flex and adapt with them.

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.



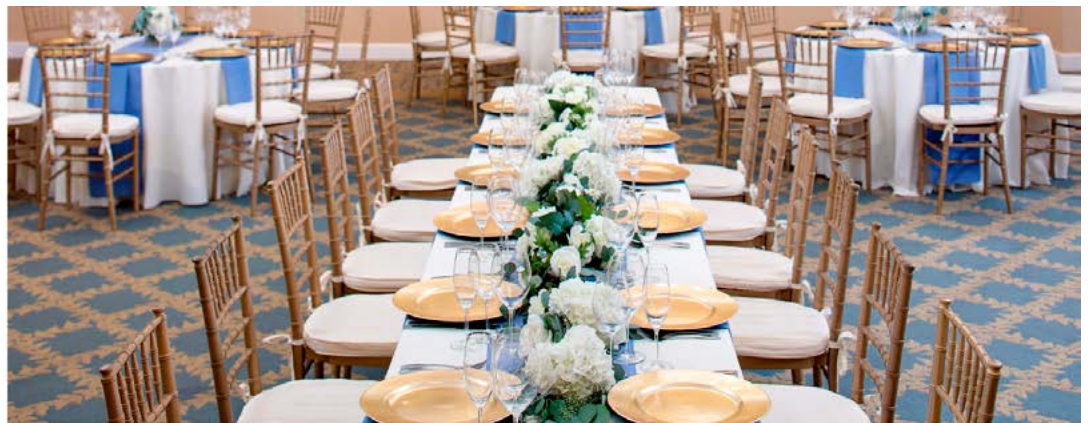
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A Moment of Silence

By Rus Devorah Wallen, LCSW, ACSW, CIMHP

Shalom Magazine recently had the opportunity to interview Rus Devorah Wallen, LCSW, ACSW, CIMHP, a distinguished psychotherapist and a previous guest columnist for our publication.

With a specialization in relaxation, meditation, and self-regulation tools, she helps individuals effectively cope with the stressors of modern life. We sought her opinion on New York Mayor Eric Adams' proposal to introduce "mindful breathing" exercises in the city's public school system. Here's what she had to say:

New York City Mayor Eric Adams has put forth a plan to incorporate "mindful breathing" exercises into the daily routine of students from kindergarten to 12th grade. These exercises, lasting two to five minutes each day, are designed to assist students in managing the stress they may encounter.

Supporters of this initiative believe that mindful breathing could have a positive impact on students' mental health and potentially contribute to a reduction in violence within schools. However, critics express concerns about prioritizing these exercises over addressing academic challenges.

During the post-pandemic period national test scores in reading and math have declined, prompting questions about the emphasis on breathing exercises. Critics argue that addressing academic setbacks, chronic absenteeism, and improving literacy rates should take precedence.

The concept of a "Moment of Silence," endorsed by the revered Lubavitcher Rebbe – Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory – entails a brief period of reflection or meditation at the start of each school day.

This practice has gained popularity since the mid-1980s and is presently either mandated or encouraged in numerous states with legal permission, throughout the U.S. The non-sectarian and secular nature of this concept has allowed it to withstand legal challenges of church vs. state.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe advocated for a "Moment of Silence" in schools, emphasizing its role in moral education and parental involvement. He believed that taking a few minutes for reflection could help children contemplate important values, making them more mindful and thoughtful about their behaviors and experiences. Notably, and even more emphatically, on several occasions the Rebbe expressed a desire for a "kosher" format of meditation free from any Eastern or religious influences, akin to therapeutic medicine – a "MediTation is like MediCation" analogy. He recommended it be administered like medicine, neither too much nor too little, but in a therapeutically beneficial dosage.

In 2015, I presented my work on addressing the Rebbe's call for a kosher and therapeutic meditation format at the Torah and Science Conference in Bal Harbor. I base a significant part of my work on the ideas discussed during that talk, which you can read about at <https://toratherapeutics.com/product/my-response-to-the-lubavitcher-rebbes-call-for-kosher-therapeutic-meditation>.

***on several occasions the
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A Moment of Silence

Although people may find it amusing when I inform them that I start my clients with 5 or 6-minute meditations as a “short-acting” dosage, this practice can be quite powerful when done diligently daily. In the famed formats of meditation (that have some Eastern religious elements) such as TM and Mindfulness meditation, one is supposed to meditate for at least 20 minutes, twice daily.

In my work with people living in the 21st century, I have seen that they don’t give themselves the patience and luxury of taking 20 minutes, even once a day. However, my *Beginner’s Meditation on the Breath™* is only 6 minutes long. Many individuals who maintain this daily practice report noticeable changes within a couple of weeks, a faster result than the months that may be required to experiment with psychotropic medications to find one that is effective, and to get it into the system.

My work has been dedicated to fulfilling the Lubavitcher Rebbe’s request for neutral and therapeutic meditation recordings. If ever the Rebbe’s request needs to be addressed it is now, when we can see the world is in a delicate balance. Feel free to download my introduction audio and my beginner’s meditation along with any other resources on my website. There is a lot for free! Stay mindful, and have a happy and healthy, sweet new year.

For more information, visit: <https://toratherapeutics.com/product/introduction-to-the-beginners-meditation-on-the-breath/>

Rus Devorah Wallen, LCSW, ACSW, CIMHP, specializes in healing workshops, individual therapy, and coaching. She embeds Torah-psychology as she teaches therapeutic relaxation and meditation, neuro-coaching, and sound healing techniques.



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The continued Jewish presence in the Land of Israel

By Rabbi Shlomo Pereira

Jews today are often challenged regarding the historical connection of the Jewish People with the Land of Israel. There are those who, out of lack of awareness or malice, ignore the continued and constantly renewed Jewish presence in the Land of Israel. There is, however, a deeper and even less understood aspect of this connection. It is how greatly such continued presence has shaped Judaism as we experience it today.

Judaism is experienced in many different ways, from the most traditionalist to the most secular. Yet, all of them stem from a common historical and cultural heritage, which is either embraced as is, appropriately adapted to our times, or simply taken into a completely different direction. And this common heritage, at its core, bears testimony to the contributions made possible by the continued Jewish presence in the Land of Israel.

What follows is a brief list of such contributions:

- The compilation of the *Mishnah*, the first comprehensive and public written rendition of Jewish Law, was completed c. 200 by the sages in Galilee under the leadership of R. Yehudah HaNasi (135-217). The *Mishnah* is a set of 63 tractates, organized in six parts called Orders. It contains 525 chapters and 4,224 entries recording civil, criminal, and religious rulings over the previous five centuries.
- According to some opinions, the core of the *Haggadah* was compiled in the second century, as the *Mishnah* includes large sections of its text. Regardless, the *Haggadah* is already referred to in a Talmudic passage dated to the first half of the 300s as a self-contained book of which people had individual copies.

- A mathematically-based Hebrew Calendar was adopted by the *Sanhedrin* in 359. Until then, the calendar was declared monthly, based on eyewitness reports of the new moon, a practice that was no longer viable under the hostile environment at the time. The new calendar was developed by Hillel II, the Head of the *Sanhedrin*, and its adoption marks the last decision of the *Sanhedrin* to be universally accepted in the Jewish world. It is the Hebrew Calendar as we know it today.
- The compilation of the *Talmud* of the Land of Israel was completed c. 400. The *Talmud* is a written record of the discussions on the *Mishnah* that took place over the previous two centuries in the academies of Israel, mostly in the Galilee. Large parts of the text were lost and other parts only exist in fragmentary form. What has reached us covers totally or partially 38 of the 63 volumes, in four of the six Orders of the *Mishnah*.
- R. Eleazar HaKalir (c.570–c.640) composed, c. 600, hundreds of liturgical poems, for Shabbat, festivals, special Sabbaths, weekdays of festive character, and fast days. Many are included in the Ashkenazic liturgical rite, including *Kinnot* for Tisha B'Av, *Selichot* for the days before the High Holidays, several pieces of the Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur services, special prayers for rain in the fall on Shemini Atzeret and for dew on Passover.
- Between the late 500s and late 900s, in Jerusalem and in the Galilee, most notably in Tiberias, generations of scribes, known as the bearers of the *mesorah* (Tradition), developed the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible, which features the most authoritative readings of the text and its standardized division into verses and paragraphs. This is the Hebrew Bible as we know it.



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The continued Jewish presence in the Land of Israel

• The sages of Tiberias, together with the Masoretic text the Hebrew Bible, developed a complete system of vowels, punctuation, and cantillation marks, the so-called Tiberian system of Hebrew punctuation. This is the system of Biblical Hebrew as we know it today.

• During the 1500s the mystics living in Safed, including R. Moshe Cordovero (1522-1570), R. Yitzchak Luria (1534-1572), and R. Chaim Vital (1542-1620), revived the study of Jewish mysticism. Their contributions led to an outburst in Kabbalistic teachings, which had a widespread and long-lasting impact.

• The Kabbalah Shabbat service, a collection of songs and psalms recited on Friday night before the evening service, originated in the 1500s among the mystics in Safed. Its most emblematic hymn is *Lecha Dodi* (Come My Beloved) inspired by the *Talmud*, which refers to rabbis going out to the fields to greet Shabbat. To this day, it is customary in many synagogues to turn east, usually the back of the sanctuary for the last stanza in order to symbolically welcome Shabbat.

• R. Yosef Karo (1488-1575), a prolific author, is best known for his systematization of Jewish Law. In 1555 in Safed, he completed the *Shulchan Aruch* (Prepared Table), which was first printed in Venice in



1565. It remains to this day the most authoritative Code of Jewish Law.

• R. Israel Najara of Gaza (c.1550-c.1625) is known for his hundreds of liturgical poems. Among his best known are *Yah Ribon Olam* (Lord of the World), a Shabbat song in Aramaic, and his *Ketubah le-Chag HaShavuot* (Marriage Contract for Shavuot), read in many Sephardic communities on Shavuot.

To be noted, this is not intended, neither in its content nor its time frame, as a comprehensive list. It is enough, however, to establish in a conclusive manner that the continued Jewish presence in the Land of Israel throughout the

centuries has bequeathed the rest of the Jewish world a wide array of foundational contributions that shape the Jewish experience today in its many different forms. Indeed, paraphrasing Isaiah, Jewish tradition never ceased “coming out of Zion.”

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

Printed and hand-colored map of the Land of Israel oriented west (1593). Credit: The Howard I. Golden Map Collection at the National Library of Israel.



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CENTRAL MASS



The Central Mass Jewish Community celebrated Israel at 75 at Mechanics Hall in Worcester at the end of April



Rabbi Josh Warshawsky Scholar-In-Residence at the Congregation Beth Israel, Worcester in June



Photos: Bruce Wahle




Jewish Healthcare Center Golf Tournament at the Haven Country Club on July 24

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CENTRAL MASS



*Jewish Heritage Day was celebrated on June 25 at Polar Park in Worcester for the third straight year. Summer Israeli emissaries joined Jewish Federation Executive Director Steven Schimmel and Outreach Director Mindy Hall for the ceremonial first pitch.
Photos: Bruce Wahle*



The Young Adult Division (YAD) of the Jewish Federation of Central Mass welcomed over 50 people at their annual picnic brunch on August 13 at Dean Park in Shrewsbury



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BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND



By Yosef Rodrigues

One of the more significant events in the Jewish world marks the new year of humanity, otherwise known as Rosh Hashanah, which happens during this particular time of the calendar.

Rosh Hashanah, translated to “Head of the Year” in Hebrew, is more than a religious celebration. Rosh Hashanah is a cosmic opening where we can plant seeds to determine how our reality will unfold in the new year.

In two days, thousands of people from all Jewish backgrounds and all walks of life will gather with the same goal of optimism and opportunity. They will use the sophisticated technology of the shofar and many more tools such as prayers and special meditations passed down for centuries, with the commitment to uproot the negative seeds we have planted this past year. And they will aim to replace them with positive seeds, along with a dedication to change genuinely, because they are committed to making better choices for themselves, their families, their community, and the world.

Jewish sages explain that our souls are born anew at this time. Just as a child’s physical DNA is encoded at birth, a person’s spiritual DNA is rewritten for the year on Rosh Hashanah. And it is rewritten according to our desires. They recommend we take this time to visualize ourselves a year from now. What do we want to have accomplished by Rosh Hashanah 2024?

Visualization entails substituting restrictive thoughts with unlimited views. It means replacing “I tried” with “I’m doing,” “I can’t” with “I can,” “no one will ever love me” with “I love myself,” or, “my hapless colleagues told me I’d never amount to anything” with “I can do anything I set my mind to.”

Dismissing the pitfalls of our inherent logic and practicalities, we can mull over the idea of our greatest dreams coming true. Doing so lays the groundwork to attain them. This is the week to drown ourselves in new colors, better emotions, and triumphs and if we’re doing it right, we can project that splendor we see in ourselves. Or we can dream about how much we can accomplish in the next 12 months. This is a time when we see ourselves in the best light and can lift those around us.

Once we start thinking about what we want to achieve, we envision ourselves with those accomplishments. We will find that as the year



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unfolds, those opportunities will come our way as long as we continue to hold fast to our thoughts.

Life is but a dream...if we let it be. So, here's the challenge: we are surrounded by people who always seem to equate dreaming and fantasizing with wasting one's life and forcing us "to be practical" and "get our heads out of the clouds."

Fortunately, Rosh Hashanah is an excellent opportunity to teach us otherwise, that dreaming about the impossible is possible, because everything is possible! Most people don't achieve what they want because they don't dare to dream.

It is also imperative to be reminded that the ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are equally vital. These special days of repentance are seen as a commencement of a transformation. For most people, Rosh Hashanah works as the opening of a trial that lengthens until Yom Kippur.

Unlike most trials which are intended to decree responsibility for previous deeds, this is an unusual one. During this period, there is an added dimension: regulating what can be done about forthcoming actions.

The ten days of penitence, also known as *Teshuvah*, are crucial to the outcome of the trial, since our verdict is determined by our approach regarding our transgressions and our efforts to repair them by changing ourselves.

The efficacy of the holiday becomes more robust when a third element is added to this process. Besides repentance (*Teshuvah*) and prayer (*Tefillah*), charity (*Tzedakah*) is the third component needed and highly recommended for this powerful festival.

As it is written in a famous religious poem (*pyyut*) called *unetanah tokef*, "to avert the severe decree," this is a time to reflect on the fact

that Rosh Hashanah is an opportunity to inscribe a person's shift for the coming year. Thus, we move through these three actions to seal that change until Yom Kippur, the "Day of Atonement."

While prayer can be self-examination and a plea to transform our inner traits and character, the feeling of remorse is also in the picture. In the story of Job, repentance was marked with the tearing of robes and putting on sackcloth to show G-d that we are all required to right the ship of our failures with an eye to the future of a better version of ourselves.

Consequently, a resolve to change and a will to repair the effects of one's faults exceptionally boosts customary religious services.

From a spiritual perspective, we know we are all connected. When one person changes their consciousness, it creates a shift for another person halfway across the globe. Scientists have also proven this in what is now known as quantum physics. We affect each other in many ways.

Even from just a physical point of view, think about this: it took only 19 people intent on carrying out so much negativity on 9/11 to inflict so much grief, and it has changed our lives forever. Now imagine what thousands of people with a specific purpose can do when their intent is transformation and bringing light! We can choose right now to do one small thing, one small change that will make us a better version of ourselves.

Yosef Rodrigues earned a Ph.D. in Portuguese Studies from Aberta University in partnership with Brown University with a dissertation on Fernando Pessoa's poetry and Jewish mysticism. He 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 and the author of the Portuguese book "À Luz da Kabbalah" (publ. Guerra & Paz).

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**RESOURCE FOR MASSACHUSETTS JEWS
OF COLOR NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED**

By Mathew Helman and Susie Davidson

The Boston-based nonprofit organization Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action (JALSA) has served as an avenue to activism and community for Jewish residents of Massachusetts for over 20 years. “Leadership and Engagement,” a recent initiative centering and elevating Jews of Color in JALSA’s activism, has earned impressive national recognition.

JALSA’s Jews of Color Initiative has been included in Slingshot’s annual, highly selective “10 to Watch” list of organizations and projects across North America that respond to current and timely needs in the Jewish community and beyond. Slingshot is a prominent Jewish philanthropic organization that engages young Jewish philanthropists to make lasting impacts on their communities.

“Leadership and Engagement” offers Jews of Color with a passion for social justice meaningful opportunities to engage with JALSA’s work in Massachusetts and around the country. The initiative seeks to address barriers that Jews of Color face to equitable inclusion and leadership, particularly within spaces dedicated to Jewish social justice.

The effort, which began as a state-focused initiative, now includes Jews of Color from around the country who are seeking connections with social justice issues from the perspective of their varied and complementary identities. “It is a deeply meaningful honor for JALSA to be recognized as a ‘10 to Watch’ organization by such an impactful organization as Slingshot,” noted Cindy Rowe, JALSA’s President and CEO. “We are eager to more fully realize the promise of our Jews of Color Leadership and Engagement Initiative, and that work will be profoundly strengthened by being highlighted by Slingshot this year,” she said.

“10 to Watch” builds on Slingshot’s history of showcasing innovative ideas and investing in positive change. Applicants must represent an organization or a project of an organization that serves a North American audience and offers new, fresh ideas to address unique and relevant concerns.

In addition to building out its Jews of Color Leadership and Engagement Initiative, JALSA has sought to further amplify the importance of the relationship between the Jewish community and the Black community, as well as support and celebrate those who share both identities. At its Annual Meeting this year, JALSA honored Embrace Boston and its Executive Director, Imari Paris Jeffries, with



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Also earlier this year, JALSA President Cindy Rowe partnered with Bithiah Carter, President and CEO of New England Blacks in Philanthropy (NEBiP) to author a well-received column in Commonwealth Magazine on the history of the Jewish community and Black community as vital partners during America's civil rights movement. The column also addressed the urgent need for these communities to reinvigorate that alliance in the face of the current white supremacy movement and other existential threats to democracy.

"This initiative promises to innovate how the Jewish community approaches social justice activism," said JALSA Board Member and Jews of Color Advisory Committee Member Jordan Berg Powers. "By engaging and centering those of us who share multiple identities, we strengthen our bonds with our allies and deepen the perspective and impact our activism achieves."

In Rowe's remarks at JALSA's Annual Meeting, she noted that the forces of white supremacy were inciting antisemitism and bigotry throughout our country. "But at JALSA," she said, "our fuel comes from Leviticus 19:16, in which we are told, 'Do not stand idly by, when the blood of your neighbor is being shed.' At this pivotal moment, let me assure you, JALSA will not be standing idly by."

Those interested in learning more about JALSA's Jews of Color Leadership and Engagement Initiative or about JALSA's work on legislative activism and social justice are encouraged to visit JALSA.org for more details, or to contact the organization's staff directly.

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Antisemitism, Book Burning and Nazi Propagandist Julius Streicher's Goals

On Oct. 27, 2018, during a tranquil Shabbat service in the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, lone gunman Robert Gregory Bowers killed 11 Jews and wounded others; some of the victims had survived the Holocaust.

This horrific incident, one of the deadliest antisemitic attacks in America, caused a seismic shock both nationally and internationally. It was, however, only the tip of the proverbial iceberg.

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL), which tracks antisemitic occurrences in the U.S., reported 3697 such incidents in 2022, representing a rise of 36 percent from the prior year. The Southern Poverty

Law Center documented 1225 hate and extremist groups in the U.S. for the same year.

Acts of hatred, bias, persecution, and oppression, especially antisemitic events, are hardly new. One can trace the phenomenon throughout biblical times, from the exile of Jews in Egypt in the Book of Exodus to the blood libel and deicide myths engendered by the Gospels of Matthew and John, to today's current outbreaks of antisemitic manifestations, as in the 2017 "Unite the Right" march in Charlottesville. There, white supremacists chanted "Jews will not replace us!" along with the Nazi racial motto "Blood and Soil."

Julius Streicher (1895-1946), Hitler's faithful disciple and propagandist since the dawn of Nazism in Munich in 1923, peered through the lens of biblical and secular history as well as then-current events to advance his antisemitic goal of eventually annihilating Jews.

He utilized examples from this research in his writings, publications and speeches and included graphic visual images of Jews in his semi-pornographic, crude newspaper *Der Stürmer*, all of which polluted the minds of Germans. His racial tenets and tasteless Jewish stereotypes even revolted the Nazi faithful.

This antisemitic work of this "Beast of Nuremberg" met its demise at the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg, Streicher's home base, where he was convicted of Count Four Crimes against Humanity, and hanged on Oct. 16, 1946.

Upon the gallows, he cried out his final words: "Heil Hitler," and "Purim Fest 1946," considering himself being executed by hanging like Haman, the ancient persecutor of the Jews (*Book of Esther*, 7:1).

In addition to the surge of antisemitism today, there is a current obsession about the education of children that recalls the perverse teachings and pedagogical practices that occurred during the Third Reich.

KRISTALLNACHT 85th YEAR COMMEMORATION

Kristallnacht and the Anti-Semitism of Adolf Hitler: On the Interaction of Malicious Intentions and Unplanned Circumstances

Professor Michael S. Bryant



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Antisemitism, Book Burning and Nazi Propagandist Julius Streicher's Goals

On May 10, 1933, exactly 90 years ago at the outset of the Nazi era and under the consenting, watchful eye of Nazi officials, students from 30 university campuses burned books to prevent Jewish, pacifist and Marxist works from "contaminating" German minds.

Even Eric Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, its film version a 2023 Oscar Best Picture winner, was burned, as was Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*.

Julius Streicher himself orchestrated the book burning event in Nuremberg. Currently, books are not burned; rather, growing campaigns of censorship have evolved exponentially. In 2023, the American Library Association's Office of Intellectual Freedom listed 2571 books on race, characters of color, or the LGBTQ+ community that moralists have successfully prevented young readers from pursuing.

Conservative or right-wing politicians also currently decry the teaching of Critical Race Theory in educational curricula. And in the 1930s, Julius Streicher insisted on teaching children the subject of race by upholding the belief that the Aryan race was superior to the Jewish "race" or religion, which was a bacteria that afflicted the biologically healthy body of Germany.

The three perverse children's readers his publishing house printed sickened the minds of the youth.

It is easy to place Streicher's antisemitic writings and caricatures into the dustbins of history, but they are resurrected time and time again. And so by reversing Streicher's mindset of contaminating the vision of Jews in the Weimar and Nazi eras, it is hoped that today



we can elucidate and counter this particular publisher's extreme and long-lasting hatred of Jews.

Examining the historical past in the Third Reich can oblige us to be more aware of society's vulnerability to prejudice. This is true even more so today, with messages of hate widely disseminated across social media and the internet.

In 2013, decades after Streicher and *Der Stürmer* faded into history, the neo-Nazi, white supremacist Andrew Anglin brought to light Streicher's tabloid's mission and founded the hate-driven website *The Daily Stormer*.

His desire to imitate the tone and style of *Der Stürmer* quickly became obvious to reviewers: "A recently leaked style guide makes the publication's aesthetic goals and ethos explicit. 'The reader is at first drawn in by curiosity or the naughty humor, and is slowly awakened to reality by repeatedly reading the same points.'" (*The New Yorker*, 2018).

In the dark corners of the web antisemitism still appears, bringing to mind Albert Camus's conclusion to his 1947 novel *The Plague*: "The plague bacillus never dies or disappears for good; that it can lie dormant for years and years in furniture and linen chests; that it bides its time in bedrooms, cellars, trunks, and bookshelves; and that perhaps the day would come when, for the bane and the enlightening of men, it would rouse up its rats again and send them forth to die in a happy city." Unfortunately, with the rise of antisemitism, that day is already here.

Prof. John J. Michalczyk is the Co-Director of the Jewish Studies Program at Boston College.

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RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND ABORTION LAWS

By Denise J. Karlin

On June 24, 2022, The Supreme Court of the United States dropped a bombshell on established Constitutional Law when it overturned in a 5-1-3 vote the then nearly 50-year-old precedent of a Constitutional right to an abortion that was set forth in *Roe v. Wade*. In *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, five Justices found that *Roe v. Wade* was erroneously decided and should be overturned¹. The *Dobbs* Court held that laws and regulations pertaining to abortion were solely within the purview of each individual state and that there was no guarantee in the Constitution of the United States to access an abortion. Within a very short time period, many groups started filing lawsuits based upon a number of legal theories. One of the most innovative and creative of these legal theories centered upon the theory that the restrictive laws violate an individual's freedom of religion.

Since the *Dobbs* decision was issued in June 2022, there have been approximately fifteen lawsuits in eight different states which claim that those states' abortion bans or restrictions were unconstitutional based upon a First Amendment religious liberty argument. These lawsuits have been filed either solely by Jewish organizations and individuals or by groups of plaintiffs containing both Jews and Christians. Essentially, these lawsuits make one or both of the following arguments. One argument is that the person filing the lawsuit has a sincerely held religious belief, based upon the teachings of their religion, that a woman has a right to choose an abortion, especially in cases where her health could be adversely affected if she were to remain pregnant, but also in other situations as well, and that by restricting her ability to obtain an abortion, her free exercise of religion, as guaranteed by the First Amendment, has been violated. The other branch of the argument is that abortion prohibitions, while usually not couched in specifically religious terms, are imposing a certain religious viewpoint upon people who do not hold that particular viewpoint and thus reflect a government imposition of certain religious values upon the general public in violation of the First Amendment prohibition of government establishing a religion. So far, none of these cases has progressed far enough along to produce any definitive Court rulings in any of the jurisdictions where they have been filed. The process is likely to be a long and arduous one with many appeals. The issue may ultimately find its way to the United States Supreme Court.

As with just about any aspect of Jewish law, there are differing interpretations in Talmudic and Rabbinic writings as to the specifics of when an abortion is allowed in Judaism, and it is clear that Judaism does not adhere to the Roman Catholic and some other Christian viewpoints that the fetus becomes a separate human being immediately upon conception. The primary Jewish source for this argument is found in *Exodus 21:22-23* which states that "When (two or more) parties fight, and one of them pushes a pregnant woman and a miscarriage results, but no other damage ensues, the one responsible shall be fined according as the woman's husband may exact, the payment to



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be based on reckoning. But if other damage ensues, the penalty shall be life for life.” This passage has been commonly interpreted to say that an unborn child should be treated as property and not as a person. Additionally, in the *Talmud*, one source states that prior to 40 days of gestation, the fetus has no status whatsoever. One Talmudic authority states that prior to 40 days the fetus is “mere water.” *Yevamot* 69b. In Rabbinic writings, Rashi has stated unequivocally that the fetus is not a person until birth while Maimonides has called the fetus that endangers a mother’s life, even during the birthing process, a “pursuer intending harm (to the mother)”.

The most liberal of Jewish denominations, Reform and Reconstructionist, have made it clear that they support a woman’s right to choose how to handle her pregnancy. The Conservative movement has been more nuanced by walking a very fine line between an absolute right to choose and weighing all the factors involved but giving most weight to the health and well-being of the mother as key. Various Orthodox groups have taken positions ranging from those close to the Conservative position, all the way to supporting abortion only when there is a direct danger to the mother’s life. No Jewish group has unequivocally supported a full prohibition on abortions. Clergy from all major Jewish denominations have supported the currently pending lawsuits.

Only time will tell for sure if this novel legal argument of religious freedom will persuade the Courts to allow even more access to abortion, either through a religious exemption or through a holding that strikes down in its entirety the particular state law being challenged. Either way, the Supreme Court’s holding in *Dobbs* - that there is Constitutional right to an abortion - is likely to stand. Like anything involving Jewish thought, there are many opinions on the subject and how best to approach it. It will be fascinating to watch these cases unfold over the coming months and even years.

Denise J. Karlin is a retired attorney. She serves as Recording Secretary of the Board of Trustees of Temple Ohabei Shalom in Brookline, Massachusetts. Any views expressed in this article are her own and do not represent the views of any organization with which she is affiliated.

[1] Chief Justice Roberts did not vote overturn Roe but instead found that the Mississippi law under review should be upheld under the review process set forth in Roe and its successor case of *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey*.

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WELCOMING THE NEW YEAR WITH ALL YOUR SENSES

By Rabbi Katy Allen

Rosh Hashanah, which literally means “the head of the year,” is sometimes considered the birthday of the world. Rosh Hashanah is also the beginning of the 10 Days of Awe that end on Yom Kippur.

On that holiest day of the year, we empty our stomachs and open our hearts to the Mystery of the Universe, G-d, the Creator – however you like to name that source of energy and power that is beyond us, bigger than us, difficult to comprehend, understand, and explain – in an intense effort to attain a sense of forgiveness and renewal.

One way to celebrate the birthday of the world is to literally be with the world, to go outside and connect to both the natural world around you and the Creator. And one way to find forgiveness is to allow the spiritual energy of the woods and fields to enter our hearts and connect us to Creation.

Here are some concrete suggestions of how to let your senses help that process along.

LISTEN

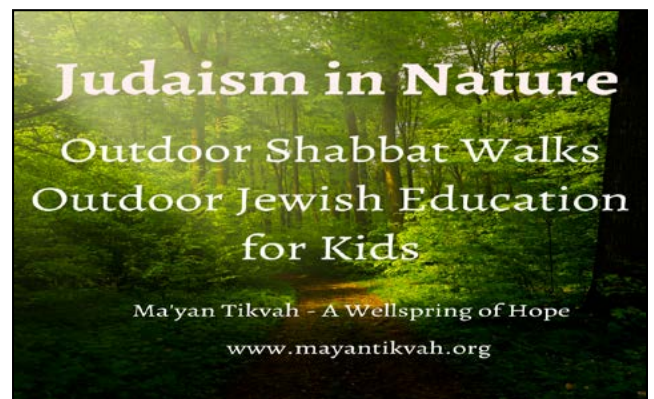
Sit quietly outdoors. Let your breathing slow, taking deep breaths and letting them out slowly. Say the Shema to yourself, “Hear, O you Jewish Person, All Being is your G-d, All Being is One.” Then listen deeply. Notice what you hear around you. Keep on listening. Pay attention to what you hear coming from within. Let the two connect. Allow messages to be received, or unexpected feelings to well up within you.

LOOK

Sit quietly outdoors. Let your breathing slow, taking deep breaths and letting them out slowly. Say the blessing from the morning service: “Blessed are You Holy One of the Universe, who opens the eyes of the blind.” Look around. Pay close attention. Move your eyes very slowly from one nearby feature to the next, giving time to fully absorb each leaf, each bit of bark, each blade of grass. Look up and out to take in the wider view, the treetops, the sky, the clouds. Take your time. Allow messages to be received, or unexpected feelings to well up within you.

TOUCH

Stand quietly beside a large tree. Let your breathing slow, taking deep breaths and letting them out slowly. Say a blessing for the



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wonders of Creation: “Blessed are You, Holy One of the Universe, who makes the works of Creation.” Close your eyes and touch the tree trunk. Allow your hands to move slowly along the bark. Feel the varying textures, the bumps and ridges. Let the feeling of connection to the tree seep into your body. Allow messages to be received or unexpected feelings to well up within you.

SMELL

Sit quietly outdoors. Let your breathing slow, taking deep breaths and letting them out slowly. Say the blessing for smelling fragrant herbs: “Blessed are You, Holy One of the Universe, who creates fragrant grasses.” Close your eyes and breathe deeply through your nose, allowing the scents of the natural world to enter your being. Turn your head slowly all around. Try to notice even the faintest scent. Savor what you smell. Allow messages to be received, or unexpected feelings to well up within you.

When you are finished, sit quietly for as long as you like, absorbing your experience. Appreciate the nature around you. Allow forgiveness to enter. And when you are ready, stand and stretch and move, and return renewed to your day.

Shana tovah!

Rabbi Katy Allen is the founder and spiritual leader of Ma'yan Tikvah – A Wellspring of Hope, which holds services outdoors all year long and has a small but thriving outdoor Jewish education program for children. She is co-founder of Jewish Climate Action Network and was ordained in 2005 from the Academy for Jewish Religion in Yonkers, New York.



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Congregation Sha'aray Shalom celebrated Shabbat by the Sea at the Hingham Bathing Beach on June 30



On June 27, Vladimir Tarasov, who is referred to as the grandfather of modern Lithuanian Jazz, led a percussion performance followed by a discussion about the role of jazz in Lithuanian independence at The Vilna Shul, Boston.

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At an April 30 Hadassah Northeast event, Lara Crawford, a policy advocate from the state's National Council of Jewish Women, taught volunteers about advocating for reproductive health. Attendees discussed why women's health is a key priority for Hadassah's advocacy. 100 post-abortion care kits for a local reproductive health clinic were collected, assembled, and delivered.

ARTS & CULTURE



Art sent by one of our readers.
The Blowing of the Shofar by
 Liliana Winner Segal.
 Email: liliana.ls535@gmail.com

The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA), and the Jewish Museum have jointly acquired a pair of rare Torah finials (1729) by Abraham Lopes de Oliveyra (1657-1750), the earliest known Jewish silversmith to work in England. The pair of finials are currently on view at the Jewish Museum in New York City through late-October. The pair will then be on view at the MFA beginning December 2023.

The finials are an artistic feat of a master silversmith. Oliveyra, an Amsterdam-born Jew from a Portuguese family, moved to London in the 1680s or 1690s. When he made the finials, London was home to Jewish communities that were both of Iberian descent and central and Eastern European origin. Jews in Western Europe were excluded from the artists' guilds, including the silversmiths' association. Despite this prohibition, Oliveyra was gradually able to practice his profession after moving to London, where he became a prolific maker of Jewish ceremonial art, especially Torah finials.

Oliveyra made at least 11 pairs of Torah finials for London's early congregations. Of those pairs, only one other pair exists in the United States - in Congregation Shearith Israel (Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue) in New York.



Torah Finials
 Abraham Lopes de Oliveyra
 (1657 - 1750)

1729 Silver, parcel gilt
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Gilad Skolnick and Guy Nattiv

An invite-only screening of the powerful film *Golda* took place in Boston on August 20 for members of the Israeli-American Council Rimon Club and a few other special guests. It was followed by a conversation with Director Guy Nattiv, and moderated by Gilad Skolnick, IAC New England regional director. Nattiv is one of only two Israeli directors to ever win an Oscar. His film *Skin* won an Oscar for best short film at the 91st Academy Awards.

Golda is a thriller set during the tense 19 days of the Yom Kippur War in 1973. Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir (Helen Mirren), faced with the potential of Israel's complete destruction, must navigate overwhelming odds, a skeptical cabinet, and a complex relationship with US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger (Liev Schreiber), with millions of lives in the balance. Her tough leadership and compassion would ultimately decide the fate of her nation and leave her with a controversial legacy around the world. More information on the new film is available at goldafilm.com.



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From July 9-11, the 20th International Research Conference of the Latin American Jewish Studies Association (LAJSA) took place at Brandeis University. Scholars and independent researchers from around the world, including Israel, Mexico, Brazil and Argentina, presented their panels and participated in discussions on subjects related to Jews in Latin America. All of the lectures are available to the public at the LAJSA website: <https://lajsa.org>.



Conference participants: Shirley Nigri Farber (Jews of Lebanon: Immigration to Brazil), Perla Aizencang Kane (Israelis abroad) and Salomon Chiquiar-Rabinovich



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HOW APPLYING JEWISH VALUES CAN HELP SAVE OUR IMPERILED PLANET

By Richard H. Schwartz, Ph.D.

The 20th anniversary edition of my book *Judaism and Global Survival* is scheduled to be published on Sept. 1. The main reason that I wrote the previous edition is summarized in the title - the world's survival is greatly threatened by climate change and other environmental dangers, and applying Jewish values can help shift the world onto a sustainable path. I wrote the new edition because the threats have become far greater.

There is a very strong consensus among 97 percent of climate experts, all the major science academies that have taken a position on the issue, and most importantly, over a thousand peer-reviewed articles in respected scientific journals, that climate change is largely caused by human activities and is a major threat to humanity. Their warnings have become increasingly dire in the past 20 years. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), an organization composed of climate experts from many countries, has called the

climate situation a Code Red for humanity. They warned in 2018 that “unprecedented changes” are needed by 2030 if the world is to have a chance to avert a climate catastrophe. Despite this and other warnings, the temperatures and atmospheric CO2 have continued to increase.

The past eight years have been the hottest since at least 1880, when temperature records were first recorded worldwide, and 2023 is on track to extend that record to nine years. This past June was the hottest June on record, and July was the hottest month on record.

Glaciers, polar ice caps, and permafrost are rapidly melting, seas are rapidly rising, and lakes and rivers are drying up in many regions. There has also been a very significant increase in the frequency and severity of heat waves, droughts, wildfires, storms, floods, and other climate events.

As devastating as these events have been, prospects for the future are even more frightening. While all the recent severe climate events have occurred due to an increase of 1.2° Celsius (2.2° Fahrenheit) since the start of the Industrial Revolution, climate experts project that it will be at least 3°C by the end of the century and possibly as high as 6°C. They fear that self-reinforcing positive feedback loops (vicious cycles) could result in an irreversible tipping point such that global warming will rise uncontrollably, with catastrophic results.

Because of the above factors, averting a climate catastrophe must become a central focus for civilization today. Every aspect of life should be considered in terms of reducing “carbon footprints.” Among the many positive steps that should be taken are shifting away from fossil fuels to solar, wind, and other renewable forms of energy; designing more efficient cars, lightbulbs, and other items; improving public transportation; recycling; and composting.

However, as president emeritus of Jewish Veg and author of *Vegan Revolution: Saving Our World, Revitalizing Judaism*, I want to stress

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HOW APPLYING JEWISH VALUES CAN HELP SAVE OUR IMPERILED PLANET

that the main cause of climate change is animal-based agriculture, for two very important reasons. First, cows and other ruminants emit methane, a very potent greenhouse gas with up to 80 times the ability to heat up the planet as CO₂, per unit weight. Even more importantly, over 40% of the world's ice-free land, much of which was previously forested, is currently being used for grazing and raising feed crops for animals. It is estimated that the world had about six trillion trees, but now this number has been reduced by about half, largely to meet the needs of animal agriculture. The loss of many carbon-sequestering trees is a major cause of the rise in atmospheric CO₂ from 285 parts per million (ppm) at the start of the Industrial Revolution to its current 420 ppm, well above the 350 ppm that climate experts think is a threshold value for climate sustainability. Major reforestation would reduce atmospheric CO₂ to a much safer level, greatly reducing climate threats.

Unfortunately, while we need more trees, fires are set daily in the Amazon rainforests and other areas to create additional land largely for the needs of animal-agriculture. The eating habits of the world's people are leading us toward possible extinction.

Therefore, averting a climate catastrophe depends very much on a major societal shift to plant-based diets. That would be helped significantly if rabbis declared that eating meat and other animal products is halachically unjustifiable today. They should do this because animal-based diets seriously violate Jewish teachings on preserving our health, treating animals with compassion, protecting

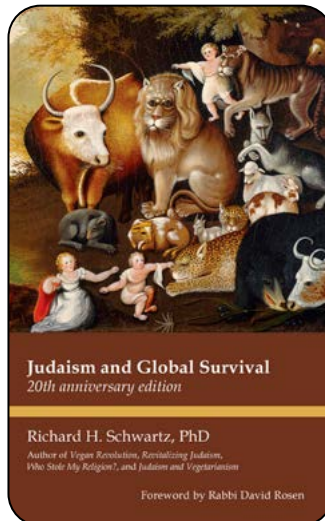
the environment, conserving natural resources, and reducing hunger.

Fortunately, it is much easier for Jews and others to shift to plant-based diets today because of the abundance of plant-based substitutes for meat and other animal products, some with the appearance, texture and taste so similar to that of the animal products that even longtime meat-eaters can't tell the difference.

In view of all of the above, rabbis and other Jewish leaders can do a great *mitzvah*, possibly the greatest *kiddush Hashem* (sanctification of G-d's Name) ever by personally shifting to an animal-free diet and urging other Jews to do so as well. Such shifts would be consistent with our mandates to be a "light unto the nations," a holy people, G-d's witnesses, eternal protesters, and partners with G-d in working for *tikkun olam*, healing and improving the world.

Bottom line: we have a choice between a largely vegan world and a world filled with very frequent devastating climate events. It is essential that every step possible be used to reduce the consumption of meat and other animal products in order to have a chance to leave a decent, habitable world for future generations. There is no Planet B.

Richard H. Schwartz, Ph.D. is Professor Emeritus at College of Staten Island. He is the author of Vegan Revolution: Saving Our World, Revitalizing Judaism; Judaism and Vegetarianism; and over 250 articles at JewishVeg.org/schwartz. Learn more at www.facebook.org/JewishVeg.



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BOOK REVIEW

The Absent Moon A Memoir of a Short Childhood and a Long Depression

by Luis Schwartz translated by Eric M. B. Becker.

Published by Penguin Press

I am fairly certain that most readers have read various books about the Holocaust. Some are autobiographies, some written by descendants of survivors. But this emotionally charged memoir written by the son of a Holocaust survivor who immigrated to Brazil struck me in a different way. While narrating the details of his father's survivor guilt, Luiz Schwarcz delves into how the intergenerational psychological trauma of the Holocaust led to his own personal struggles with depression.

Mental illness has been increasingly discussed since the pandemic began, and I think it is important to hear from the patient themselves how they feel and how they have tried to overcome depression and bipolar disorder challenges. In a very poignant biography, this author describes his father's trauma over not being able to save the rest of the family, his life under the Nazi occupation, and growing up in an affluent family involved in many Jewish activities.

Schwarcz is a successful publisher who lives in São Paulo where he founded Companhia das Letras, a well known publishing house. My interest in the book was sparked because I have been following his wife Lilia, a historian and online teacher who discusses issues related to racism and politics in Brazil.

While reading *The Absent Moon*, I could not stop thinking about how she was able to handle her husband's unstable personality and not only raise their two kids, but also run a business with him. As someone



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BOOK REVIEW

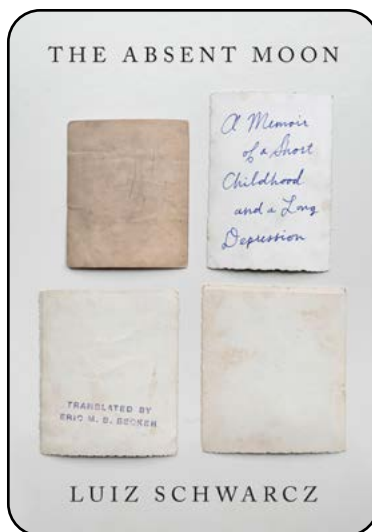
The Absent Moon *A Memoir of a Short Childhood and a Long Depression*

who almost married a man diagnosed with bipolar disease (and who hid this information till a week before the wedding date), I always wonder how a spouse can live with the wild mood swings. I read the book thanking G-d for saving me from this stress, and asking Him to bless the families who are suffering.

Schwarzc talks openly about his father's oppressive silence and his repressed emotions. The book title in Portuguese, *O Ar Que me Falta* (*The Air That I Lack*) invokes a suffocating metaphor of a person who does not know how to express his feelings.

I understand that some people refrain from talking about their painful past traumas, as if by not talking about certain subjects, they will disappear. I commend Schwarzc for candidly explaining his psychological struggles and the effects of medications. Schwarzc enlightens us on how his own mental disturbances affected his relationship with all the people around him: family, friends, co-workers and clients.

I believe that anyone who is struggling with bipolar disease or depression can learn from this book and relate to the author's position. I also feel that anyone who is living with, or as a professional, is dealing with someone who has a mental health issue, might benefit from reading this first-person account of a restless mind, so that they might better assist in their or others' struggles.



My favorite part of the book is when Schwarzc describes going to synagogue on Yom Kippur with his father, and then later in life after his father died, remembering him at the same synagogue. "I enjoy those rare moments I spend at the temple, because it's there that I can feel my father again," Schwarzc writes.

I imagine that many of us who mourn the loss of a relative will empathize. There is always a Jewish scene in our mind that connects us with deceased family members. The book became even more meaningful to me when he mentioned the streets and places in Sao Paulo that I used to go to. His father lived on exactly the same street as my grandmother, Alameda Barão de Limeira.

I hope readers might enjoy reading about Schwarzc's resilient journey, and how he fought against these invisible demons in order to stay alive, and build a great career and a loving family.

In 1999, when I interviewed Elie Wiesel for my radio program *Shalom Israel* in Rio de Janeiro, I asked him to record a message for the Holocaust survivors among my radio listeners. He said that it is important for each one of the survivors to register their story so that future generations would know what happened and no one would be able to deny that it happened. There are still stories to be told, as the repercussions of the Holocaust still afflict us.

Review by Shirley Nigri Farber, Shalom Magazine publisher and editor.

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Rosh Hashanah

Evening of September 15

In-person and livestream service.

Day of September 16

3 services: tot (& their families) service,
multigenerational service, in-person and live
stream classical service.

Tashlich family bike ride following services.

Yom Kippur

Evening of September 24

In-person and livestream services for all

Day of September 25

3 morning services: tot (& their families)
service, multigenerational service, in-person
and live stream classical service.

Afternoon learning session.

In-person and livestream final service.

For times and signup, contact
gschulman@templeshalom.org

***New Collaboration between
Women & Infants Hospital and
Israeli Startups in Fertility***

A research agreement between Providence's Women and Infants Hospital and an Israeli firm has been reached with the assistance of the Rhode Island Israel Collaborative, a non-profit organization that promotes commerce, academics and science projects between Israel and Rhode Island.

Dr. May-Tal Sauerbrun-Cutler, Division of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility at Women and Infants Hospital and Assistant Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Alpert Medical School of Brown University and Rohi Hourvitz, CEO and Co-Founder of FertilAI signed a research agreement for the purpose of testing FertilAI's algorithms with Women and Infants retrospective data.

The purpose of the research is to validate the generality of artificial intelligence algorithms on different populations. These algorithms were developed with the purpose of improving operational efficiencies and clinical outcomes for fertility patients.

The RIIC introduced the two organizations in 2022, yielding this agreement which further strengthens the academic and research ties between Israel and Rhode Island.

Rhode Island academics interested in connecting with the Israel Innovation ecosystem as well as Israelis interested in connecting to the Rhode Island ecosystem should not hesitate to contact RIIC for similar assistance. For more information, contact info@theriic.org.

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Congregation Beth El welcomes new cantor - and new members



Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley has a brand-new cantor - and to celebrate her appointment, Beth El is offering a year's free membership and free religious school tuition for new families with children, followed by a year of half-price membership and tuition.

Cantor Vera Broekhuysen, formerly of Temple Emanu-El in Haverhill, started at Beth El in early July. "She's a wonderful fit for many reasons, but her award-

winning social justice advocacy truly stands out. Our many outreach programs, our Sanctuary Committee, and our active Tikkun Olam Committee are particularly excited," says Rabbi Joshua Breindel.

"Beth El thrills to song and to social justice - my own two governing Jewish passions. It's a deep blessing to join a community with such a rich history of engaged, creative ritual and study," Cantor Broekhuysen says.

Congregation Beth El is a joyful, participatory Reform synagogue with services on Friday nights and Saturdays that embraces people of all ages, religious backgrounds, races, cultures, and LGBTQIA+ identities. Its "BE InSpirEd" program offers Jewish education for grades preK-12, including a high school program with themed classes, community service, and an exchange program with a high school in Haifa. For more information, see www.bethelsudbury.org or call 978-443-9622.



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**LAUNCH OF
B'NAI TORAH METROWEST**

B'nai Torah MetroWest is excited to announce the launch of their new Reform community. Led by spiritual leader Cantor Kate Judd, B'nai Torah MetroWest ("BTM") is an inclusive community, located in the Western suburbs of Boston. BTM, a successor of Congregation B'nai Torah, was established in June, 2023 subsequent to the closure of B'nai Torah of Sudbury.

At the heart of who they are is a deep commitment to social action. Their mission is to cultivate a vibrant, inclusive Jewish community. BTM strives to create a sacred space where individuals can explore, celebrate, and deepen their connection to Jewish traditions and values. Guided by the principles of *tikkun olam* and *tzedek*, BTM is dedicated to promoting social justice and addressing the pressing issues of our time.

Through engaging workshops and educational programs, BTM aims to nurture the spiritual and intellectual growth of their members. They embrace diverse expressions of Jewish identity and welcome individuals and all families, including multi-faith families, fostering a warm and welcoming environment where everyone can feel a sense of belonging.

Learn more about BTM's High Holy Day services and programs at <https://bnaitorahmetrowest.org>.



**B'nai Torah MetroWest is excited to announce
the launch of our new Reform community, led
by spiritual leader Cantor Kate Judd.**

**We're an inclusive community, located in the
Western suburbs of Boston, and
all are invited to join us for
High Holy Day services!**

Learn more:

bnaitorahmetrowest.org



JFSMW CEO INTERVIEWED ON BATE PAPO TV



Lino Covarubias, CEO of Jewish Family Services of Metrowest, was interviewed on the *Bate Papo com Shirley* TV show in May. *Bate Papo com Shirley* TV was created and is hosted by journalist Shirley Nigri Farber in 2005 as a Portuguese language talk show geared to immigrants from Brazil, Portugal and Cape Verde.

During the conversation, held in Spanish and Portuguese, Covarubias explained how JFSMW is helping various immigrant communities in the Metrowest (among them many Brazilians) in the areas of education, family assistance and immigration services. The *Bate Papo* TV show can be seen on local stations and on Comcast on Demand in five New England states. It is also online at <https://vimeo.com/829852687> and at www.facebook.com/batepapomagazine.

Shanah Tovah!

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State Representative**



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EVENT LISTING

Boston College

Monday, September 11 at 5 p.m.

The Center for Christian-Jewish Learning at Boston College presents *Sabbath as Gift and Command: Jewish and Christian Perspectives* at the Corcoran Commons Heights Room (in-person) and Zoom webinar (virtual). Panelists: Susannah Heschel (Dartmouth College), Brian Robinette (Boston College), and Joanna Kline (Gordon College).

In-person registration: Email cjlearning@bc.edu. More information at bc.edu/cjlearning.

Yiddish Book Center

October 15 from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Grand Opening of: *Yiddish: A Global Culture*, a groundbreaking new, permanent exhibition on view at the Yiddish Book Center, 1021 West Street, Amherst, MA. Special celebratory performance: *The Glorious, Fabulous, Incandescent World of Yiddish*, from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tickets: \$18 Members, \$20 General. Register at yiddishbookcenter.org.

Temple Shalom, Medford

Saturday, October 21 at 11:30 a.m.

Shabbat Sing-Along with Rabbi Dell'era at Temple Shalom, 475 Winthrop St. Medford. Sing, move and celebrate Shabbat with your kids ages 0-8 and then join us for lunch. Free and open to all. Email events@templeshalommedford.org for more information.

The Good Fight 2023

Join ADL New England on **October 10** from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. -at the Renaissance Boston Waterfront Hotel to explore how you can confront antisemitism: on campus, in schools, in everyday conversations, in workplaces, and in our communities. For details, visit www.ADL.org/goodfight2023.

Happy Rosh Hashanah

State Representative

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Erev September 15, 8:00 pm
Sept 16, 9:30 am Sept 17, 10:00 am
Gann Academy (Waltham) and livestreamed

Selichot Program and Service

September 9, 8:00 pm
CDT Sanctuary (West Newton)

Kol Nidre Yom Kippur

Sept 24, 6:30 pm Sept 25, 9:30 am
Gann Academy (Waltham) and livestreamed

Shabbat Shuvah Contemplative Service

September 23, 10:00 am
CDT Sanctuary (West Newton) and Zoom

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RE/MAX

Jewish Couple to be Honored for Helping Immigrants Resettle

By Susie Davidson

On September 27, JCRC Boston will honor Barbara and Ed Shapiro and the Shapiro Foundation at its annual gala at Temple Emanuel in Newton. Rachel Lewis, JCRC Director of Synagogue Organizing, said the Shapiro Foundation has supported outreach to congregations that have recently been sponsoring families from Afghanistan, Ukraine and other restive regions who have been migrating to the U.S. over the past few years.

“The Shapiro Foundation has supported JCRC’s work to support and welcome immigrants for around six years,” Lewis explained. “Most recently, in 2021, they helped us establish a unique partnership with Catholic Charities and Jewish Family Services of MetroWest, who each have a long history of helping refugees and immigrants resettle.”

Together, they have helped build congregational support teams to collaborate with resettlement agencies to welcome hundreds of Afghans who began arriving in area communities after the fall of Kabul.

“JCRC has recruited many synagogues, a good number of whom we had been engaging with in a variety of social justice efforts for years, and some new congregations activated by the crises at hand,” Lewis said. These included churches and other faith communities in Greater Boston.

The efforts included securing housing as well as items families required, such as furniture. Representatives met the families at airports, and helped them register their children for schools.

“Our community is now using some of these same support systems to welcome Ukrainians and respond to varied crises and needs that arise,” Lewis said, citing an example of the recent increase of newly arriving families from Haiti seeking refuge in Massachusetts.

“We continue to leverage our community resources to open our doors, rather than close them,” said Lewis. “The Shapiros have catalyzed JCRC’s immigration work and the work of so many congregations in our community to enable us to do this holy work of welcoming,” she added.

The theme of the September 27 event is celebrating “Our Community of YES.” This, Lewis explained, “reflects the ethos that the Shapiros have seeded in our community, and one that JCRC and our congregational and organizational

partners continue to hold, as people seeking refuge continue to arrive.”

For tickets and more information, visit <https://www.jcrcboston.org/events/jcrc-celebrates-a-community-of-yes/>



A MEMBER OF THE JCRC COALITION GREETES A UKRAINIAN FAMILY AT LOGAN AIRPORT

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EVENT LISTING

Boston Synagogue
Saturday, October 7 at 6:30 p.m.

Simchat Torah comes to life at the Boston Synagogue, 55 Martha Road, Boston. Join the celebration with Live Music at the downtown hub for Jewish Music! There will be singing & dancing as we end and restart the Torah cycle. For details, visit www.bostonsynagogue.org/event/simchat-torah-with-live-music/

Prayer for the French Republic
September 7 - October 8, 2023

New play written by By Joshua Harmon and directed by Huntington Artistic Director Loretta Greco at The Huntington Theatre, 264 Huntington Ave., Boston.

Prayer for the French Republic begins in 2016 Paris. The Salomon Benhamou family has worked hard to make Paris into a wonderful home after settling down in the 1870s. But when their son comes home beaten up because he was wearing a yarmulke, they are forced to question their safety and sense of belonging in the country they love. Full of intrepid humor, humanity, and hard decisions, the play jumps between 2016 and the 1940s, following the lives and heated kitchen-table discussions of five generations of family.

Information and tickets: <https://www.huntingtontheatre.org/whats-on/prayer-for-the-french-republic/>

Hadassah Walk

Join Hadassah Northeast on Sunday, **October 22** for our Annual Walk for Women's Health. Meet at Chestnut Hill Reservoir at 1 p.m. Our goal is to raise awareness of Hadassah's efforts in Israel and the U.S. to improve women's health. <https://runsignup.com/hadassahwalk>. \$25 registration fee.

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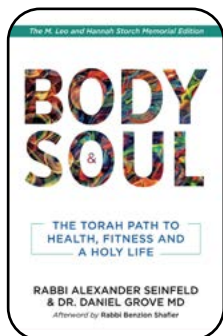


ARTS & CULTURE

Body and Soul:

The Torah Path to Health, Fitness, And A Holy Life

Publisher: JSLI Press - Feldheim



In response to the worldwide epidemics of obesity, heart disease, diabetes and other preventable conditions, a Rabbi and medical doctor invested 10 years to prepare for writing this new book, *Body and Soul: The Torah Path to Health, Fitness, And A Holy Life*.

Jewish tradition has 3000 years of wisdom on this subject, but until now it has been scattered among many books, most of which have never been translated. In partnership with doctors and dietitians, *Body & Soul* includes current medical information (with

references to medical literature) on what is known about nutrition, exercise, weight loss and longevity, as well as related topics such as environmental toxins.

Taking a comprehensive approach, *Body & Soul* highlights the interconnectedness of physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of wellbeing using a practical blueprint that includes proven strategies and attainable goals. By bridging the gap between traditional Jewish teachings and modern wellness pursuits, the book offers a nuanced perspective on the integration of spirituality and physicality, fostering a greater appreciation of both realms.

Body & Soul features practical information and tips such as maintaining a balanced diet and conquering a sweet tooth; exercising; helping children develop healthy habits; the importance of sleep; and a Jewish view of intermittent fasting.

Body & Soul is not only informational; it's also motivational, encouraging readers to make the changes needed for a healthier life.

About the Authors

Rabbi Alexander Seinfeld, Ph.D. heads Jewish Spiritual Literacy, Inc. (JSLI), a nonprofit organization dedicated to revitalizing Jewish education. His previous books include *The Art of Amazement: Discover Judaism's Forgotten Spirituality* and *The Art of Kavana*.

Dr. Daniel Grove, M.D. is board certified in general internal medicine, critical care and pulmonology, and is affiliated with MedStar Health hospitals in the Baltimore-Washington region. He is the author of *The Weight Loss Counter Revolution*.



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State Representative
Ted Philips



EVENT LISTING

Hadassah-Brandeis Institute

Sandra Seltzer Silberman Hadassah-Brandeis Institute Conversations Series Featuring Jennifer Rosner, author of *Once We Were Home*

September 13, 7 p.m. EST/Online/Free and open to all

Beautifully evocative and tender, *Once We Were Home* reveals the little-known postwar history of Jewish children who were hidden during the Holocaust. Based on true stories, this heartwrenching novel raises questions of complicity and responsibility, belonging and identity, good intentions and unforeseen consequences, as it confronts what it really means to find home. Register: <https://bit.ly/HBIConversationsOnceHome>

Sandra Seltzer Silberman HBI Conversations Series Featuring Janine Holc, author of *The Weavers of Trautenau: Jewish Female Forced Labor in the Holocaust* (a publication in the HBI Series on Jewish Women)

October 18, 7 p.m. EST/Online/Free and open to all

Join HBI when we speak with Janine Holc, author of *The Weavers of Trautenau*, who uses a fresh approach to postwar testimony collections, many of which are shared with the reader, to reconstruct the forced labor experiences of Jewish girls and women, including the remarkable risks they undertook to survive. Register: <https://bit.ly/HBIConversationsWeavers>



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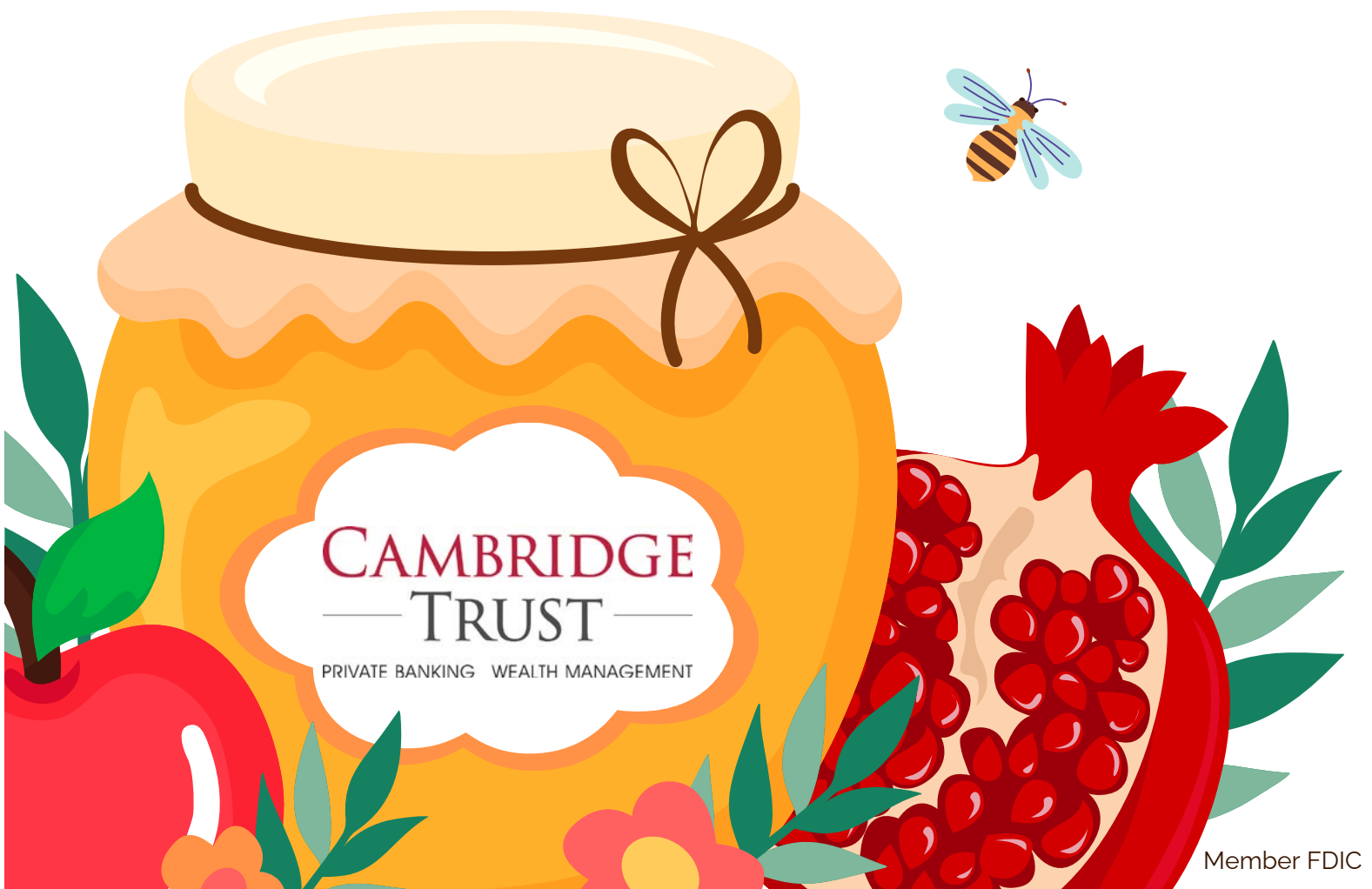
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Sabbath as Gift and Command: *Jewish and Christian Perspectives*

Susannah Heschel (Dartmouth College)
Brian Robinette (Boston College)
Joanna Kline (Gordon College)

This panel will consider what it means to enter into viewing Sabbath keeping as a gift and as a commandment from God for humans to nurture. In addition, it will ask what it means for this to be a practice shared, yet shaped differently, by Jews and Christians.

BOSTON COLLEGE
Center for Christian-Jewish Learning

Monday, Sept. 11, 2023

5:00-6:30 PM, HYBRID
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