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Issue #530
May 9, 2024
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IDF Takes Rafah Border Crossing



IDF soldiers seized the Rafah border crossing with Egypt this week, planting Israeli flags where previously Hamas flags had flown. The limited operation followed IDF directives for 100,000 civilians to move to an expanded humanitarian aid area so that the IDF can engage directly with Hamas and force negotiations. (Credit: Tazpit News Service)



YU's Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman Leads University Heads in Auschwitz

(l-r) Dylan Hanley, executive vice president of U15 Group of Canadian Research Universities; Dr. Reynold Verret, president of Xavier University of Louisiana; Dr. Claudette Commanda, chancellor of University of Ottawa; Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman, president of Yeshiva University, Dr. Mark Ginsberg, president of Towson University; David Machlis, co founder and vice chair of International March of the Living; and Dr. Kermit Bridges, president of Southwestern Assemblies of God University (SAGU) pose under the "arbeit macht frei" sign during the 36th annual 'March of the Living' between Auschwitz and Birkenau on May 6, 2024, in Oswiecim, Poland. (CREDIT: ALEXI ROSENFELD/GETTY IMAGES)

See article on page 112

Mesivta Yesodei Yisrael To Empower Young Olim

(Courtesy of MYY) Mesivta Yesodei Yisrael of Beit Shemesh (MYY) is poised to be a transformative force in the world of chinuch in Israel, with a strong focus on first-generation olim. With its doors set to open in September 2025, Yesodei Yisrael represents a new chapter in empowering young olim to navigate and succeed in Israeli society. For American Jews — whether they are considering aliyah, have relatives in Israel, or are simply invested in the future of the Israeli Jewish community — Yesodei Yisrael will offer a unique opportunity to support the establishment of an institution that supports the unique needs of American families that have chosen to build their futures in Israel.

CONTINUED ON P. 164



Rav Shimon Kronenberg

Rutgers Under Fire For 'Capitulating' to Pro-Palestinian Demands

By Debra Rubin

Rutgers University, which has been hit with federal investigations over its alleged failure to protect Jewish students, defused a potentially confrontational situation by negotiating the end of a pro-Palestinian encampment, but has come under fire for agreeing to consider some of the protesters' demands.

The encampment was peacefully dismantled by students on the university's main campus in New Brunswick on May 2 after

CONTINUED ON P. 62





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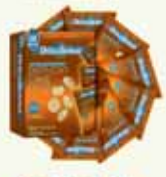
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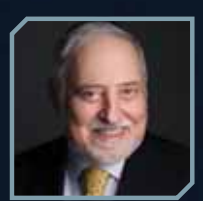


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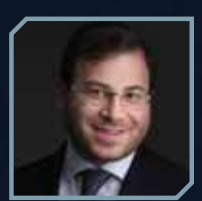
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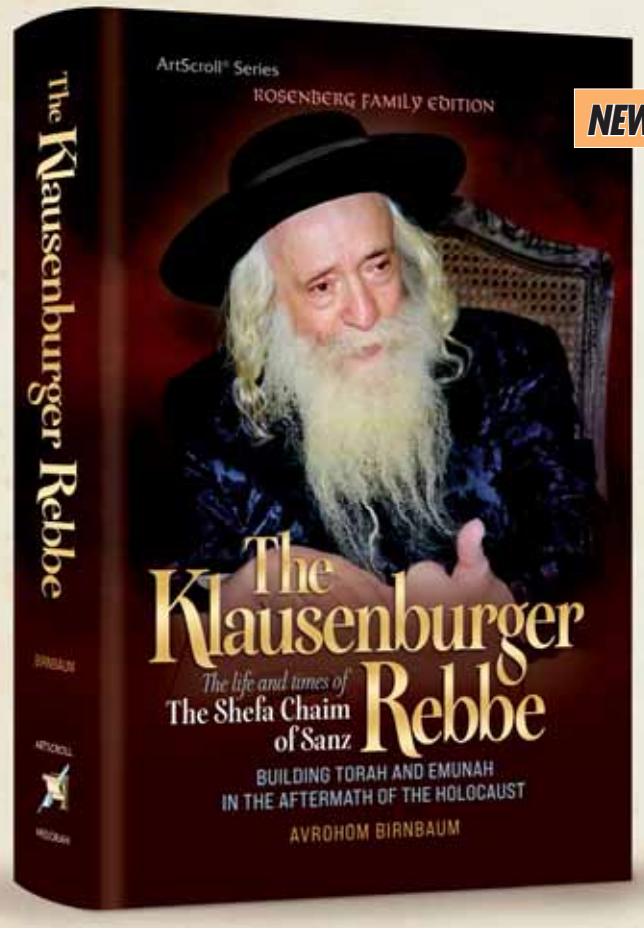
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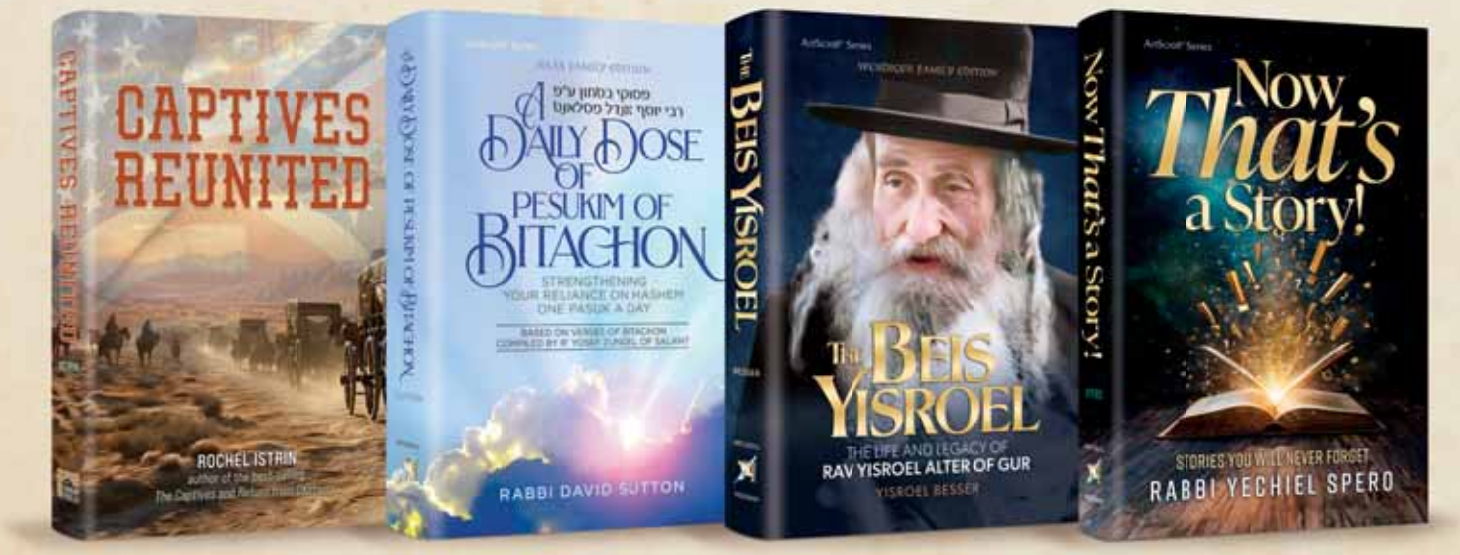
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Rav Shaul Feldman,
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Matty Feldman
סמ"ר - סמל ראשון

Combat soldier who was called back to service on October 7th. Participated in taking control of the kibbutzim and in the war in Gaza.



Rav Bentzi Mann,
Director of Mizrachi's Schools Department

Called in to the Army on October 8th to join the IDF Rabbinate Chevra Kadisha and identification team where he has been serving for the last few months. He has also been leading/guiding the hundreds of solidarity missions that have been coming to Shura base over the past few months.

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WORLD NEWSBRIEFS

IDF Kills Terrorists, Destroys Hamas Infrastructure in Rafah

(JNS) Israel Defense Forces ground troops on Wednesday, May 8 continued the offensive against Hamas in the Gaza terrorist bastion of Rafah.

Soldiers killed an unknown number of gunmen and located tunnel shafts and other underground infrastructure on the 215th day of the war, the army announced.

"IDF forces led by the 162nd Division and under the intelligence guidance of the Shin Bet and the Military Intelligence Directorate continue targeted operations in eastern Rafah against Hamas terrorists and the group's terrorist infrastructure," the army said.

In addition, troops from the division's Givati and 401st Armored brigades killed Palestinian terrorists in close-quarters combat. The brigades' combat teams also worked to destroy terrorist infrastructure above and below ground.

Givati infantrymen spotted a terrorist nearby with a rocket-propelled grenade launcher and killed him before he could attack.

"Meanwhile, forces of the 401st Brigade continue raids on the Gazan side of the Rafah Crossing following indications and intelligence information that terrorists are using the area," the army said.

Over the past 24 hours, Israeli Air Force fighter jets attacked more than 100 targets throughout the coastal enclave, including terrorist bases, observation posts and launch positions.

Evacuations of some 100,000 noncombatants from eastern Rafah started on Monday ahead of an overnight operation in which the IDF took control of the Rafah Crossing with Egypt and the southern section of the Salah ad-Din Road, the Gaza Strip's main highway.

The IDF on Monday called on the civilian residents of eastern Rafah to evacuate to humanitarian zones.

Already 50,000 Palestinians have left Rafah in the past 48 hours following the evacuation orders, a United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) staffer told CNN on Wednesday.

In his first official comments on the operation, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday night noted that "within hours, our forces raised Israeli flags at the Rafah Crossing and took down the Hamas banners.

"Seizing the Rafah Crossing is a very significant step towards destroying the remaining military capabilities of Hamas, including the elimination of the four terrorist battalions in Rafah, and an important step to damage the governmental capabilities of Hamas," said the premier.

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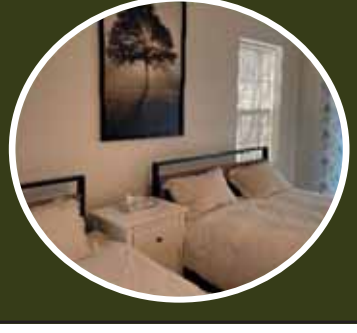
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Netanyahu Talks Hostage Negotiations With Visiting CIA Chief

(JNS) Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hosted CIA Director William Burns at his office in Jerusalem on Wednesday afternoon, May 8 for talks on the ongoing indirect hostage negotiations with Hamas.

Burns first held a private discussion with Mossad head David Barnea before they both joined the meeting with Netanyahu.

Israel sees no signs of a breakthrough in Egyptian-mediated negotiations on a hostages-for-ceasefire-and-terrorists-release deal, a source in Jerusalem told Reuters earlier on Wednesday.

However, the official said the mid-level delegation dispatched by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday will stay in Cairo for now.

The IDF launched a limited military operation in eastern Rafah on Monday night, shortly after Hamas claimed it had accepted a ceasefire deal proposed by mediators, in what Israeli officials described as "an exercise by Hamas meant to present Israel as the refuser."

Netanyahu reiterated on Tuesday that the terms proposed by Hamas, which Egypt and Qatar devised without consulting with Jerusalem, are still "very far" from what his War Cabinet deems acceptable.

The United States did not inform Jerusalem in advance of Hamas's "acceptance" of the hostage deal proposed by Cairo and Doha, Axios reported on Tuesday, citing three Israeli officials.

Upon reading the Hamas statement, Israeli officials reportedly were surprised to see "many new elements" that were not contained in the proposal to which Israel had agreed and which was presented to Hamas by the American, Egyptian and Qatari mediators 10 days earlier.

According to one source, Burns and other Biden administration officials knew about the changes to the proposal but didn't inform Israel. The new text was finalized at Doha on Monday morning with Washington's knowledge.

Hostages Forum Asks ICRC to Press Hamas for Access to Captives

(JNS) The Hostages and Missing Families Forum sent a letter on Tuesday to Mirjana Spoljaric, president of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and Kate Forbes, president of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), to raise awareness of the 132 hostages being held by Hamas in Gaza.

The letter calls on Red Cross leaders to cancel commemorations of World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day and urges them to advocate for the immediate release of the hostages held in Gaza.

"After seven months of Hamas denying the ICRC access to the hostages and after having heard the testimonies of those who came back, we believe it's time for the ICRC to speak up publicly against Hamas," Yehonatan Sabban, a former ICRC spokesman in Israel who works as the media relations coordinator for the forum, told JNS on Wednesday.

"It is not the time to celebrate this day. It's time for the ICRC to issue a statement and explain that Hamas's actions are violations of International Humanitarian Law. We hope they will," he added.

"We are writing to you with heavy hearts and deep concern regarding the upcoming commemoration of World Red Cross Day on May 8," the letter begins.

"As we approach this significant day, it is evident that there is no room for celebration when 132 Israeli and non-Israeli individuals, including 19 women, a baby and a toddler, have been held as hostages in Gaza for seven months," it adds.

"Canceling the commemorations of World Red Cross Day this year would send a powerful message of empathy and compassion to the hostages and their families and reaffirm your unwavering commitment to upholding humanitarian principles in the face of adversity," the letter continues.

The Hostages Families Forum noted that the testimonies of survivors who were released during the November 24-30 truce revealed extreme cases of psychological and physical violence, including brutal sexual assault (including against men), mutilation, torture, starvation and forced dehydration.

"Furthermore, the lack of medical treatment and the prevention of access to medical care by the International Committee of the Red Cross were mentioned. As each day passes, the health and lives of all hostages are seriously endangered," the letter says.

Hagari: Hamas Terror Will Continue After Rafah Operation

(JNS) Israel Defense Forces Spokesperson Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari said on Wednesday that Hamas will still pose a threat even after a military operation in Rafah city, its last stronghold in the Gaza Strip.

Speaking at the Ynet and Yediot Ahronot "People of the State" conference at Expo Tel Aviv, Hagari said, "I want to tell the public, so that they do not delude themselves: Even after we deal with Rafah, there will be terror. Hamas will move northwards and try to reconstitute itself, even in the next few days. In every place Hamas returns to, including in northern and central Gaza, we will return to operating."

The spokesperson put the Gaza war in perspective from the military's point of view on the 215th day of fighting since the Hamas-led massacre of Oct. 7.

"We took an operational plan for the war for approval by the political echelon. Within this plan, we mapped out the war, which was estimated to be about a year of fighting," Hagari explained.

"Within this year, we saw that we would first of all deal with Hamas's greatest centers

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Join Teaneck's Yom Ha'atzmaut/Yom Hazikaron Event, Monday, May 13



By Rabbi Chaim Strauchler

We are so excited. The Yom Ha'atzmaut Experience is just a few days away. Our pro-Israel community will once again take center stage, proclaiming our love for Israel.

Our theme this year is achdut. With an ongoing war in Israel and growing antisemitism around the world, the importance of Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut in our lives only grows. In times of trouble, achdut is our guiding ethos, forging connections within Israel and fostering solidarity among Jews across the globe. Particularly now, the opportunity to join together and fully realize the principles of Zionism and celebrate Israel becomes of paramount importance.

Registration and a small fee are required at https://bit.ly/3Qxu9ab. This is for entry and security purposes.

The Yom Ha'atzmaut Experience will:

- Display our steadfast solidarity with the State of Israel.
- Provide an outlet to proudly express our Zionism on this momentous day in Israel's history.
- Galvanize our community in staunch opposition to the surging tide of antisemitism locally and worldwide.

At this critical time, we must not hide our support for Israel. Our support for Israel belongs in the public square. Israel and America have a long and beautiful partnership. We—as Americans—have been a critical part of Israel's success. America was there for Israel from the time of its founding. America has not just been the critical ally in Israel's defense; America has been a beacon of democratic values that has inspired Israel's democracy. Confronted with pernicious anti-Israel and anti-America propaganda and the alarming rise of antisemitism, we will illuminate the darkness with truth and compassion.

We have created an exciting program that you will not want to miss. Our request of you: Stand with us. Stand for Israel. Join us.

Congregation Rinat Yisrael has partnered with many local organizations to create the Yom Ha'atzmaut Experience. It will all take place on May 13: The location will be announced once you sign up.

Commencing with the Yom Hazikaron Kumzitz at 6 p.m., followed by Mincha/Maariv at 7:45 p.m., and culminating in an Aerial Light Show at 8:15 p.m., the evening's festivities will conclude with dancing (finishing before 9 p.m.). We invite you to register at www.rinat.org/yhe and partake in any segment of the program that resonates with you.

The Kumzitz will feature soul-stirring Jewish, Hebrew and American patriotic melodies performed by local musicians, alongside poignant video tributes honoring Israel's fallen heroes. We anticipate a breathtaking display during the aerial light show, surpassing even the splendor of last year's event. All are welcome to join us, whether for a portion or the entirety of the festivities.

We eagerly anticipate celebrating Yom Ha'atzmaut in the company of our community, infusing the event with exuberance and camaraderie. Our aim is to craft an experience that will linger in the memories of children and adults alike—a celebration that elicits awe and wonder.

Program FAQs:

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Letters to the Editor

Let's Show Gratitude During National Police Week

National Police Week — May 12-May 18 this year — is again upon us, when people throughout the United States will extend special recognition to those law enforcement officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty for the safety and protection of others.

While this annual observance is to honor and remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, we should also salute the members of police agencies serving in our community and in communities across the nation. Recent months have certainly been challenging for all of them. We should be grateful for their ongoing efforts to safeguard and protect our families and property on a daily basis.

When you see a police officer — during Police Week 2024 or anytime — please take a moment to say "thank you" and let them know that you value their service and commitment, especially during these trying times. Both you and they will be happy that you did.

Yitz Stern
Teaneck

Mazal tov to Shira & David Greenberg on the recent wedding of their son Efraim to Meirav Landsman, daughter of Shera & Keith of Holliswood, Queens. Yaaleh hazivug yafeh veyivnu bayis ne'eman b'Yisrael.

A Look Back at US-Israel Relations

Much has been made in recent weeks about the Biden administration "putting pressure" on Israel, as if this was some kind of anomaly in U.S.-Israel relations. A brief review of the historical record on this point is in order. U.S. policy towards Israel—including from Republican administrations—has often included sticks along with carrots. These tactics are not novel, and readers should be aware that Republican and Democratic administrations have acted similarly.

For example, in 1957 Republican President Dwight Eisenhower sought to pressure Israel into unconditionally withdrawing from the Sinai following the Suez crisis and threatened to suspend vital U.S. financial aid to Israel. In his own words, Eisenhower preferred "a resolution which would call on all United Nations members to suspend not just governmental but private assistance to Israel."

Henry Kissinger, the Jewish Secretary of State in the administration of Republican President Gerald Ford, grew frustrated with what he perceived as Israeli intransigence in talks with Egypt following the Yom Kippur War. President Ford shared this view and wrote to Prime Minister Rabin in 1975, "I have given instructions for a reassessment of United States policy in the region, including our relations with Israel." Ford put a hold on critical arms sales for six months.

Republican President Ronald Reagan was furious when Israel bombed the Iraqi nuclear reactor in 1981, and, rather than simply abstaining, the U.S. actually supported a UN Security Council resolution condemning Israel. Reagan also suspended the delivery of F-16 fighter jets to Israel. Moreover, after Israel annexed the Golan Heights, Reagan suspended a strategic cooperation agreement with Israel. In 1982, Reagan expressed "outrage" over Israeli bombing raids in Beirut and pressured Prime Minister Begin into a ceasefire.

After a 1990 incident on the Temple Mount in which Israeli forces killed 21 Palestinians, the administration of Republican President George Bush, Sr. joined a UN resolution condemning Israel (again, rather than simply abstaining). Bush, Sr. pressured Israel to cooperate with a UN investigation into the incident. In 1991, after Saddam Hussein launched Scud missiles that hit Tel Aviv and Haifa, U.S. pressure dissuaded Israel from retaliating. Later, Bush, Sr. withheld $10 billion in loan guarantees unless Israel froze settlement-building in territories captured in the 1967 war.

In 2001, during the administration of Republican President George Bush, Jr.,

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Rachel Zamist • Temimah Zucker

The Jewish Link of New Jersey/Expanded Edition
PO Box 3131
Teaneck, NJ 07666
Phone: 201-371-3212
Email: editor@jewishlink.news
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When Universities Put Feelings Before Truth, They Created a Ticking Time Bomb

Beyond the blatant double standard against Jews, scratch the surface of the campus rage and you'll see a temper tantrum from whiny kids who are used to getting their way.



By David Suissa/
JewishJournal

There was a stunning video clip last week of a UCLA provost meeting with protesters at their encampment. He had come in good faith, wanting to discuss their grievances. What he got instead was sheer animosity, as students chased him away with insults.

We've seen this kind of chutzpah spread through college campuses in recent weeks, with demonstrators ransacking buildings and destroying university property. There seems to be no fear whatsoever of consequences.

How did college students get so brazen?

A good place to start is with a movement that started about 10 years ago and revolved around protecting college students from "microaggressions." Suddenly, any student with the smallest grievance became empowered — as long as they were part of a group considered "oppressed."

"Something strange is happening at America's colleges and universities," Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt wrote in "The Coddling of the American Mind," a seminal 2015 essay in The Atlantic. "A movement is arising, undirected and driven largely by students, to scrub campuses clean of words, ideas, and subjects that might cause discomfort or give offense."

This scrubbing has come at a price, as the movement to protect feelings, culminating in the pervasive, victim-driven DEI bureaucracy, came to dominate the primary mission of a university — the pursuit of truth.

We're seeing the inevitable result of this ticking time bomb in the current protests — zero interest in pursuing truth and every expectation that feelings will be protected and demands will be met.

Most of us have seen the video of a protest leader holding a press conference outside a building at Columbia University where students had barricaded themselves. She was wondering why food was not being brought in. The student was so ridiculed on social media she will probably go down as one of the faces of the movement.

Students like her have been taught by feckless college leaders that victimhood is where the power lies. Except for Jews, who have typically been put in the privileged "oppressor" group, a victim from a marginalized group is always right. It's no wonder that instead of seeking truth, those students now seek victimhood.

"A lot of college students in this generation, there's a sort of paradigm they use, or lens they use to kind of evaluate the world," New York Times columnist Frank Bruni said in a recent interview. "And it's one in which people who have less money, people who have less power, sometimes people who have darker skin, must inherently be wronged and are therefore most likely to be in the right."

Yes, even terrorists.

We saw that play out right after the massacre of Oct. 7, when, as Bruni said, "you saw a lot of young people not even take a moment to really acknowledge what had happened in Israel, and how horrific that was. They just kind of immediately applied this paradigm and began advocating not just for Palestinians, but in a perverse way, at times for Hamas." The same people obsessed with "microaggressions" were indifferent to, or celebrated, terrorism against those deemed "oppressors."

Beyond the blatant double standard against Jews, scratch the surface of the campus rage and you'll see a temper tantrum from whiny kids who are used to getting their way. Those entitled kids have been conditioned by universities who coddled them while indoctrinating them in anti-Israel classes and abandoning their mission of truth.

In another Atlantic essay titled, "American Universities Are Post Truth," Josh Barro argued that "A lot of the research coming out of [elite universities] does not seem to aim at truth, whether because it is politicized or for more venal reasons. The social-justice messaging they wrap themselves in is often insincere. Their public accountings of the reasons for their internal actions are often implausible. They deceive the public about the role that race plays in their admissions and hiring practices."

In other words, as they were treating students with kid gloves and putting feelings before the search for truth, elite universities were loath to admit it, and for good reason. Instead of nurturing curiosity, they nurtured rage.

Now, as the rage has turned violent, many college leaders are panicking. The truth has caught up with them. Some are trying to appease the protesters, while others are calling the police. As commencement ceremonies are being canceled, hysterical protesters continue to make absurd and unrealistic demands.

The campuses of 2024 have been hijacked by the coddled generation.

Yes, these protests are anti-Israel and anti-America and anti-Western. But let's not forget that they are also anti-truth.

It's what happens when you teach kids that they are the most important people in the world– as long as they represent a favored victim group— and you will do everything you can to address their tiniest complaint to make sure they never get hurt.

Who's getting hurt now?

David Suissa is publisher & editor-in-chief of Tribe Media/Jewish Journal, where he has been writing a weekly column on the Jewish world since 2006.

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Letters to the Editor

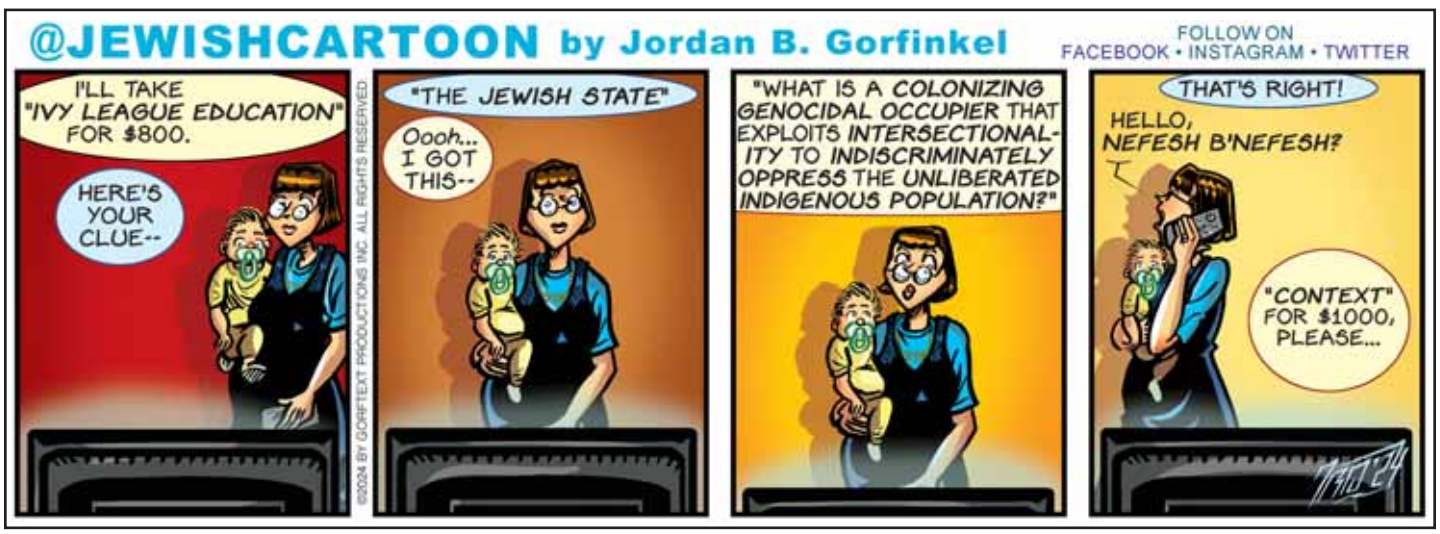
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Israeli forces entered Gaza in response to Palestinian bombardment of Sderot. Secretary of State Colin Powell termed the Israeli response "excessive and disproportionate," and the Israeli forces soon withdrew, seemingly under U.S. pressure. In a 2002 speech outlining his vision for a future Palestinian state, Bush stated flatly that "Israeli settlement activity in the occupied territories must stop." In 2006, less than one month into Israel's war with Hezbollah, Bush was working with Condoleeza Rice on a UN resolution that required Israel "to immediately stop all offensive military operations," while leaving the Lebanese terror group largely intact. Later, the Bush administration helped draft a UN ceasefire resolution in early 2009, calling for a "full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza," a mere three weeks into its battle against Hamas.

Meanwhile, ex-President Trump recently told an Israeli newspaper that "you're losing a lot of the world, you're losing a lot of support, you have to finish up [the war]" and "you have to get on to peace." He told a radio host that Israel should "get it over with," and that "I'm not sure that I'm loving the way they're doing it."

Finally, for all its supposed "distancing," the Biden administration is still sending arms shipments to Israel seven months into its current war against Hamas. Despite a delay in one shipment, according to an Israeli official, "Even now, a continued series of defense shipments are being sent from the U.S. to Israel." In the words of chief military spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari, coordination between Israel and the United States has reached "a scope without precedent, I think, in Israel's history." Moreover, President Biden proved without any shadow of a doubt last month that he stands ready to come to Israel's defense. I would note the words of Israel's President Isaac Herzog, the day after successfully repelling Iran's unprecedented attack on Israel: "Bless the coalition of nations led by the U.S. and @POTUS."

Noah Liben
Teaneck



Remembering Rabbi Wallerstein, z"l

It is hard to believe that two years have passed by since the petrira of my rebbe, Rabbi Wallerstein, z"l.



The author (left) with Rabbi Wallerstein, z"l.

One of the *yesodot* (principles) of emunah that Rabbi Wallerstein was very passionate about was how much love Hashem has for us. Rebbe gave a *mashal* (story) to explain this concept.

Once, there was a king who was redesigning his palace. He called his three best artisans and instructed them each to create a design on a wooden panel. He gave them 30 days to complete the project. In the middle of the 30-day time period, the king decided to check on the progress of each of the designs.

He came to the first artisan and asked him, "Do you need any funding for your project?" The artisan answered, "Yes, I need $500 worth of supplies."

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We Must Show US Radicals They Do Not Represent the Country

Today's protesters idolize Osama bin Laden. Professors at our universities espouse these toxic ideologies. This is a malignancy that cannot be allowed to metastasize across our nation.



By Rabbi Steven Burg/ Jerusalem Post

Last month, a dark truth was laid bare at anti-Israel rallies across North America. As news broke that Iran had launched 300 missiles targeting Israeli civilians, the crowds erupted into cheers and celebration. In that chilling moment, the veil was lifted, revealing the evil underpinnings of these demonstrations.

For too long, we in the West have been lulled into complacency by the guise of "free speech" claimed by these rallies. We must realize that when speech crosses into incitement of violence against others, it is no longer freedom—it is a threat to freedom itself.

The chants of "Death to Israel" signal an assault not just on the Jewish state, but on Western democratic values and America itself. The harassment of Jewish students, and the demonization of Israel on college campuses—this is an attack on our entire civilization.

Bill Maher pointed this out recently when he discussed that pro-Palestinian protesters have already begun to shout "Death to America" on American soil. He referenced a large rally that had taken place in Dearborn, Michigan. Maher said on Twitter, "We've passed the Rubicon with chants of 'Death to America' on American soil."

Something has changed with these protests.

Reminiscent of 1939 Pro-Nazi Protests

They are reminiscent of the pro-Nazi protest in 1939 that took place in Madison Square Garden and was organized by the German-American Bund. But they weren't the only such group active at the time. There were also the Teutonia Society, the Hitler Club and the Christian Front. These groups were actively countered by American anti-Nazi organizations, many of which were led by American Jews.

The images of the 1939 rally aren't looked upon positively by almost anyone now, and the same will be said in the future for those leading these "Death to America" rallies either. Now is the time for Americans, both Jewish and non-Jewish, to stand up and counter these hate protests and the groups who lead them once again.

We must not be naive. Looking back at the pro-Nazi rallies that once disgraced American soil, we will similarly condemn those who today praise the genocidal agendas of Hamas, Hezbollah and the Iranian regime sponsoring them. It's time to call out these rallies for what they are. These rallies are pro-terrorism. History will judge these rallies of blind hatred harshly.

We cannot allow these radical fringes spewing hatred of the U.S. and Israel to go unchallenged. America and its ally Israel, the Middle East's lone, passionate democracy, stand on the front lines against the forces of extremism and terrorism.

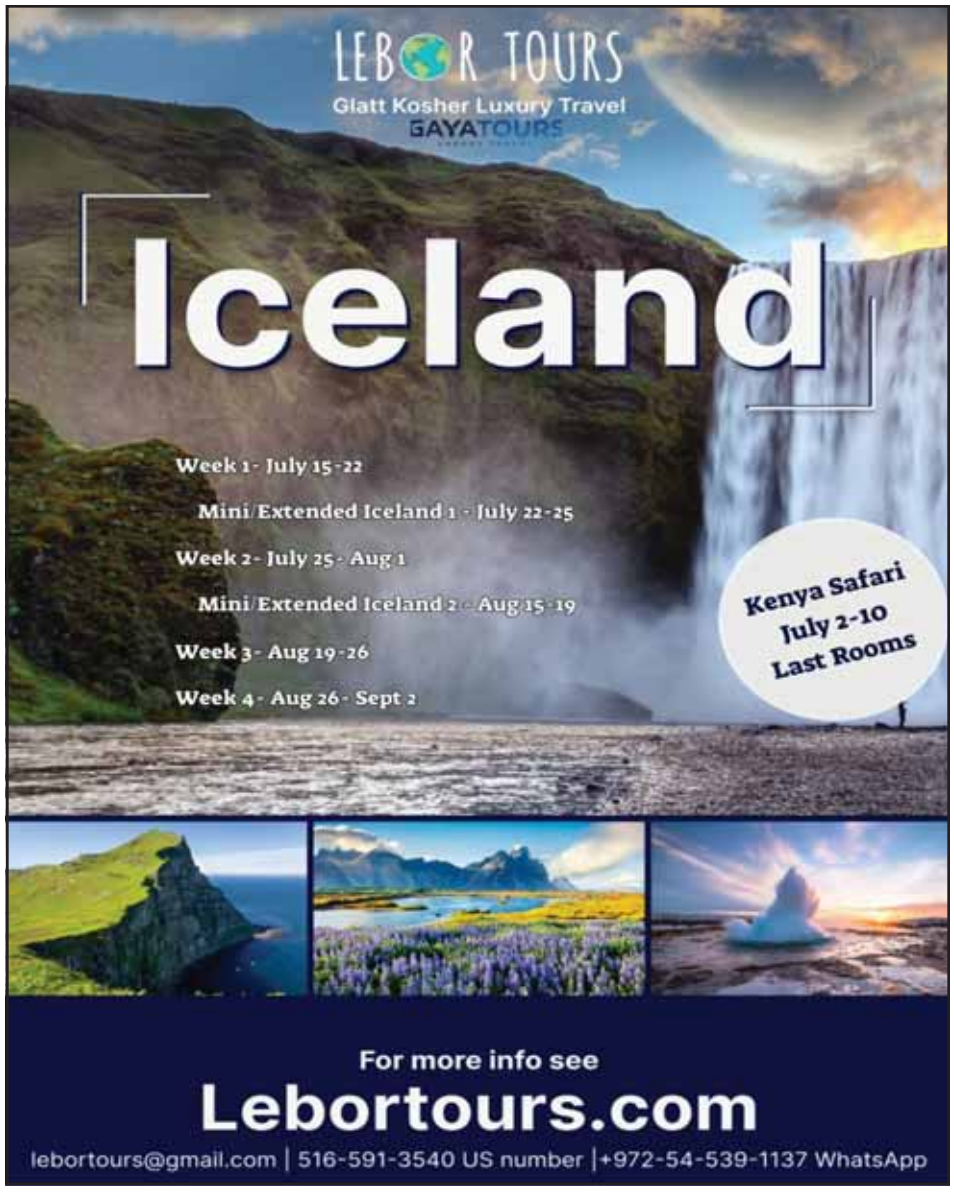
Today's protesters idolize Osama bin Laden, the mass murderer of Americans. Professors at our universities espouse these toxic ideologies. This is a malignancy that cannot be allowed to metastasize across our nation.

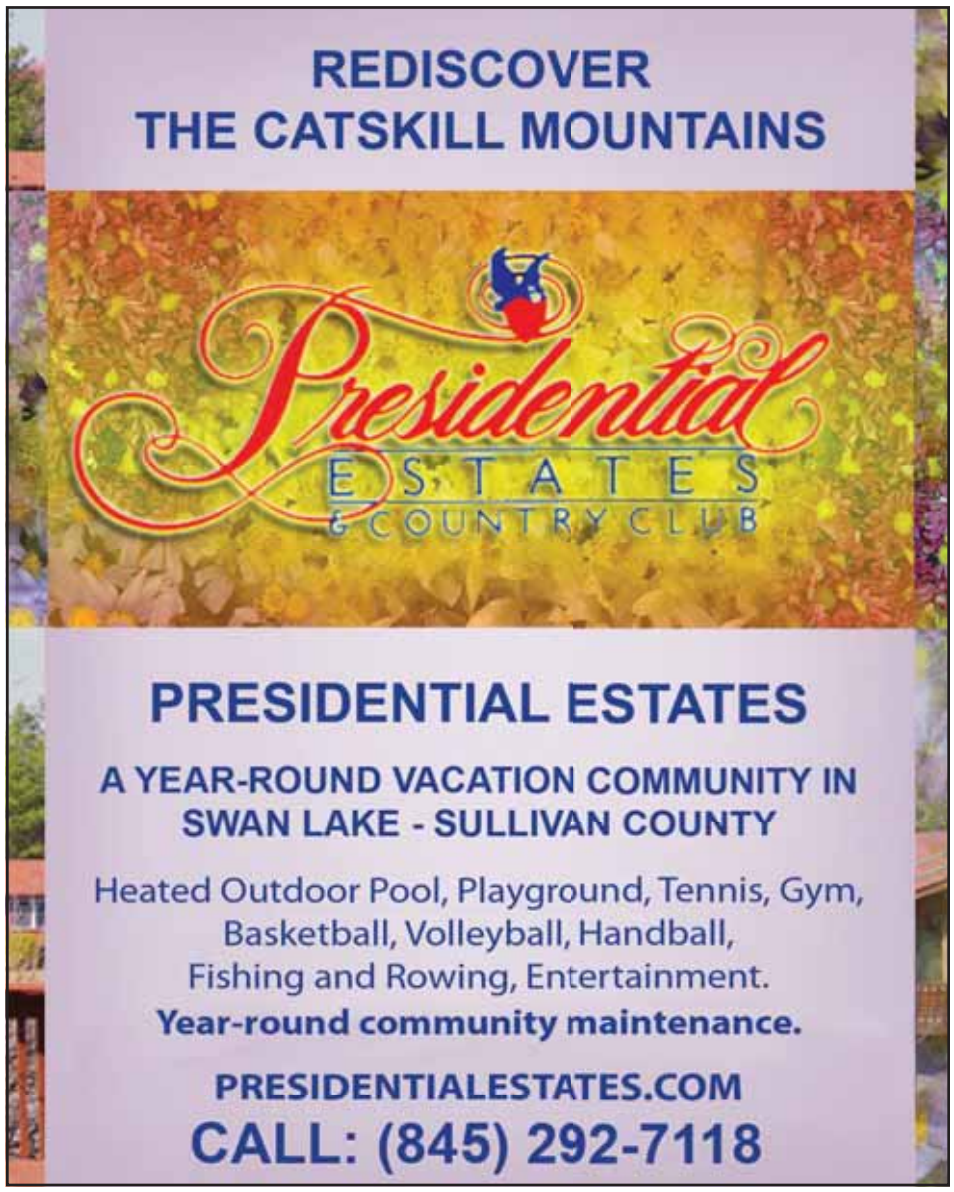
The Jewish community has been sounding the alarm, and now all who love America's ideals must join in this righteous struggle. Our nations' fates are intertwined—an attack on Israel is an attack on the West and its values.

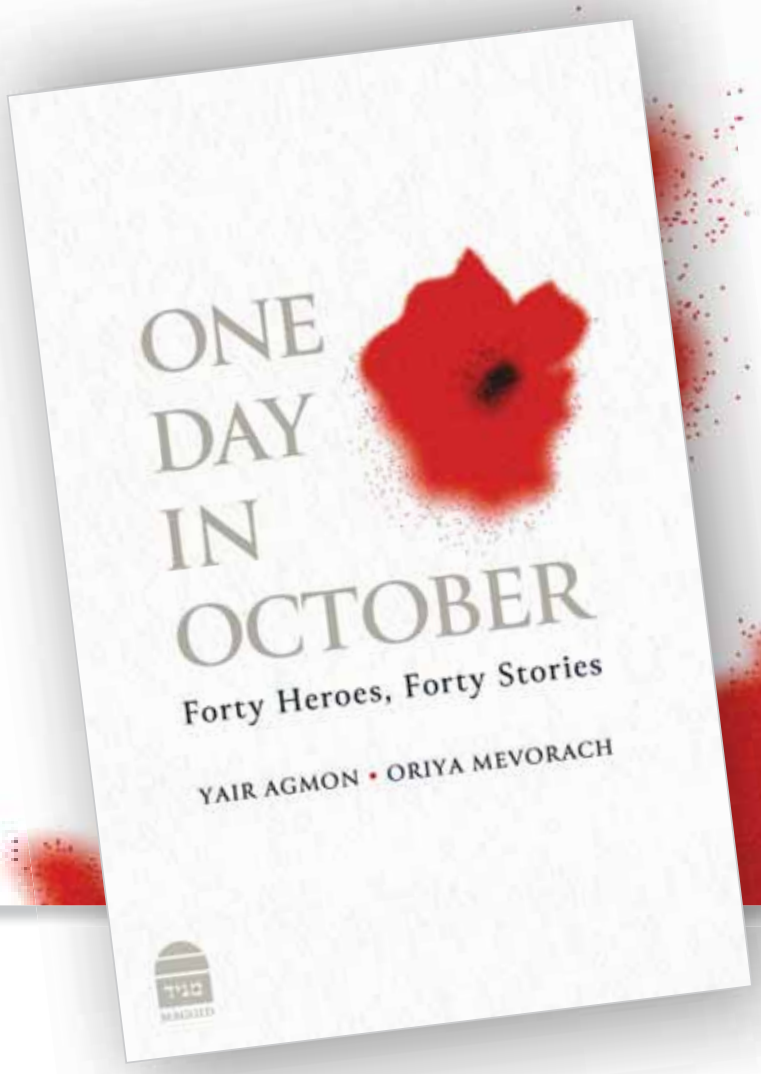
We all need to show the radicals who hate this country that they are not representative of our country and will not be tolerated. We must hold the line, confront those cheering terrorism, and protect the civilized world we hold dear.

The writer, a rabbi, is Aish's CEO and also serves on the Board of Governors of the Jewish Agency, as an executive board member of the Rabbinical Council of America, and as a board member of Yeshiva University High Schools and Naaleh High School. Prior to Aish, he was the eastern director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, where he oversaw the Museum of Tolerance in New York City and contributed to the center's fight against antisemitism.









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One Day in October: Forty Heroes, Forty Stories

by Yair Agmon and Oriya Mevorach

Shaylee placed her little finger in her newborn baby's mouth to keep her quiet. Shlomo sat on the couch and pretended to be asleep. Miki asked the terrorist to keep his promise. Amit comforted the last patient in the clinic. Aner threw seven live grenades out of the public shelter. Emanuel made sure that a fallen soldier's love letter would reach its destination.

And it all happened on a single day. On one day in October. October 7th, 2023, was one of the most tragic days in Jewish history. With Hamas' brutal attack, the State of Israel was ravaged before our very eyes, its land filled with the fallen, with hostages, with refugees. But in that very moment, countless heroes arose.

From the depths of a living hell, through unimaginable sadness and loss, they have risen, giving us hope and inspiration, and the chance to tell a different story. These heroes offer us a ray of light, helping us to see the good as we read of their incredible kindness and bravery.

One Day in October is a unique, ambitious book of monologues that introduces its readers to forty real-life heroes. All forty stories take place within the same twenty-four-hour period, in the same strip of beautiful, broken, blood-soaked land. Amidst all the pain and sorrow, these true and touching stories offer readers a welcome dose of consolation and hope.

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Toby KOREN MAGGID

The Senate Must Act to Combat The New Antisemitism

Yes, that includes anti-Zionism.



By Nathan J. Diament

An antisemitic virus is spreading across college campuses, but you can't combat antisemitism if you can't—or won't—define it. Modern antisemites hide their hate behind a thinly veiled facade of anti-Zionism. They insist they don't have a problem with Jews per se—just the only Jewish state in the world.

Their poorly constructed house of lies collapses in the face of calls to "Go back to Poland" or "Reignite the Intifada." These threats can't be chalked up to policy differences over Israel's war against Hamas. Anyone attending America's most prestigious universities must know these hateful slogans reference the extermination of Jews simply because they are Jews.

Similarly, anti-Israel protestors who rail about "human rights" but can't muster a peep against scores of other human rights tragedies—China, Myanmar and others—reveal their true motivation. They are not human rights activists. They are antisemites.

In 2016, then-Chief Rabbi of England Jonathan Sacks, zt"l wrote an essay explaining: "Antisemitism is a virus that survives by mutating. In the Middle Ages, Jews were hated because of their religion. In the 19th and 20th centuries, they were hated because of their race. Today, they are hated because of their nation-state, Israel. Anti-Zionism is the new antisemitism."

Thankfully, there is a bipartisan effort to combat this new antisemitism masquerading as anti-Zionism. Passed by the House, the Anti Semitism Awareness Act (AAA) requires the U.S. Department of Education to use the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism when enforcing federal anti-discrimination laws.

This definition includes traditional anti-Jewish hatred and Holocaust denial, but also modern antisemitism, which targets the State of Israel based on its Jewish foundations and character. In other words, anti-Zionism *is* antisemitism as far as the law is concerned.

Now the Senate needs to do its part to send the AAA to President Biden's desk. There are two obstacles in its path.

The ball is now in Senator Bernie Sanders's court. As chairman of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP), he can shepherd this bill through his committee, but Sanders is a notorious critic of Israel and has yet to hold a single hearing on campus antisemitism. In contrast, the Republican-controlled House of Representatives has already held four such hearings.

Alternatively, the highest ranking Jew in the U.S. Senate, Chuck Schumer, can bring the bill to the floor for a Senate-wide vote where it has wide bipartisan support (sponsored by Republican Tim Scott and Democrat Bob Casey). But Schumer has been glaringly quiet even as antisemitic protesters camp out in his home state.

Schumer is likely trying to protect his left flank. In the House, 70 Democrats, including Israel haters like Rashida Tlaib, Ilhan Omar and Jamaal Bowman, voted against the bill under the guise of free speech concerns. They argue the AAA is intended to stifle free speech and all criticism of Israel.

That's a red herring. Nothing in the AAA prohibits antisemitic speech, as distasteful as it is. It does not prevent Congresswoman Ilhan Omar from spouting hateful nonsense about alleged Israeli genocide. It does not prevent college students from protesting Israel's war with Hamas. If you think that's what these college protests are about, you haven't been paying attention.

From Columbia to UCLA, Jewish students are threatened with violence, physically attacked and barred from entering public spaces. Schools don't shut down classes because of "peaceful protests." They shut down because they have allowed Hamas supporters to make campus life unsafe.

So what does the AAA do? It inserts the IHRA definition of antisemitism into Title 6 of the Civil Rights Act. Under Title 6, colleges and universities are legally required to make sure Jewish students are not discriminated against or prevented from participating and enjoying university life.

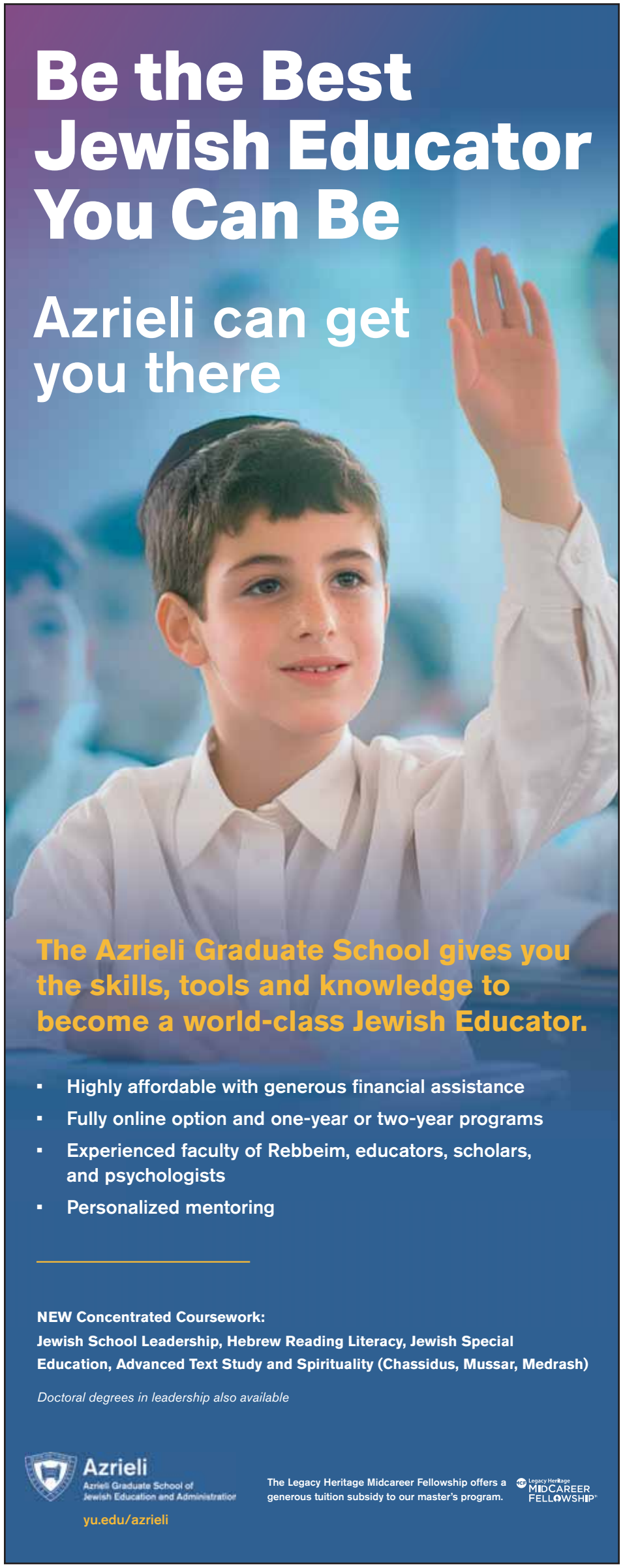
Holding a sign that says "Kill the Jews" is obviously threatening and intimidating. Protesters found a loophole in signs that say "Bring the Intifada to Columbia" or "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free." But these slogans are not constitutionally protected criticisms of Israel. They are antisemitic and intended to make Jewish students feel unsafe.

Under the AAA, the Department of Education has a clear legal position to investigate instances in which anti-Israel activity becomes unlawful, discriminatory and cause for intimidation.

The AAA also sends a clear message to college presidents and administrators who use "free speech" to justify their inaction and cowardice. They have a legal obligation to protect Jewish students. Instead, they are letting the inmates have free reign of the asylum.

The IHRA definition is the most authoritative and recognized definition of antisemitism, adopted by more than 1,200 entities worldwide, including 36 U.S. states, 91 U.S. cities and municipalities, the U.S. Department of State in each of the prior three administrations and 42 other countries.

CONTINUED ON P. 34



Raise Your Voice for a Better Teaneck



By Emma Horowitz

These days, I spend a lot of time thinking about the Jewish future, both here in Teaneck and beyond. Maybe you do, too. We can't help but notice that things have changed around here since October 7, and many of us have been compelled to become more aware of local politics. Sometimes that can be frustrating, but I firmly believe that getting more involved and using our collective voice will bring back a state of tranquility to our town.

One of the most effective ways to be heard is also one of the simplest: Register to vote, make sure your voting address is current, and exercise your right to vote **in each and every election**. Ensuring our local government represents our interests and reflects our values is the quickest path to restoring the calm and – dare I say it? – boring town we all chose.

Recent events that have disturbed our community stem from local politics. For example, the March 10 pro-Hamas protest outside Keter Torah emerged from the February 17 town council meeting. One of our Teaneck town councilwomen endorsed the hateful, inaccurate speech that went viral on social media, and when confronted with dozens of her constituents sharing their horror at what happened at the protest and her part in it, that same town councilwoman reacted with scorn. "Asking question[s] regarding things happening in our town is a part of my job," she huffed. She did not denounce the hate march, instead vaguely condemning "all hatred." If a local leader cannot explicitly condemn antisemitism and hate when it marches down our town's main streets, how can we trust that she represents us on any other issue?

Institutional hostility to Teaneck's Jews unfortunately extends elsewhere in local government. A recent example comes from Teaneck High School, where the newly formed Palestine Club held its inaugural event, at which they disseminated a handout containing lies and prejudicial, misleading half-truths, as well as offensive distortions. "Who are the Palestinians?" the flyer asks. "The Palestinian people consist of Muslims, Christians and Jews. They are a diverse people with rich culture and history....Why should you care about Palestine? Our tax dollars are helping fund the genocide of the innocent Palestinian people including women and children."

Like any other school club, the Palestine Club has a faculty advisor, and therefore should have some adult oversight. Minimally, any materials that are distributed should be accurate. That advisor, however, spoke at the Board of Education meeting on May 2, and doubled down on her views, saying, "Students and I have expressed feeling unsafe...around genocide deniers. What is this school district doing to ensure our safety against violent white supremacist ideology?...Let us know if we will continue to face undue scrutiny and censorship, and we will respond accordingly...Free Palestine." A school board with responsible leadership would hear this speech, note the propaganda in the handout, and make appropriate personnel decisions. Instead, several members of the board ignored her statement and accused the community members who complained about the handout of "attacking the kids."

The BOE trustees are right about one thing: the problem is not with "the kids." The problem is with the adults who fail to do their jobs, and that is where we, the electorate, come in. Board of Education trustees are elected officials. Three of them are up this November. It is incumbent upon all of us to show up for that election and VOTE.

The next election is the primary on June 4. On your ballot will be your party's presidential, congressional, and local political party candidates. Many of these races will be unopposed. Why, then, is it so critical for the Jewish community to show up in force and vote?

First, many districts contain contested races for the Teaneck Democratic Municipal Committee. BCJAC is endorsing select candidates in that race, and next week's *Link* will contain a comprehensive discussion of what this committee is, why it matters, and our endorsements. Second, politicians notice who comes out to vote, and a community with a high rate of participation in the primary (regardless of party affiliation) is a community whose concerns will be addressed. For example, if the BOE trustees know our community does not vote, they will be much less worried about being held accountable. But if they know we are watching, we disapprove of their behavior – *and we vote* – there is a real chance that things can improve. Turnout in uncontested primaries is usually very low, so this is an excellent opportunity for our community to raise its voice. We must not squander it.

One post-October 7 blessing has been meeting allies and friends from across Teaneck's different subcommunities who have stood with Teaneck's Jews, and I personally appreciate each and every one of them, as do we all. Further, we are extremely lucky that we already have many leaders in local government who truly care about every Teaneck resident, regardless of race, religion, or ethnicity. It's time that all of them meet that basic standard.

Early voting will take place from Wednesday, May 29 through Sunday, June 2 at the Rodda Center, or you can vote on Primary Day at your polling place on June 4. People affiliated with either party may vote, or unaffiliated voters may declare their affiliation by voting in the primary.

See you at the polls!

Emma Horowitz is the president of the Bergen County Jewish Action Committee and lives in Teaneck with her wonderful family. She is an English teacher at Ma'ayanot and is equally happy talking about politics, literature and her dog.

ARE YOU REGISTERED TO VOTE?

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Biden Admin Confirms Blocking Arms Shipment to Israel Over Rafah

Concerns cited that the weapons could be used in densely populated parts of Gaza's Rafah city.

By Joshua Marks/JNS.org

The Biden administration on Tuesday night, May 7 confirmed reports that it had held up a munitions shipment to Israel. This was further confirmed by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Wednesday.

U.S. President Joe Biden's decision to hold up a delivery of thousands of heavy bombs to the Israel Defense Forces was taken in the context of Jerusalem's plans to carry out a large-scale ground offensive in Rafah, Austin told senators.

"We've been very clear that Israel shouldn't launch a major attack into Rafah without accounting for and protecting the civilians that are in that battlespace," Austin said, according to a Reuters report.

"And again, as we have assessed the situation, we have paused one shipment of high payload munitions," he said during a hearing on Biden's 2025 defense budget request. "We've not made a final determination on how to proceed with that shipment."

On Tuesday night, an unnamed Biden administration official confirmed reports that Washington had held up a munitions shipment. A senior official told CBS News on Tuesday night that the United States last week stopped a delivery of thousands of heavy bombs over fears that they could be used during Israel's military operation in Rafah.

The shipment included 1,800 bombs weighing 2,000 pounds and another 1,700 bombs weighing 500 pounds.

According to the official, Israel has not "fully addressed" U.S. concerns about the humanitarian situation for the over one million Gazans sheltering in Rafah city, and the administration is particularly concerned that 2,000-pound bombs could be used in densely populated parts of the city.

It marks the first time since the Hamas-led assault on the northwestern Negev on Oct. 7 and ensuing war in Gaza that Washington has held up arms supplies to its Middle Eastern ally.

The Biden administration has also reportedly held up the delivery of thousands of precision weapons to Israel amid the Jewish state's war against Hamas in Gaza.

According to a Wall Street Journal report on Monday, citing officials familiar with the deal, at issue is the sale of up to 6,500 Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAMs)—a guidance kit that converts "dumb bombs" into "smart" precision-guided munitions.

The weapons shipments are being held up to send a political message, a separate report by Politico cited a U.S. official as saying on Tuesday.

Jerusalem already greenlit a ground offensive in the last Hamas bastion in southernmost Gaza despite opposition from the White House, which Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly stated is essential to defeating the terror group and preventing them from regrouping and threatening Israel again. Hamas has publicly vowed many repeats of its murderous rampage of Oct. 7.

Evacuations of some 100,000 noncombatants in eastern Rafah started on Monday ahead of an overnight targeted operation in which the IDF took control of the Rafah border crossing with Egypt and the Salah ad-Din road.

A source familiar with the Israeli plans told CNN that the operation in Rafah would be "very limited" in scope and is intended to pressure Hamas to agree to a hostage-release deal. The source said that the operation is not the full-scale ground offensive that Netanyahu has declared will take place and that U.S. President Joe Biden is against.

The IDF on Monday called on the residents of eastern Rafah to evacuate to newly established humanitarian zones.

The IDF has marked out two evacuation zones: an expansion of the Al-Mawasi zone, along the central-southern Gazan coastline, and Khan Yunis.

Monday's message directs noncombatants to the expanded area in Al-Mawasi, which includes field hospitals, tents and increased amounts of food, water, medicine and other supplies.

The Israeli military said that it was conveying the evacuation message via announcements, text messages, phone calls and media broadcasts in Arabic.

The United States has made its views on a major ground invasion of Rafah clear to Israel, a State Department spokesperson told Reuters on Tuesday.

It was the first response from the Biden administration since Israel began the targeted operation in eastern Rafah.

"We continue to believe that a hostage deal is in the best interest of the Israeli and the Palestinian people; it would bring an immediate ceasefire and allow increased humanitarian assistance into Gaza," the spokesperson said in an email.

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YU Names Rebecca Cypess, PhD, New Dean of Yeshiva College And Stern College for Women


Rebecca Cypess, PhD

(Courtesy of YU) Following a competitive national search, Yeshiva University has appointed Rebecca Cypess, PhD, the new dean of Yeshiva College and Stern College for Women. An accomplished and visionary educational leader, Dr. Cypess is currently the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University, where she is also founding co-chair of J-FAS (Rutgers Jewish Faculty, Administrators, and Staff), which combats antisemitism and anti-Israel bias on campus. Dr. Cypess will assume her new position on July 1, 2024.

Dr. Cypess succeeds long-time Dean Karen Bacon — legendary in her commitment to students — who will become the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. "Karen's contributions to YU are so profound and meaningful that they cannot be quantified or even simply explained," said Dr. Selma Botman, YU Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. "I am truly excited that she is joining the Office of Academic Affairs, where she will lend her wisdom and experience to all the schools and colleges of YU."

Dr. Cypess is the ideal choice for YU, said Dr. Botman. "She is mission aligned, deeply committed to excellence and filled with dynamism. She has a winning personality that will fit right into the culture of YU."

A renowned music scholar, professor, researcher and performer with a master's degree from YU's Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies, another from the Royal College of Music (London), and a PhD from Yale University, Dr. Cypess comes to YU with a diverse and unique skill set and a passionate personal and professional mission.

"As an Orthodox Jew deeply committed to higher education, I am honored to be afforded this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," she said. "I care deeply about YU. Since its founding, this institution has been critical to Jewish life in the United States, and I am eager to support its ongoing success and vitality."

In addition to building on the tradition of academic excellence across all subjects at Yeshiva College and Stern, Dr. Cypess hopes to cultivate and strengthen collaboration across the university, continuing to integrate Jewish values and Jewish learning into the undergraduate programs. "Such collaboration has never been more important than it is now," she said.

Collaboration and partnership-building have been central tenets of Dr. Cypess's tenure at Mason Gross School of the Arts, where she helps oversee curriculum and research in five different arts disciplines. "Encouraging dialogue and cooperation among the arts, sciences and humanities—and across the university as a whole—has been very exciting," she said. "When we talk to each other and collaborate, we know and accomplish more."

Although she has achieved considerable success at Rutgers, after Oct. 7, Dr. Cypess began reevaluating her priorities. Seeing a need to spend more time supporting the Jewish community in academia, she had planned to step down as associate dean and return to her faculty role. Then she read the announcement about the dean position at YU and knew she had to apply. It came at just the right time and in perfect alignment with her commitments to both academic excellence and the Jewish world.

"The position at YU gives me the opportunity to devote myself to strengthening academia from within the Jewish community," she said. "All roads seemed to lead to YU."

Much of higher education today, Dr. Cypess said, has embraced nihilism – which puts YU, the flagship Jewish university, in an ever more profound and vital position. "In a world where many people ignore facts and view reality as relative, YU is a beacon of morality, emanating from our timeless Jewish values," she said. "The world needs YU as never before. I am honored to become part of an institution that leads with academic excellence, moral clarity and the search for truth."

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Strengthening Future Jewish Leaders: The Paul E. Singer Foundation Awards Major Gift to YU's Straus Center

(Courtesy of YU) In an era marked by a lack of thoughtful discourse in the public square, Yeshiva University's Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought aims to cultivate Modern Orthodox intellectual leaders who are well versed in both Torah and the Western canon, and ready to assume the mantle of Jewish thought leadership in America. Thanks to a significant grant from The Paul E. Singer Foundation, the Straus Center's Impact Office has greatly expanded professional mentorship opportunities for Straus students and alumni in the fields of politics, policy and journalism to further equip top YU students and graduates with the tools for impactful engagement in the public sphere.

The Straus Impact Office, supported by this grant, aims to foster the growth of the Straus students, known as Straus Scholars, and other YU students outside the classroom, and maximize their impact as emerging Jewish leaders. Led by Senior Scholar and Impact Office Director Dr. Tevi Troy and Straus Impact Officer Sarah Wapner, the Impact Office plays a critical role in facilitating internships and job placements for these students and alumni at leading think-tanks, publications, political offices, graduate schools and other leading institutions.

At YU, Straus Scholars head several clubs and societies, hosting widely attended events and programming. Clubs like the Alexander Hamilton Society, the J.P Dunner Political Science Society, the Yeshiva University Political Action Club (YUPAC), the Pre-Law Society and the YU Philosophical Society all have Straus Scholars at the helm. This year, several Straus Scholars oversaw the YUPAC trip to Washington, DC, leading over 150 Yeshiva University students in meetings with lawmakers and Israeli diplomats in the nation's capital.

Straus Scholars also take leading roles on the staff of the campus newspapers, with several students serving in editorial positions at the YU "Commentator" and "Observer." Through these various activities, Straus Scholars model impactful leadership and drive serious intellectual engagement on both campuses.

The Impact Office also regularly hosts prominent journalists, academics and thought-leaders who share their insights and professional experiences with the Scholars, such as "Tablet Magazine" Staff Writer Armin Rosen and "The Wall Street Journal" Features Editor Adam Kirsch. Several scholars have gone on to be personally mentored by these important individuals and others, relationships facilitated by the Impact Office.

In addition to the ongoing Impact programming on campus, Straus scholars have completed summer internships at the Hudson Institute, OpenDor Media, New York-Presbyterian Hospital, the American Enterprise Institute, the Hertog Foundation, the Fund for American Studies, and the Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute, all with the help of Impact Office mentorship. Their writing has been published in leading publications, including "The Wall Street Journal," "National Review," "Tablet Magazine," "The Boston Globe," "Mosaic Magazine" and "The Jewish Review of Books," and they serve in key student leadership roles across both of Yeshiva University's campuses.

Upon graduation, Straus Scholars have pursued a variety of impactful professional opportunities, including jobs at Goldman Sachs, the Tikvah Fund, the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty.



With the support of this grant, Straus Scholars and other student leaders at Yeshiva University continue to receive invaluable mentorship and support post-graduation as they navigate these fields as emerging Jewish leaders.

This grant extends beyond the Straus Center, as it will also benefit undergraduate scholars at Yeshiva University's newly established Senator Joseph Lieberman–Mitzner Center for Public Service and Advocacy. Named in honor of late Senator Joseph Lieberman, a distinguished statesman and former vice-presidential candidate renowned for his commitment to bipartisanship and public service, the Lieberman-Mitzner Center embodies YU's dedication to preparing Jewish students for roles of political leadership and advocacy in the public sphere.

The Paul E. Singer Foundation's support will help significantly in advancing the mission of Yeshiva University and its programs to launch future leaders. The grant not only enables our students to become influential leaders in politics, policy, journalism and academia but also reinforces Yeshiva University's commitment to nurturing future Jewish leaders grounded in the great dual inheritance of the Jewish and American traditions.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

One-Man Show 'October 7' Presented at SAR Academy

(Courtesy of SAR Academy) Chagai Lober, founder of the Aspaklaria Theater in Jerusalem, presented his one-man show "October 7" at SAR Academy in the Bronx. Originally written during the Second Intifada but adapted after the massacre of Simchat Torah, the show deals with the very personal ways families are forever altered by tragedy, and how even the most mundane can be a source of tremendous challenge.



Chagai Lober performs his one-man show, "October 7," at SAR Academy. (CREDIT: SAR ACADEMY)

The play was scheduled to debut in Israel on Jan. 7, but Chagai's son Yonatan was killed in Gaza on Dec. 25. For Yonatan's shloshim commemoration, and with renewed poignance, Chagai went ahead with the performance, hosting his first show in the U.S. at SAR.

After the show, and as he came out to address the audience about the history and meaning of it all, his stage manager shouted out to him, "Mazal tov, during the show, your daughter gave birth to a baby girl." Chagai paused, cried, delivered his words of comfort to the audience, and asked everyone not to leave without committing to living, celebrating, enjoying the things they have, and supporting each other. He then said, "Before you leave tonight, please wish me Mazal tov!"

To learn more about the play and how to host it, contact oren@aspaklaria.org.

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Yom Ha'atzmaut/Yom Hazikaron Event

CONTINUED FROM P. 16

What is it?

A celebration hosted by the Bergen County pro-Israel community in commemoration of Israel's 76th Independence Day.

Where is it?

You will get an email once you've registered and have been approved

Why should I come?

There is a Talmudic doctrine, "*Shtika ke'hoda-ah*,"which suggests, "Silence presumes agreement." In the face of injustice and adversity, silence is complicity. Our gathering serves as a resounding affirmation of our unwavering support for Israel and our collective rejection of the hatred and bigotry we have been witnessing across the country, and indeed, many parts of the world.

Is it safe?

Yes. We will have a full detail of security personnel and police. Please come early, leaving time for parking and access control.

What is different this year?

We are asking people to register in advance so that we can help maintain safety for everyone. To defray the costs of the evening, the various features at the event, the security and town costs, etc., we are asking for a nominal fee from every entrant; $5 per person, $18 per family. The registration form will show you these options. Know that for the family options you can enter two names per line (six people).

Do I have to stay for the whole thing?

No, attendance is flexible. Feel free to come and go as you please. However, registration is required at: https://bit.ly/3Qxu-9ab for entry and security purposes.

What should I bring?

Bring along a blanket and wave the flags of the United States and Israel. Most importantly, bring your smile. No bags, please!

How should I dress?

Attire is casual, but bonus points for donning blue and white—the colors of Israel.

What if it rains?

Come rain or shine, our celebration will proceed as planned, embodying the resilience and spirit of Israel. In the unlikely event of inclement weather, the program will be postponed to Tuesday, May 14 at 6 p.m..

Will there be davening?

Yes. We will begin with Mincha at 7:45 p.m. Please bring your own siddur or a siddur app on your phone. (We recommend the Koren Siddur app, which includes the special tefillot that we will say for Yom Ha'atzmaut.)

Will there be music?

Yes. Lots of it.

What should I tell my friends?

That you are going to show your support for Israel, *now*. That your voice matters and that their voice does, too. Please join us.

Rabbi Chaim Strauchler is the rabbi of Congregation Rinat Yisrael.





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Teaneck Community Shuls To Mark Shabbat Chayal

By Pearl Markovitz

In 2005, "IDF Shabbat" was designated as a Shabbat to be marked close to Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut by Jonny Ben David, a member of Bnai Yeshurun, to pay honor to his son's service as a lone soldier. In 2012, the Shabbat was renamed the "Ilan Tokayer Shabbat Chayal" by Reva and Aaron Tokayer of Teaneck to honor the memory of their son Ilan Tokayer, z"l. who had proudly served in the IDF as a lone soldier, but passed away after his service. Currently, many local shuls organize around this designated Shabbat on which they host a festive kiddush and donate funds to an organization that is connected to IDF soldiers and their families. Representatives of the selected tzedakah often join in the Shabbat and address the congregations about the work of their organization.

On May 18, the Shabbat of Parshat Behar, seven congregations in the South of Route 4 section of Teaneck have joined together to mark Shabbat Chayal including Congregation Beth Aaron, Young Israel of Teaneck, Teaneck Jewish Center, Congregation Ohr Saadya, Congregation Arzei Darom, Congregation Netivot Shalom and Congregation Shaare Tefilla. In addition to honoring the memory of Ilan Tokayer, Congregation Beth Aaron will be honoring the recent passing Al Kidush Hashem of Zecharia Haber, HY"D, beloved son-in-law of Nancy and Dennis Friedman, longtime members of Congregation Beth Aaron.

The congregations have selected an organization named Tzalash as the recipient of their contributions this year as an excellent provider of religious and emotional support to thousands of soldiers and their families. The word "Tzalash" is understood to mean a "badge of honor," but as an acronym for the mission of this outstanding organization it represents "Tzava le-Shem Shamayim," an army for the sake of heaven.

Rabbi Dovid Gottlieb has served as the managing director of Tzalash since 2021. After seeing firsthand the incredible support provided to his son during his service in the Kfir Brigade of the IDF, Rabbi Gottlieb chose to join the Tzalash family. He balances his time as the rabbi of the growing community of Kehillat HaEla in Ramat Beit Shemesh and his lecturing at Yeshivat Har Etzion (Gush) with his work for Tzalash. He has also authored two volumes of a planned five-volume series of essays on the weekly Torah portion, which is distributed to soldiers throughout the IDF. Rabbi Gottlieb received semicha from Yeshiva University, where he was a member of the prestigious Wexner Kollel Elyon. Before making aliyah in 2010, he served as the rabbi of Congregation Shomrei Emunah in Baltimore.

In speaking to Rabbi Gottlieb about the contributions of Tzalash, it became clear that the scope and diversity of its projects is huge and incredibly effective in helping keep the religious soldier focused and committed during his or her service. Rabbi Gottlieb estimates that during the course of a year, 10,000 soldiers and their families are impacted by Tzalash through their many diversified services.

Before their drafting into the IDF, Tzalash visits yeshivot across the country to provide lectures and shiurim to 11th- and 12th-graders, preparing them for dealing with the challenges that present themselves during army service. During their service, Tzalash representatives visit bases weekly to provide physical treats as well as words of chizuk. Learning sessions are arranged to coincide with free time so that the religious soldier stays connected to Torah learning.

Tzalash has organized all-day Torah gatherings at venues such as Binyinei HaUma, hosting the Chief Rabbis and different roshei yeshiva. Tzalash distributes specially designed pocket Gemaras, Mishnayot, chumashim and special volumes of divrei Torah that accompany the soldiers on the base and in the field. To date, five volumes of Rav Asher Weiss' series "Minchas Asher" have already been distributed throughout the IDF and the sixth volume on Pesach will be delivered in time for the chag. Impressed by the work of Tzalash, the Chofetz Chaim Heritage Organization has donated 10,000 Hebrew translations of "Shemiras Ha'Lashon" to Tzalash to distribute on IDF bases.

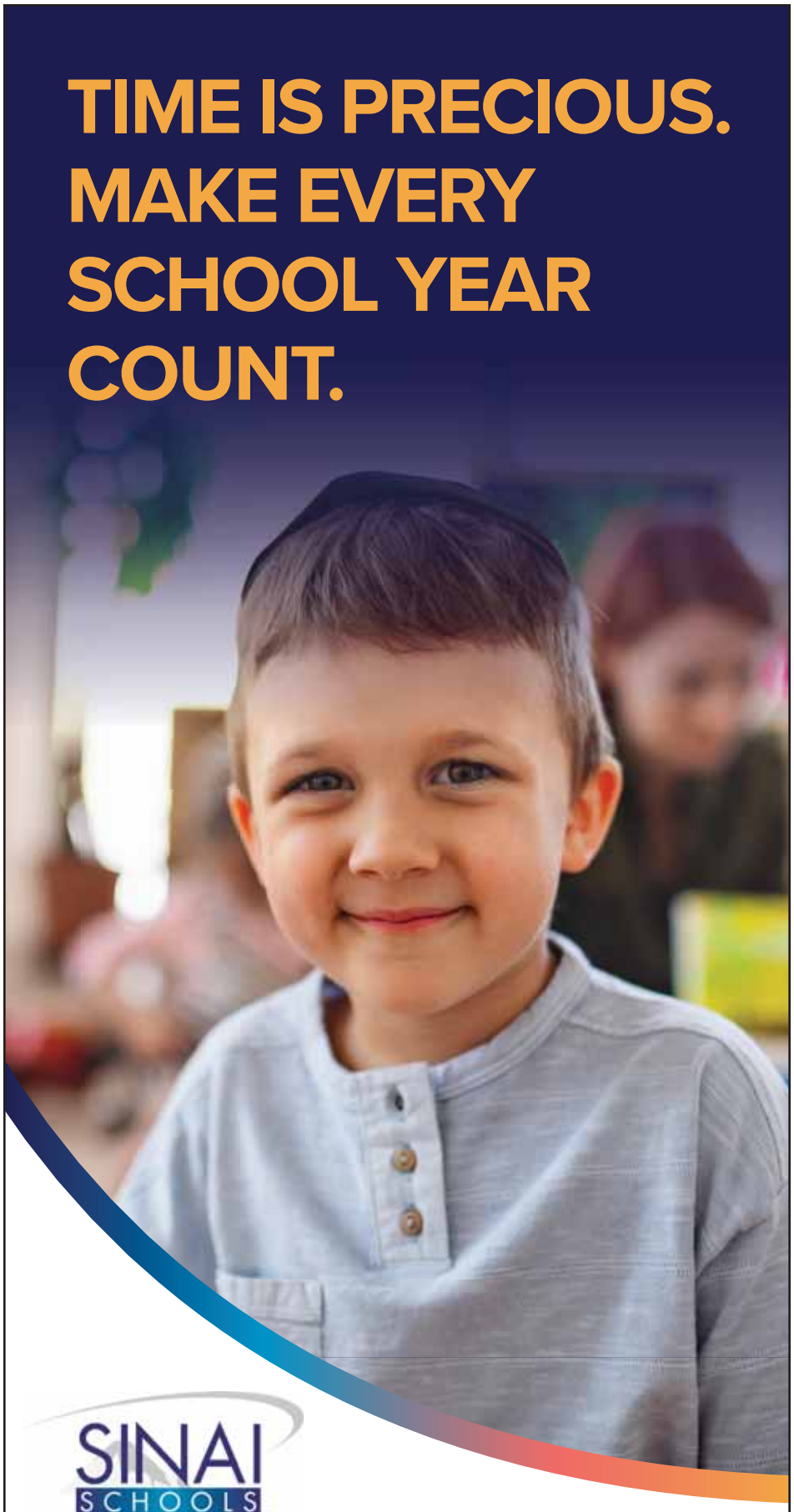
The physical and emotional welfare of families of soldiers is a key focus of the Tzalash organization. Thus the Eshet Chayil initiative was formed, and is especially active during the current wartime, providing emotional support and programming to the wives of enlisted soldiers. Over 4,000 couples have benefitted from the services provided by Tzalash in the form of programs throughout the country offering advice, support and companionship.

Tzalash has expanded its services to lone soldiers in the form of material and emotional/spiritual support. Unique to Tzalash is the support it provides to female religious chayalot, whose numbers are growing and whose challenges during their service are unique and often unaddressed. The organization realizes this great need and has taken this task upon itself.

Tzalash endeavors to infuse every momentous event in the experiences of an IDF soldier with a religious celebration. An example is a siyum followed by a festive meal that is hosted on the day of a soldier's *Tekes Hashba'a,* swearing-in ceremony, so that these occasions take on religious significance. Rabbi Gottlieb stressed that Tzalash is in no way coercive or invasive.

Rabbi Gottlieb and another representative of this impressive organization plan to be in Teaneck on Shabbat Chayal, during which they will have an opportunity to speak at the various participating shuls and share their vital work.

To find out more about the work of Tzalash and to donate, go to https://tzalash.org.



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Manhattan Synagogues Face Bomb Threats Amid Rising Antisemitism

By Jewish Link Staff

On Saturday, May 4, more than a dozen synagogues and Jewish institutions in Manhattan received a disturbing bomb threat via email. The threat came amidst a recent spike in antisemitism due to ongoing anti-Israel protests across New York colleges, leaving local Jewish residents on high alert. Upon investigating the threat, law enforcement ultimately deemed it "not credible," but its appearance makes one thing abundantly clear: Manhattan Jewish institutions and their constituents do not feel safe in this current climate.

According to The New York Post, the email stated: "Hello, if you see this email, just have notice of a bomb I have set inside of your building...you have a few hours to disarm or else blood will shatter everywhere." Law enforcement officials told the Post that the group which sent the email was calling itself "Terrorizers111." Overall, the group targeted 14 Manhattan synagogues and Jewish centers, as well as five more in Queens, two in Brooklyn, two upstate and one on Long Island.

Upon receiving the threat, Congregation Rodeph Sholom on West 83rd Street on the Upper West Side was evacuated by the NYPD as a precaution. In a message to congregants, Executive Director Barbara Zakin confirmed that a search was done of the premises but nothing was found.

During this time on Saturday, New York Gov. Kathy Hochul announced she was "actively monitoring" the situation, writing that even though the threats were deemed not to be credible, New York "will not tolerate individuals sowing fear and antisemitism. Those responsible must be held accountable for their despicable actions."

The following day, Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY) released a statement announcing the designation of $400 million in federal funding for the protection of houses of worship. He wrote on X, and later posted to his other social media accounts: "Last night's bomb threats targeting New York City synagogues created immense fear, but sadly, these threats are not a total shock given the rise in antisemitism that we have seen and the overall spike in threats to places of worship."

Sen. Schumer also held a press conference with Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-NY) on May 5, after consulting with FBI officials about the threats.

"The second I heard about the threats, your heart sinks, you hope it's a hoax. And in this case, thank God, it was," said Schumer. "But that doesn't [negate] the fear, the trauma when synagogues and other houses of worship have to be evacuated. The fear and trauma when they have to be evacuated stays with the congregants, and people who go the next day wonder, 'Is it going to happen again, am I safe?'"

Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine called the pattern of threats a "hate crime" and said there is a growing trend of "swatting," when individuals report fake emergencies to authorities, targeting Jewish institutions.

"We are witnessing a dramatic increase in antisemitic incidents across the United States," said Community Security Service (CSS) CEO Richard Priem in a statement to The Jewish Link. "We are also seeing a growing number of institutions signing up for our programs. Although the latest bomb threats — while not deemed credible by law enforcement — are intended to intimidate our community, the fact that so many Jews are stepping up for training to volunteer to secure their own institutions is sending a powerful message that we will not shy away from protecting our Jewish way of life. We will continue to grow our network of trained security volunteers to ensure the Jewish way of life can continue and flourish."

Law enforcement continues to investigate the source of the May 4 threat. As of press time, no arrests had been made.

New Antisemitism

CONTINUED FROM P. 21

Congressional hearings with university presidents and upcoming hearings with public school district superintendents are very important, but they must be translated into legislation with consequences. Those hearings have already laid bare a stunning disregard for the safety of Jewish students on campus and the absurdity of the "We are not antisemitic, We are just anti-Zionist" lie.

When the then-presidents of Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania can't say whether calls for the genocide of Jews violate the university's conduct policy, it is clear that we are not talking about policy disagreements about the Israel-Hamas war. When a leader of the Columbia encampment says we should be "grateful that I'm not just going out and murdering Zionists," we are no longer talking about "peaceful protests."

The virus spreading across college campuses is dangerous and disgusting—it is also illegal. The House has done its part. Now, the Senate and President Biden must act to give the government the clear and decisive tools to wipe it out.

Nathan J. Diament is the executive director for public policy, Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America.

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HP's Bridge Turkish Grill Receives Threats and Bad Reviews for Support of Rutgers Jewish Rally

By Harry Glazer

As staff members of The Bridge Turkish and Mediterranean Grill kosher restaurant in Highland Park learned recently, you don't have to enter a 'Liberated Encampment' on a college campus, or even be Jewish, to face harassment, falsehoods and other odious actions from Hamas sympathizers.

The Bridge had agreed to provide kosher food at cost for a 'Students Supporting Israel' End of Semester barbecue on May 3, planned for the Voorhees Mall on the Rutgers-New Brunswick campus, opposite the protesters' encampment. The barbecue ads told prospective attendees, "Let's peacefully show our Zionist pride and spirit" and added, "Please remember this is a peaceful demonstration, be respectful, no shouting, and thank RUPD." The event was co-sponsored and promoted by Rutgers-Chabad; days later, the barbecue was moved to a nearby New Brunswick park.

Shortly after word got around about the barbecue, the Bridge started receiving calls pressuring the restaurant to drop their support of the event. As Sam Eriske, owner of the Bridge, shared with The Jewish Link, "People were calling and saying: 'What are they paying you? We'll double it (if you don't support the rally)' and 'If you do this, you're gonna get a bad reputation."



The Bridge

Eriske told his staff to ignore the angry callers and estimated that they received "about a dozen" such calls.

Shortly afterwards, The Bridge began to see a rash of 15-20 scathing bogus one-star reviews appear on its Google Reviews page. Eriske said that the slandering of his restaurant made him sad and angry, because "it was so stupid."

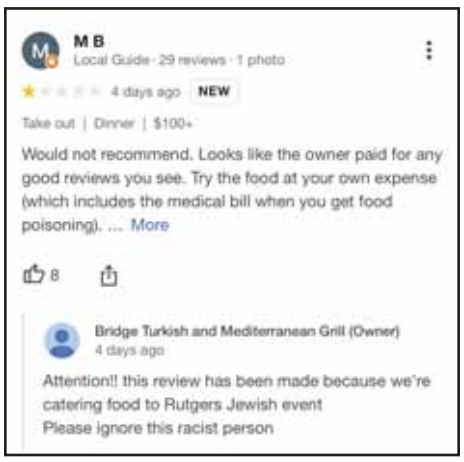
Eriske and his staff were gratified to see the immediate supportive response they received from the local Jewish community. Eriske cited supportive emails he received from Rabbi Reuven Drucker and other members of the VAAD HaRabbonim of Raritan Valley, as well as from other community members.

Community members also started posting enthusiastic five star reviews of The Bridge, to counterbalance the bogus reviews. To limit the traction of the phony reviews, staff at The Bridge posted responses to each of them, which said: "Attention: This review has been made because we're catering food to Rutgers Jewish event. Please ignore this racist person."

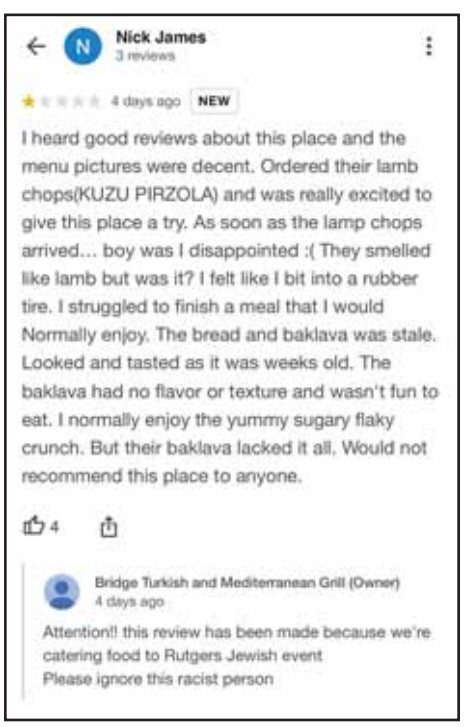
At press time, the effort to restore The Bridge's well-earned reputation on Google Reviews has made remarkable strides, with the restaurant's ranking now a solid 4.6 stars.

Eriske is grateful for the community response, commenting while still on vacation visiting family and friends in Turkey: "I deeply appreciate their support and respect them. I am 100% with them, for sure."

Michael Garber, mashgiach and front-end manager of The Bridge, added: "The students, at Rutgers, SSI and Chabad, specifically Michael Batushansky, president SSI; Kelly Shapiro, vice president, SSI; and Camilla Vaynberg, director of programing; demonstrated real leadership skills in organizing this event despite the hurdles placed in their way, in a very professional manner. We should be very proud of these young men and women."

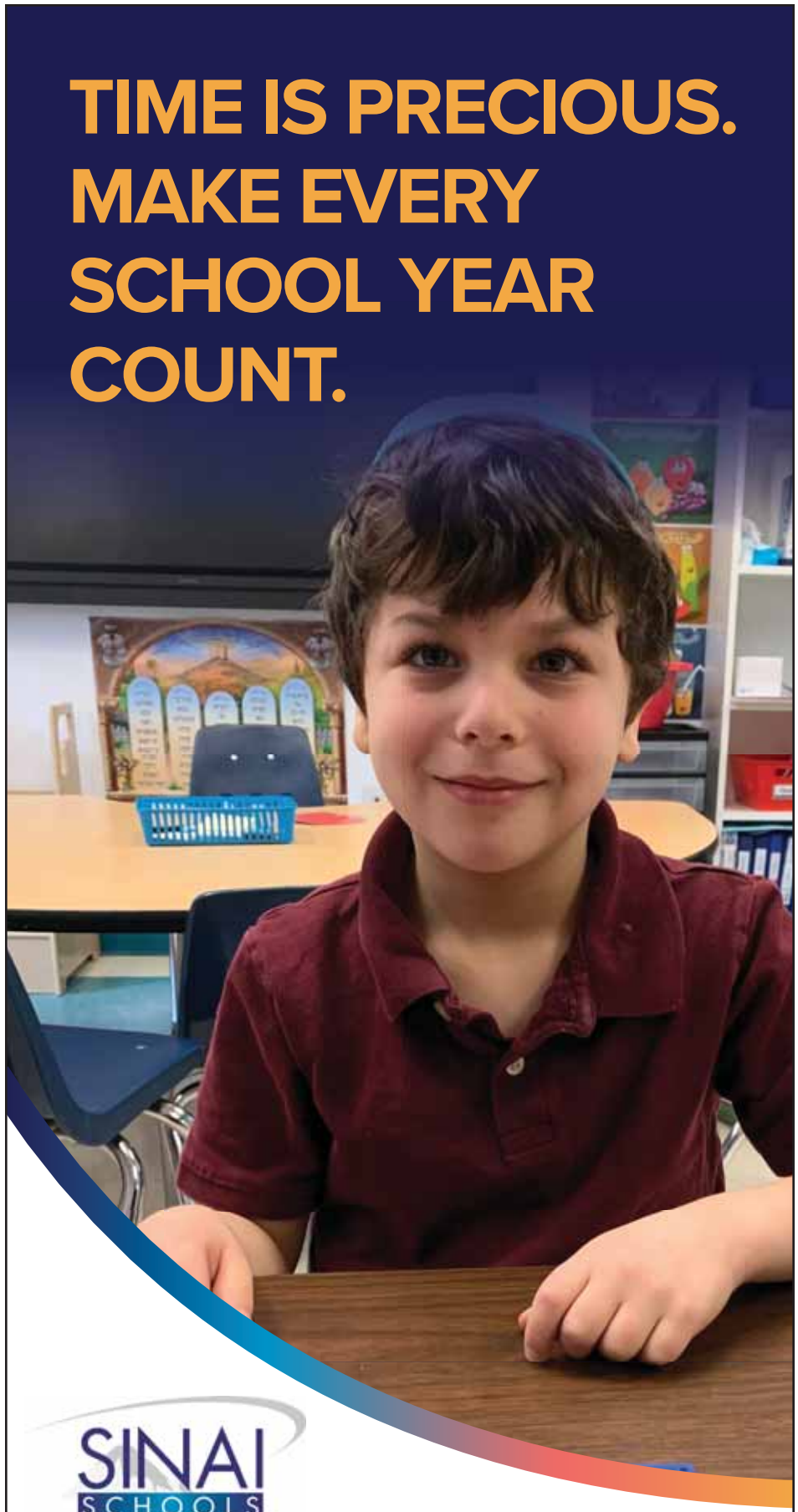


Bogus review, #1



Bogus review, #2

Harry Glazer is the Middlesex County Editor of The Jewish Link. He can be reached at harryglazer615@gmail.com and he welcomes feedback. And for the record, Harry is a big fan of The Bridge: their food & service is always top-notch.



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The Jewish Historical Society of North Jersey Plans Annual Dinner



Dr. Morris Joelson



Miriam Gray

(Courtesy of JHS) The Jewish Historical Society of North Jersey (JHS) will celebrate its eighth annual dinner on Thursday, May 23. The event will take place at Temple Emanuel in Franklin Lakes at 6 p.m. JHS will be honoring the late Miriam Gray and the late Dr. Morris Joelson.

Gray was a long-time devoted volunteer and officer of the Jewish Historical Society, dating back to when the JHS was located in the Barnert Hospital in Paterson. She continued volunteering with the organization when it moved to its present location in Fair Lawn. Gray was instrumental in promoting the mission of the historical society throughout Bergen and Passaic Counties.

Dr. Joelson was a beloved physician who practiced in northern New Jersey in the early to mid-20th century. He delivered close to 20,000 babies during his career. Dr. Joelson is best remembered as an old-fashioned physician who made house calls and treated all patients regardless of their ability to pay for his services. His black medical bag, along with the instruments he used to treat his patients will be on display at the dinner. The evening will feature a musical presentation in memory of Dr. Joelson by guitarist Aaron Nathans, nephew of JHS founder, Jerry Nathans.

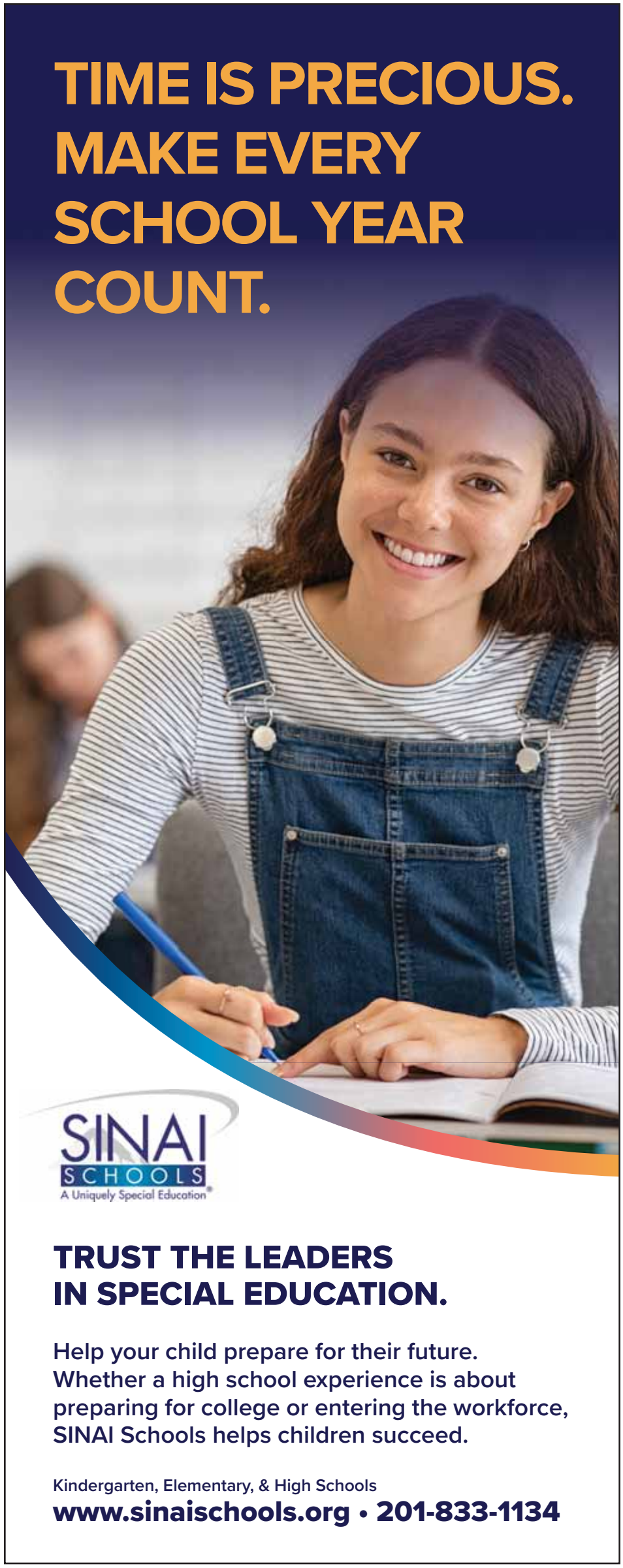
For more information, please call the Jewish Historical Society office at 201-300-6590.

15th Annual Russian Shabbaton Attracts Large Gathering

(Courtesy of Bris Avrohom) During the last weekend of March, the 15th Annual Russian Shabbaton was held where over 1,200 people participated. Bris Avrohom was an integral part of the shabbaton with six tables dedicated to Bris Avrohom friends. Bris Avrohom rabbis gave lectures and held private meetings with people who came to consult with them to learn about Judaism. The 72 speakers who spoke over the course of the Shabbat gave the attendees the opportunity to learn about yiddishkeit. For many of the people, it was their first exposure to an authentic Shabbat.



(l-r) Rabbi and Mrs. Mordechai Kanelsky; Dr. Yair Ansbacher, keynote speaker, and Bris Avrohom friends. Behind Rabbi Kanelsky is Rabbi Bentzion Laskin, shabbaton director.



Ohel Opens Pre-Vocational Program in Teaneck

(Courtesy of Ohel) Do you remember receiving your first paycheck? Were you beaming with pride about your hard work? Did you capture that moment with a photo? Did you buy yourself a special gift?

Every person wants to lead a productive and meaningful life. We all want to feel like we make a difference in this world. It is no different for an individual with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities (I/DD).

Bringing its 50-year history and extensive work with the I/DD population in New York, Ohel has opened a pre-vocational program in Teaneck and is very excited to have already enrolled a good number of individuals with I/DD into this training program based in Teaneck. The program allows individuals with I/DD to participate in volunteer or vocational community experiences to help them prepare for jobs in an integrated setting in the community where they will work alongside neurotypical people. Some people may not be quite ready yet or have not identified their employment strengths. Ohel works with each person to tailor a customized program in their desired area of interest.



To assist a person in finding the right job opportunity, trained Ohel staff first assesses their interests in several ways. The Ohel staff places them in volunteer positions to evaluate how they perform in real-life positions. The staff also administers a written assessment tool and helps them work through it. Videos allow staff to demonstrate to the clients what each job entails. Run by Abby Cohen, who has several decades of I/DD and/or employment training and placement experience, the program is currently helping individuals locate jobs in retail, including in an auto store, working with children, working with animals and doing office work.

As Ohel prepares its clients for the workforce, the staff works on skills such as respecting personal space, communication, recognizing priorities, computer skills, physical presentation, writing a resume and interviewing skills. Each person is assigned a job coach to help them in their preparation for the workforce and to accompany them on their assigned volunteer or employment opportunity.

Ohel is proud that some individuals have already been placed in positions. Yosef is currently volunteering at Holy Name hospital, together with his coach. Yosef is the "Number One" volunteer in the cafeteria. He comes to work daily with a huge smile on his face. He stocks food, organizes and cleans the tables. The supervisor seeks Yosef out for difficult tasks because he knows Yosef can handle them. Co-workers and customers always tell him that he does an amazing job. Along with the other individuals in the program, Yosef is very proud of the work he does as a contributing member of society. He also operates a silver polishing business, providing an important service to members of the community. (See related photograph)

According to Lisa Sheinhouse, director of Ohel's Community Services, Ohel's goal in New Jersey is to replicate and build upon its work in New York, which currently provides pre-vocational and employment services to well over one hundred individuals who are placed in jobs throughout New York City and Nassau County.

For more information on Ohel's Pre-vocational program and other support programs, please contact 718-686-3133 or NJServces@ohelfamily.org.

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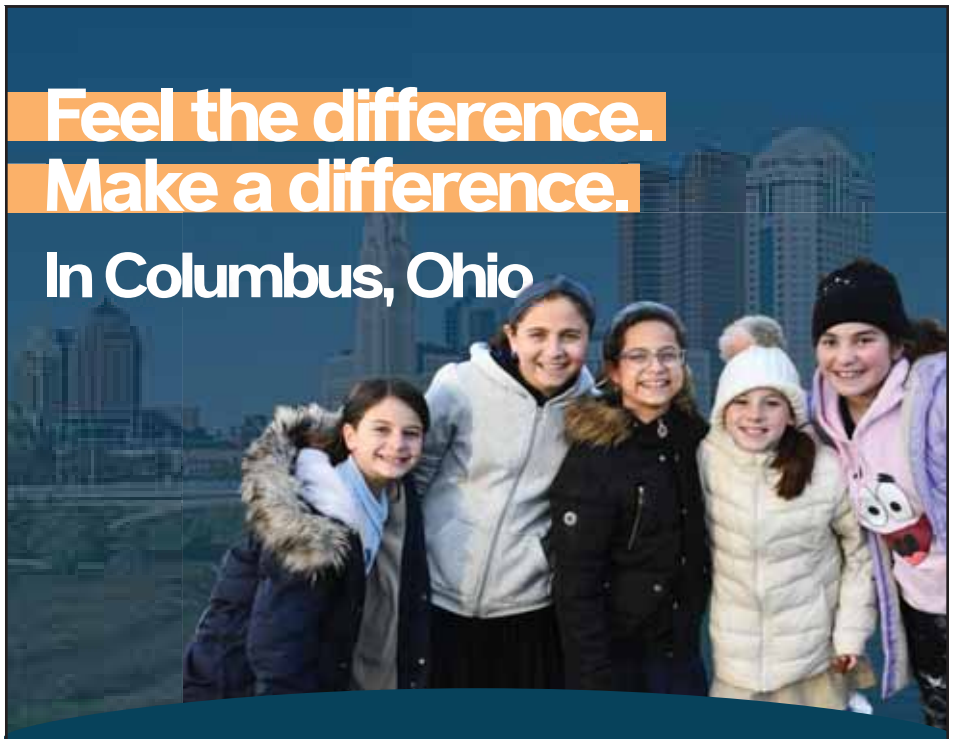
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COMMUNITY NEWSBRIEFS

Lubavitch on the Palisades Offers New Course on Medical Ethics


Rabbi Mordechai Shain

Join Rabbi Mordechai Shain for "Decisions of Fate," a new four-week course navigating questions of medical ethics. Explore the guiding Jewish values that help inform choices on common medical questions. This course will equip students with the tools to chart a path through four areas of medical ethics: experimental treatments, extending life, pregnancy questions, and caring for a body. Gain an enriching perspective on how the Jewish ethical tradition helps us confidently navigate fateful decisions.

Beginning Tuesday, May 14, from 8:30-9:30 p.m. at Lubavitch on the Palisades, 11 Harold St., Tenafly, New Jersey. In-person and Zoom option available.

Fee: $80 (textbook included)

Please visit chabadlubavitch.org/learn for more details and to register, or call 201.871.1152, ext. 512.

Teaneck Library Plans May Events

Holocaust Art Exhibit "Precious Belongings: Lost and Found" is hosted during the month of May, on the lower level of the library. RYNJ students honor Yom Hashoah and memorialize Holocaust survivors with beautiful artwork inspired by the USHMM's 2024 calendar.

Celebrate Shavuot with the BCJAC! Sample delicious kosher cheesecakes and learn about the holiday's traditions, with "Cheesecake & Tradition: A Shavuot Tasting," on Thursday, May 30 at 6:30 p.m.

The library is located at 840 Teaneck Rd, Teaneck.

Garden Club of Teaneck Holds Sale

The Garden Club of Teaneck annual plant sale is being held through Sunday, May 12, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.. It features a large variety of locally grown plants, including annual flowers, perennials, vegetables, herbs, houseplants, succulents, hanging baskets, container arrangements, terrariums, air plants and Mother's Day gifts. Various unusual specialty plants and handcrafted herbal salves are also available,as well as knowledgeable gardeners to guide you with your purchases. Amazing prices! The venue of the plant sale is 296 Lindbergh Boulevard in Teaneck. Visit the Garden Club of Teaneck Facebook page or gardenclubofteaneck.org for more information.

Yom Ha'Atzmaut to Be Celebrated in Livingston

Livingston Celebrates Israel is a Livingston Township tradition. The township has celebrated Independence Day for the past six years, and this year it is more important than ever to show support for the one true democratic ally of the United States in the Middle East. Join the celebration on Tuesday, May 14, 4-6:15 p.m.. Flag raising at 7 p.m. at Livingston Town Hall, 375 Livingston Avenue.

The core committee of Inna Yelisevich, Joana Rothenberg, Suzy Lugashi, Shyella Myak, Leah Commer, Joshua Commer and Elena Steinmetz, together with many others, have been planning a special afternoon of events that will take place at the Livingston Community Center and culminate with the raising of the Israeli Flag in front of town hall.

Young and old are invited to attend the events and learn about and support the Jewish (and?) Israeli community both here in Livingston and in Israel.

Lavy House Live to Present Windowsill Garden

Jewish Family Service of Central New Jersey's Lavy House Live Series will be presenting "How to Create Your Own Windowsill Garden" on Wednesday, May 15 and Thursday, June 20 11 a.m., at the Lavy House, 748 E. Broad Street, Westfield. The two-part series will teach you how to create and care for your garden in your own home, and then share recipes with produce grown in our gardens.

The program will be presented by JFSCNJ Garden Coordinator Tre Lanier. Born in Florida, Tre relocated to Union County with his family as a youngster and discovered the benefits of veganism and combined that passion for nature and its health benefits. His dual position as an associate in the JFSCNJ Charlotte Shak Food Pantry and Garden Coordinator, affords him the opportunity to utilize his skills to benefit members of our community.

The program is funded by the Lavy House and the Standish Foundation. Light refreshments will be served (kashrut observed). Ample parking is available in the Temple Emanu-El lot.

Contact: info@jfscentralnj.org or call 908-352-8375, to register for this program.



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Volunteers Needed to Place Flags at Clifton Cemetery

Seeking volunteers to help put up flags at King Solomon Cemetery in Clifton on Sunday morning, May 12 and/or Sunday morning, May 19 from 9 a.m.- noon.

If you're interested, please email Carl Singer at jwv.carl@gmail.com. Please use "FLAGS" as the subject.



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Hundreds Support Israel at United For Israel March

By Lori Yoffe

Hundreds came out to support Israel and for a safe campus for all students at Columbia University. The march was held outside the Columbia University campus during the last week of April. It was an encouraging sight to see hundreds show their support for Israel and the students, and chant Am Yisrael Chai and sing the Israel national anthem. Only Columbia students with a student ID and faculty were allowed entry onto the campus given the recent pro-Hamas demonstrations on campus. Later reports indicated that about half the pro-Hamas demonstrators later arrested were not Columbia students nor faculty but outside agitators.





(CREDIT: LORI YOFFE)









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Dr. Ann Shinnar


Dr. Marsha Edelman

(Courtesy of Lamdeinu) For the past decade, Lamdeinu, the center for high-level, accessible and inspiring Torah learning in Teaneck, has hosted a special Yom Ha'Atzmaut celebration for women. Under the direction of Dean Rachel Friedman, the program engages its participants in Tefillah Chagigit, Shirei Eretz Yisrael, words of Torah inspiration, and the exploration of films selected to reflect contemporary Israeli life. This year, Lamdeinu's program will take place on Tuesday May 14 from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The event will be on Zoom so that participants from near and far can join and enjoy.

Lamdeinu's Yom Ha'Atzmaut celebration will open at 9 a.m. with Tefillat Shacharit led by Dr. Ann Shinnar. Divrei Torah and Berachah by Dean Friedman will follow. At about 10:15 a.m., Dr. Marsha Edelman will explore how songs of Eretz Yisrael since the establishment of the Medinah have enriched and punctuated our experience as a nation. Dr. Edelman will provide historical context for each musical piece, with a special emphasis on how Songs emerged from the challenges of wartime.

At about 11:15 a.m., participants will view two films about the modern state of Israel—one provides a glimpse into Israeli society through serious drama and the other does so through humor. Viewers will be asked to consider certain questions as they watch these films, and a short discussion will follow.

Lamdeinu offers classes every Monday through Thursday for men and women. Special programs are held to celebrate the chagim and to commemorate historical moments, such as Yom HaShoah, Yom Ha'Atzmaut and Yom Yerushalayim. Lamdeinu's inspirational summer programs will begin in June. For more information, contact Lamdeinu Program Director Debbie Negari at lamdeinu613@gmail.com or visit Lamdeinu at www.lamdeinu.org.

Lamdeinu looks forward to celebrating Israel's 76th birthday with you this Yom Ha'Atzmaut beginning at 9 a.m. To register or sponsor please go to lamdeinu.org.

SINAI Schools To Stage Student Art Shows

SINAI Schools will hold its annual Unique Inspirations Student Art Show in two locations this year. The first, on Sunday, May 19, 4-6 p.m. at Congregation Beth Abraham, Bergenfield, will feature artwork by students at its New Jersey schools.



The second show, featuring artwork by students at the Irving Montak SINAI School at SAR, will be held on Tuesday, May 21, 5-6:30 p.m. at SAR Academy in Riverdale, New York.

The students created this artwork through SINAI's Paley-Mironov Art Therapy Program.

Both family-friendly events are generously sponsored by Bear Givers. Hors d'oeuvres and kid-friendly foods will be served. For more information, visit sinaischools.org.





BCHSJS to Celebrate 50 Years With Jewish Matchmaking Event

By Chaya Glaser

As the community moves through the Omer period following Pesach, it is invigorated by a shared mission to foster the growth and continuity of the Jewish people. Exemplifying their mission of "Jewish Continuity," Bergen County High School of Jewish Studies is set to celebrate 50 years of Jewish teen education on May 20 with an exciting event, "From Hebrew High to Chuppah," featuring Jewish matchmaker Aleeza Ben Shalom of Netflix's "Jewish Matchmaking" fame.



Rabbi Dr. David Fine, BCHSJS board and faculty member, and executive director

BCHSJS is a regional Sunday school held at Temple Israel & JCC, in Ridgewood, New Jersey for Jewish teens in grades 8-12. Students are welcomed from over 20 diverse congregations, including Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, Orthodox and non-affiliated.

While contemplating how to honor BCHSJS's milestone, it was a natural decision to enlist Ben Shalom, who is revolutionizing traditional matchmaking. "We're both focused on connecting Jews with other Jews and deepening their connection to Judaism and the broader Jewish community," said Shari Haber, BCHSJS board member and vice president.

BCHSJS' program stands out educationally, socially and inter-communally. Students choose their own line of study from scholarly classes to arts or current events. This unique "bottom up approach," said Haber, "gives students autonomy and choice and supports them as they form a Jewish identity. This has been an effective way to encourage the teens to continue their affiliation beyond their formative years and throughout their adulthood."

The social and communal aspects of BCHSJS are vital, serving as the main Jewish community hub for many students who attend secular high schools. "The intangible of this experience is the connection with Jewish peers," noted Rabbi Dr. David Fine, BCHSJS board and faculty member and executive director. During the pandemic, Fine was instrumental in adapting the school environment to provide a safe and nourishing space for Jewish teens amid remote learning. Students also positively impact the greater community through tikkun olam initiatives, including food and charity drives.



Shari Haber, BCHSJS board member and vice president

Support doesn't end with graduation. BCHSJS prepares students for college challenges, including antisemitism and BDS movements, through a mandatory senior seminar. This proactive approach ensures that students are equipped with both a strong understanding of Jewish and Israeli history and the tools to stand up and advocate as Jews.



Aleeza Ben Shalom at a live Jewish matchmaking event.



BCHSJS students.

The May 20 event promises to be a vibrant evening where matchmaking meets improv, creating a lively and engaging atmosphere. It will feature a VIP cocktail reception with Ben Shalom, followed by a live matchmaking session and Q&A segment. Attendees can expect a dynamic mix of humor and Jewish wisdom, where four singles will grace the stage to delve into their personalities and dating preferences. Ben Shalom will enlist the audience for help, offering advice and guidance.

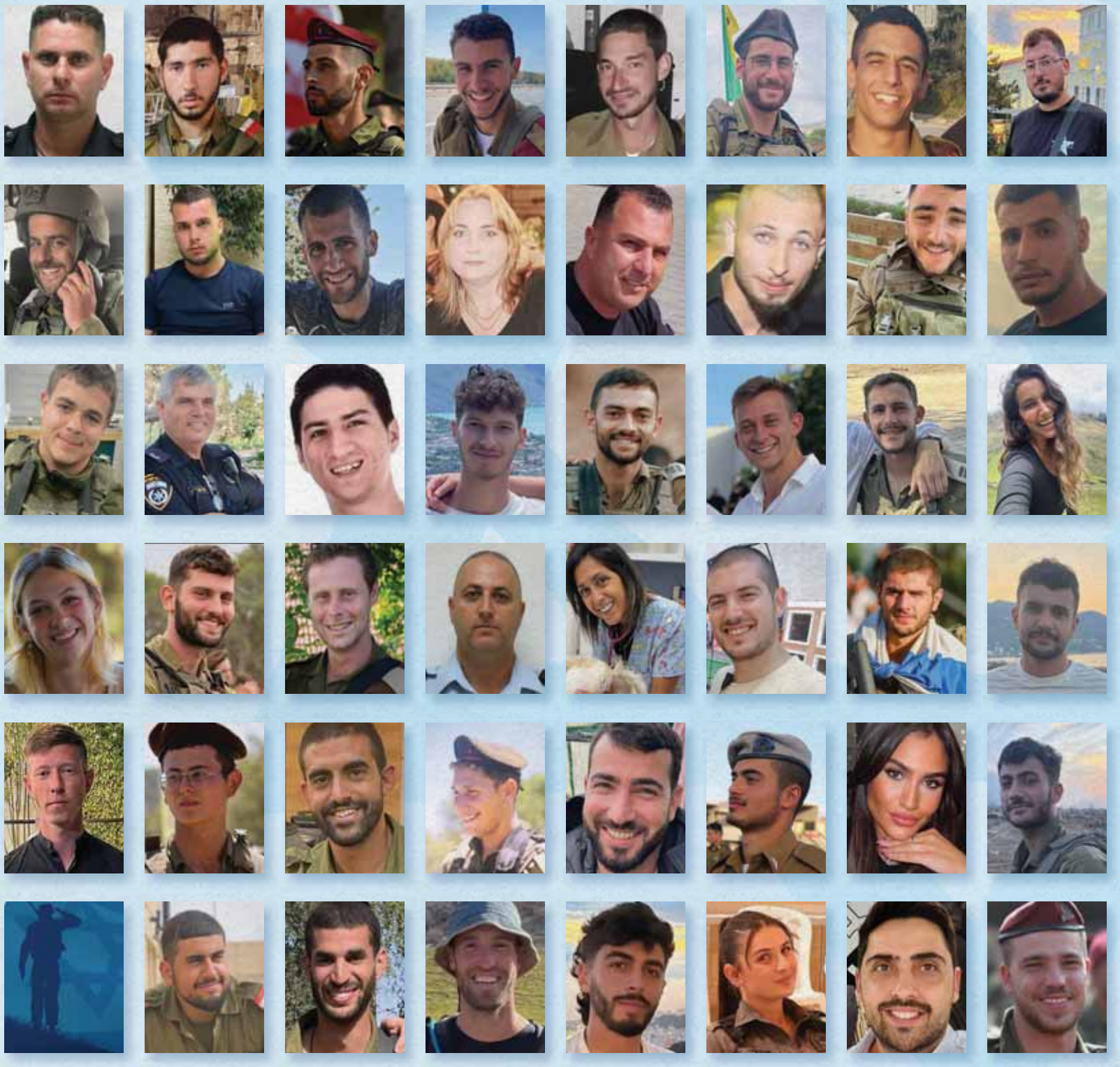
After hosting 60+ live Jewish matchmaking events, the matchmaking veteran loves that "at every event, something new pops up. Whether you're single or married, old or young, observant or less so, everyone gets involved!"

Beyond the laughter and lighthearted banter lies a deeper message of Jewish continuity. Ben Shalom asserted that "Right now, we have soldiers in Israel who are physically fighting for our land. Our land will always be there. I am physically fighting for the future of the Jewish people, and want to ensure that there will be people to live in that land." The deep sense of purpose is reflected in her

CONTINUED ON P. 48



YIZKOR יזכור



Since October 7th forty-eight AMIT alumni (pictured above) have made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our people. For almost a century AMIT has been educating its students to be meaningful, contributing members of Israeli society and we are proud of the thousands of AMIT graduates, educators and staff serving our country during this time of war.

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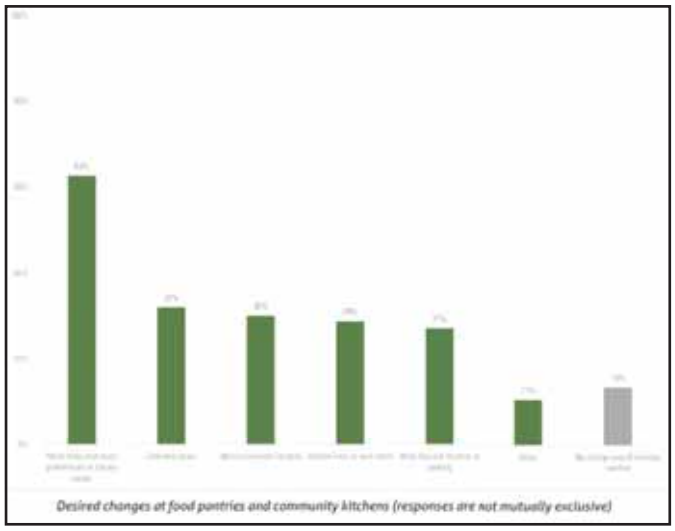
OU to Lead Data-Driven Policy Changes Inspired By Kosher Food Insecurity Study

(Courtesy of OU) While their friends and neighbors are feverishly shopping and cooking for Pesach, thousands of kashrut observant Jews in New York's five boroughs who live with food insecurity can only dream of the luxury of a carefree supermarket run, devoid of financial constraints.

Thanks to a groundbreaking study on the experience of food insecurity commissioned by Gemiluth Chessed of Greater New York (GCGNY), organizations that support these individuals are gaining a greater understanding of clients' unique needs and preferences in an effort to make the experience of receiving food assistance more dignified and efficient.

GCGNY supports seniors' health and well-being by funding a range of community, social, food and health organizations, including the Orthodox Union, the Food Bank for New York City and City Harvest.

"We commissioned this research to better understand the needs of the population that we and many others are serving across the New York City area," said GCGNY President Rabbi Dr. Peter Kahn.



"Through our relief work, we realized the OU has a critical role to play when it comes to tackling food insecurity," said OU Department of Community Projects and Partnerships National Director Rabbi Simon Taylor.

According to Dr. Michelle Shain, Jewish Nonprofit Planning and Research Institute (JNPRI)'s director of research and the study's author, the situation that a majority of respondents face — where a one-size-fits-all pantry box often does not work for their families — reflects general academic findings around food insecurity.

"People's diets are fairly inelastic, highly individual and idiosyncratic, meaning their eating habits stay about the same, regardless of what foods are easily available to them," she noted.

She pointed to the following data acquired from the study: there was no single type of chicken, meat or fish that was a staple protein for all respondents; and more than half of participants relayed that they are unwilling to eat unfamiliar foods in order to save money, suggesting that when resources are scarce, other priorities get shortchanged.

"One of the study's big takeaways is that a one-size-fits-all model really doesn't work for many people," she said. "Sixty-one percent of participants said they would feel more comfortable going to a food pantry or community kitchen if there were more foods that meet their preferences or dietary needs.

"When asked what the Jewish community could do to better support them, one-third requested more grocery gift cards," noted Shain. "Beyond enabling them to make their own choices, using gift cards in retail stores feels more dignified than visiting food banks or community kitchens, and alleviates people's sense of shame around needing food assistance."

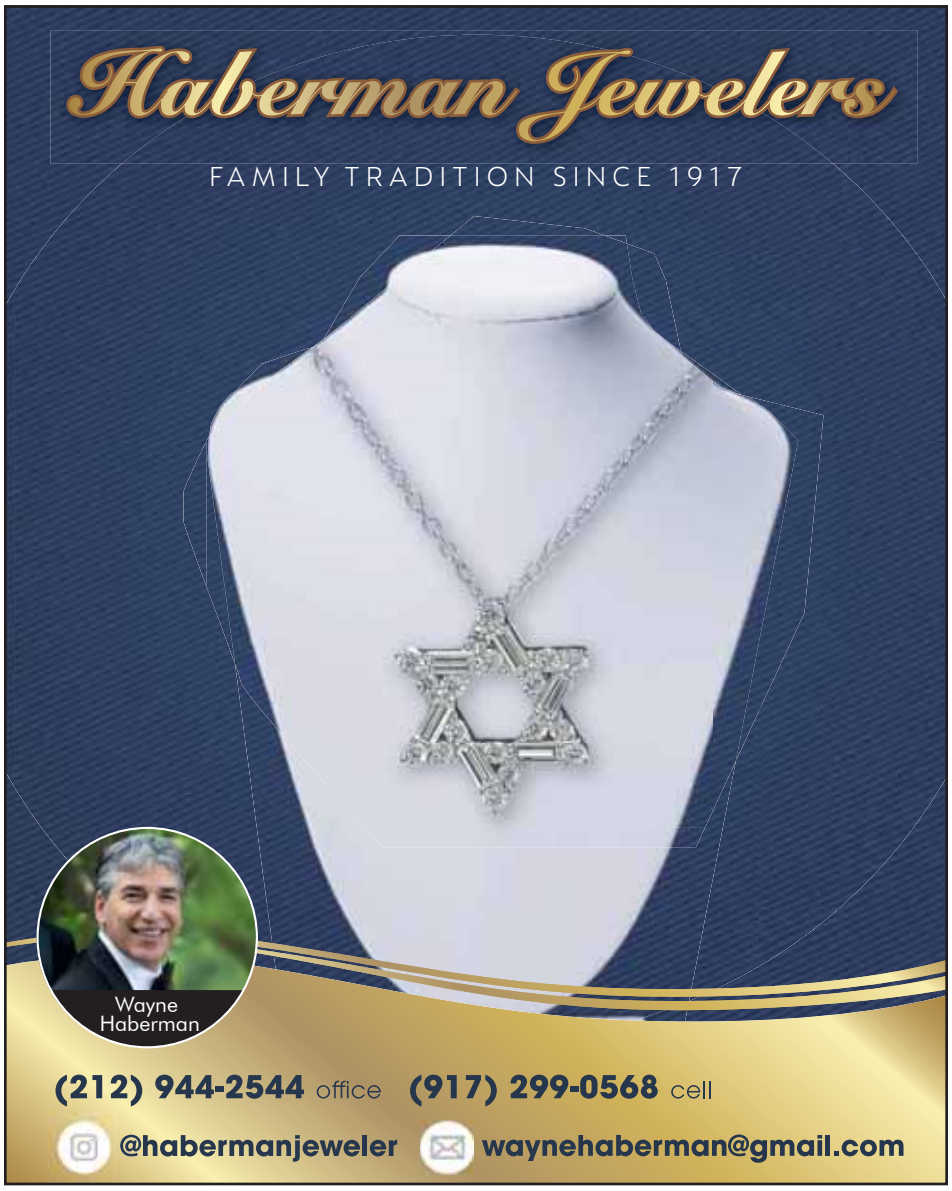
Another critical takeaway of the report was that time and mobility constraints prevent some from accessing both low-cost retail food as well as food banks and community kitchens. Whereas only half of those who are food insecure choose their primary grocery store because of pricing, the rest select stores based on their location's accessibility, hours and convenience. About half also maintain they'd be more comfortable visiting a food pantry or community kitchen if it had extended hours, shorter lines or were situated in more convenient and discrete locations.

The OU's Department of Community Projects and Partnerships is currently working on piloting different solutions based on the data.

"As the cost of living in kosher observant homes continues to skyrocket, ensuring that people have food is absolutely critical and the OU is committed to making a difference," said Taylor.

An OU-initiated partnership with GCGNY, Empire Chicken, and City Harvest launched in December 2023 has enabled the ongoing distribution of 26,000 pounds of kosher chicken at a subsidized cost to New Yorkers struggling to afford kosher meat.

"Tackling food insecurity, especially among older adults and those with specific dietary observances, is crucial," said Kahn. "We're proud to be part of a coalition that's not just supplying food but is also understanding and addressing the root of the need."



BCHSJS to Celebrate 50 Years

CONTINUED FROM P. 46

matchmaking efforts, aligning with BCHSJS' mission in securing the future of Jewish family and community.

As she guides participants through the ins and outs of dating, Ben Shalom reminds Jews that finding love is not just about luck; it's about authenticity, connection and a willingness to embrace the journey wherever it may lead. "Never give up," she insisted. "Your person is out there, and you can and will find them. Keep trying!"

Ben Shalom's personal journey into matchmaking has evolved. "I didn't know it at first," she said. "It took me until my late 20s to early 30s to figure out what I wanted to be when I grew up. I was always a go-between, helping, and didn't know that matchmaking could be a profession." Her professional calling crystalized through stages, first stemming from volunteering for an online dating site. When a recession hit her husband's industry, she felt compelled to find a job that could support their family.

"I can't do anything else! This is the most important job in the entire world and the only thing I want to do," she affirmed. So she transformed her passion into a full-time business, training matchmakers and coaches. Reflecting on her path, she expressed gratitude for the financial struggle: "Without it, I might have just continued to do this as a volunteer, instead of being motivated to make it greater."

Ben Shalom's matchmaking process is not that of a conventional Yente of "Fiddler on the Roof" or city-clique "Mrs. Maisel" matchmaking archetype. "It's collaborative and relatable," she explained. She encourages community participation, noting the importance of building a network of collaboration over competition. "There's a need for more volunteer matchmakers," she said. If someone has always wanted to delve into the art of matchmaking, this event is their opportunity to participate in the warmth and inclusivity of community-led Jewish matchmaking.

So, what's the secret to successful matchmaking? Spoiler alert — according to Ben Shalom, it's simple: "listen to what somebody wants, as opposed to giving them what you think they need." This philosophy has guided countless individuals in finding their perfect match, one soulmate at a time.

In conclusion, Ben Shalom offered this blessing: "May those who are searching for their soulmate find them this year, and may everybody else who has already found their soulmate help others to find their soulmate."

The "From Hebrew High to Chuppah" event supporting BCHSJS will deliver an unforgettable night celebrating Jewish continuity and the joy of Jewish matchmaking. The entire community is invited to attend.

For tickets and information, visit www.bchsjs.org/hebrew-high-to-chuppah.

Chaya Glaser is a staff writer at The Jewish Link.

Participants in Highland Park 5K Race Don Israeli Flags to Show Support

By Harry Glazer

Rivka Sonts of Highland Park, a longtime Israel activist, created the group Run for Israel for the annual 5K race in Highland Park, held Sunday May 5. During the run Rivka wore the Israeli flag and got some negative comments but also was encouraged by a Jewish man who asked to hold the flag. He said it made him so happy to see Rivka wearing it, motivating him in his run.

Sonts said that the goal of creating the group and encouraging runners and walkers to wear Israel flags or shirts was to increase unity, bring awareness to fight antisemitism, and openly project Jewish pride without fear.



(l-r): Rivka Sonts, Miri Goldberg (second place race winner) and Hava Friedenreich.



Community members gather behind the flag.

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Kaplen JCC on the Palisades Announces $5 Million Gift From Philanthropist Richard J. Kurtz

(Courtesy of Kaplen JCC on the Palisades) Philanthropist Richard J. Kurtz has made a $5 million gift to the Kaplen JCC on the Palisades in Tenafly, where he has long served as a member of the Board of Trustees. In recognition of his generous support, the New Jersey Jewish Sports Hall of Fame, located at the Kaplen JCC, will be named for the Kurtz family.

Kurtz is a business leader known for generously supporting organizations throughout Bergen County and nationally.



He is the founder, owner and CEO of The Kamson Corporation, a privately held real estate management company with properties in numerous states.

"I remember my first discussion with Leonard Rubin about the importance of supporting the JCC, an institution he cared so deeply about," said Kurtz. "He told me that my giving would come back to bless me in so many ways, and he was right. I have taken those words of wisdom and shared them with my family, friends and the many people I have been lucky to mentor throughout my business career. As leaders, our institutions, our country and our culture depend on us to chart the path forward."





"Although my conversations with Richard began long before the events of October 7, the gift exemplifies the philanthropic leadership that we have needed since that tragic day," said Steve Rogers, CEO of the Kaplen JCC. "Richard understands that strong Jewish organizations are fundamental to a strong Jewish diaspora, which is essential for support of Israel."

"The Kaplen JCC has thrived for nearly 75 years due to generous visionary leaders like Richard," said Arthur Sinensky, Board Chair of the Kaplen JCC. "At a time when the Jewish people are facing tremendous challenges in Israel, around the world, and most distressingly in our local towns, we all need to do our part to strengthen the foundations of Jewish life."

In addition to their support of Jewish organizations, the Kurtz family has long stressed the role sports have in building community and fostering an environment for young people to succeed. Mr. Kurtz graduated from the University of Miami with a degree in education. Before embarking on his successful business career, he taught basic and physical education in the public school system and ran the soccer, baseball and basketball youth programs in Cresskill, New Jersey.

Daniel Zausner, chair of the board of governors of the Hall of Fame, noted "The Kurtz family gift will have broad impact across the entire state of New Jersey, as it provides the means to build a permanent home for the Hall of Fame that will be the site of impactful programming and provide an opportunity to build community through a love of sports."

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‘Challenges in Jewish Education Panel’ Program Planned in Stamford

By Jewish Link Staff

Rabbi Avi Bloom, head of technology at SAR High School in the Bronx, and Sarah Rubinson Levy, an educational consultant on technology from Denver, Colorado, will discuss “Artificial Intelligence: Applications to the Day School Curriculum” at the annual Challenges in Jewish Education Panel. The one-hour program will be held at the Young Israel of Stamford on Shabbat morning, June 8, at 11 a.m., immediately after morning services. The event, which will be moderated by Rabbi Tzvi Bernstein, is being sponsored by the Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy in Stamford in partnership with the Young Israel of Stamford.


Rabbi Tzvi Bernstein


Sarah Rubinson Levy


Rabbi Avi Bloom

“I’m excited that we will once again bring two top-notch Jewish educators to our community to discuss a timely and important issue relating to our community,” said Michael Feldstein, who is organizing the event. “In years past, we have had more than 200 people come out on a Shabbat morning to hear our speakers. It demonstrates that our community members are interested and concerned about challenging topics facing our community and want to hear what other professionals from other schools have to say on the subject.”

Bloom has been at SAR High School as its director of technology for seven years. Before that he worked at the school as a teacher and as the student activities coordinator. He received his rabbinic ordination and master’s degree in education from Yeshiva University.

Levy has been an education consultant and curriculum developer for the past 20 years. She was the founder and head of school at Einstein Academy in Denver and the director of Jewish life and learning at the Denver Jewish Day School. She is the founder of Sarah Rubinson Consulting and Contracting, where she advises school administrators on how they can effectively integrate various new technologies into their curricula.

The panelists will continue the dialogue and answer questions from the audience at seuda shlishit at 8 p.m., following Mincha. The program is sponsored by Gayle and Howard Rothman and open to the entire community.

Stamford Speaker to Discuss Trip to Shura Army Base

By Michael Feldstein

Alison Cowan, a freelance journalist and popular author who worked as a reporter and editor for the New York Times for 27 years, will speak on Monday, May 20 at 8 p.m. at Temple Beth El in Stamford, sharing her observations about her trip to the Shura army base in Israel. The program is being sponsored by the Stamford Chevra Kadisha.

Cowan wrote a very powerful article for the Wall Street Journal about her trip to the Shura army base, which is where the 1,200 individuals who were massacred by Hamas terrorists on Oct. 7 were first brought to have their remains identified and have their bodies prepared for burial.

The rabbis, reservists and other volunteers at Shura were thrust into what might have been the most brutal part of the war in Gaza — helping to identify all of the people who were slaughtered on Oct. 7. These individuals working at Shura are the ones who were entrusted with the grim but sacred task of preparing the deceased for burial and then making sure the families of those who had perished were notified.

Cowan gained newfound respect for the work of the chevra kadisha in Jewish communities across the globe and will be sharing some of her reflections with members of the Stamford community.

The primary function of the chevra kadisha is the preparation and burial of the deceased in accordance with halacha. The three major aspects that are involved are: *shmira*, guarding the body of the deceased from the time of death until the time of burial in order to comfort the neshama before it goes up to heaven; *tahara*, the washing and cleansing of the body and the ritual purification of immersing the body in the mikvah; and *tachrichim*, dressing the purified body in special clothes of simple, pure, white handmade cotton or linen garments that are identical for each Jew.

The Stamford Chevra Kadisha is responsible for the execution of this holy task in the local Stamford Jewish community. Its volunteers provide this important service of making sure that Jewish individuals are properly prepared for burial and are attended to until internment. The organization also provides support for the families during the shiva.

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Highland Park's Ahavas Achim Set to Welcome Young Couples to Shabbaton, May 17-19

By Harry Glazer

A Middlesex County shul that is becoming a magnet for young couples is poised to hold their second annual Shabbaton to showcase their community.


Ben and Bat-Chen Kaplan

Congregation Ahavas Achim of Highland Park, New Jersey is known for attracting and engaging young couples, with two young dads serving as vice presidents and a third preparing to assume the role of shul president this summer. The shul holds young couples' Shabbat lunches every few months, which regularly brings in dozens of attendees.

The shul's previous shabbaton for young couples, in March 2023, attracted 20 couples who were considering moving to the community. Of them, nearly a third have already relocated to Highland Park or are in the process of doing so. One of the shabbaton's planners, Rob Haarburger, noted that 20 additional young families visited the community for Shabbat at various points in the last year.



2023 Shabbaton gift for guests.

The Ahavas Achim 2024 Prospective Family Shabbaton, set for Friday-Sunday, May 17-19, will feature Friday night dinners in hosts' homes; a special kiddush after davening sponsored by the shabbaton followed by a young families' community luncheon in the shul; greetings and remarks by the shul's rav, Rabbi Steven Miodownik and an ice breaker; youth activities in the afternoon; a Shalos Seudos at the shul, and a Motzei Shabbat trivia night event.

JJ Laufer/Century 21 Realty of Highland Park, which is cosponsoring the Shabbaton, will offer community tours to interested families on Sunday morning.

Ten couples have already registered for the May Shabbaton and others are anticipated.

Haarburger notes that 14 young family members in the shul are involved in planning the shabbaton, which reflects the passion many young couples have for Ahavas Achim.

Haarburger pointed out five facets of the Highland Park/Edison community that make it particularly appealing to young couples:

- The community is extremely hashkafically diverse, with eight frum synagogues within easy walking distance—a shul for everyone.
- A wide variety of home/apartment sizes, at lower prices than many other major Jewish communities in New Jersey.
- School choices locally or within an hour's drive to best fit your children's needs.
- The community is conveniently located to both New York, North Jersey, Lakewood and Philadelphia.


Ahavas Achim Shabbaton trivia night, March 2023.

- A wealth of "in-town" amenities, such as mikvahs, restaurants, a kosher grocery store and more, with an "out-of-town" feel.

One of the six young couples who has already moved to Highland Park since the last shabbaton at Ahavas Achim is very happy. Ben Kaplan, who moved to the area with his wife, Bat-Chen and their children Zoey and Yedidya, shared with The Jewish Link: "The Highland Park/Edison community exudes warmth. It has the out-of-town feel while supporting the infrastructure of a metropolitan Jewish community. And we see the kindness of the community in the individual families who welcomed us with open arms. We were lucky to be invited to the prospective members' lunch last year and even more fortunate to be a part of the community today."


Congregation Ahavas Achim.

To register to attend the Prospective Family Shabbaton at Congregation Ahavas Achim, see: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc0P5VofT-as25MEY6K-FCZvlGIO9pk9fcvr3DKp_g8nw_jL5A/viewform. For more information, send email to rhaarburger@aafundraising.org. The shabbaton is also cosponsored by the Rabbi Pesach Raymon Yeshiva of Edison (RPRY).

Harry Glazer is The Middlesex County editor of The Jewish Link. He can be reached at harryglazer615@gmail.com and he welcomes feedback.

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8:30 am, Social Hall

PRE-MINCHA SHIUR
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A Special Shomrei Torah Dinner Honoree: 33 Years in the Making

By Robert Isler

Although Janusz Legutko's name may not sound Jewish, those who know this year's shul dinner honoree will agree that the choice couldn't have been more fitting. As Shomrei Torah's Rabbi Emeritus Benjamin Yudin put it when asked by The Jewish Link if he and Rebbetzin Shevi had 20 minutes to share their thoughts he said, "It shouldn't take 20 minutes for me to tell you that he's an exceptional human being. If it does, I'm doing something wrong." On May 19 the shul will host what promises to be a truly special event as it bids farewell to Janusz, who will be retiring after 33 years of service.


Straightening the Torahs.


In the simcha hall.


Making the rounds with the tzedakah box.

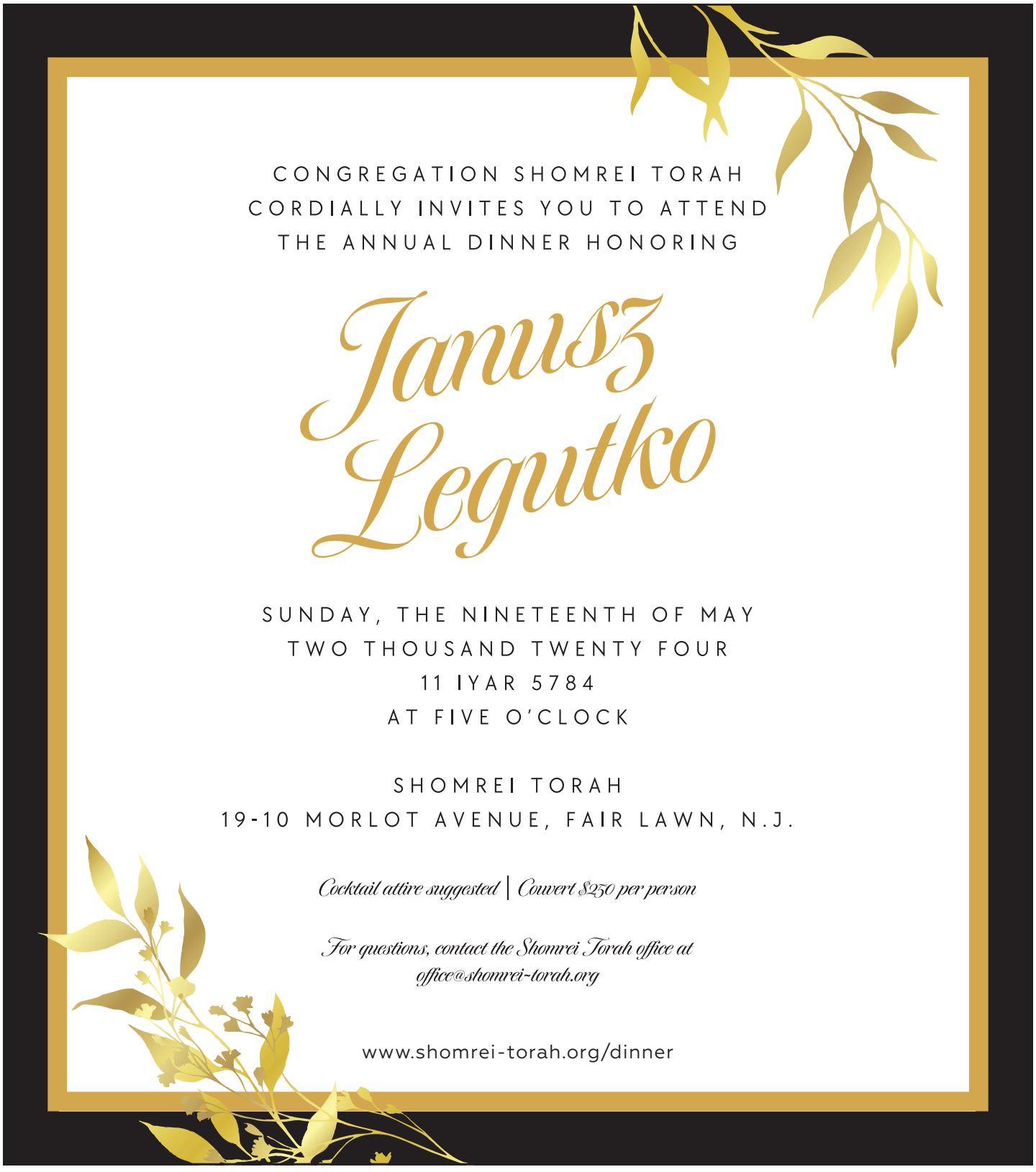
The narrative of Janusz and Shomrei Torah over the years has been one of mutual respect and admiration. After helping on weekends for about a year, Janusz, a Polish Catholic from Krakow who had been living in Garfield, New Jersey was officially hired in 1991 as a full-time custodian. It didn't take long for him to step up in a major way, as he readily volunteered for any and all tasks. Before long he became the shul's unofficial shamash. As past shul president Michael Glass, who has worked closely with Janusz, noted, "There is not one aspect of the shul's running that Janusz doesn't have a hand in," adding "He treats the shul as his own home."

Over the years, besides his prepping for virtually every type of kiddush, simcha and special event the shul has had to offer, making sure both the shul and mikvah areas are spotless, and being available for all sorts of emergencies and special requests, he has helped with kiddush and Havdala, made the rounds with the shul's tzedakah box at morning minyan, gathered sheimos to accompany burials, and even regularly rolled and tagged Torahs for Shabbos and Yom Tov. And woe to the person who brought chametz into shul after Janusz cleaned for Pesach! On occasions when extra help was called for, his response would invariably be, "No, we need to save money."

Janusz candidly shared his background with The Jewish Link. When asked if he minded having his personal life divulged in print, his response was "Why not, it's the truth." He had been a math teacher in Poland for 10 years after receiving his master's degree. A shaky economy and a separation from his wife were the impetus for his moving to the United States. He left behind a daughter with special needs whom he loves very much, but felt she was in good hands with his wife. He has provided financial support to them and returns to Poland each year for a three-week visit so that his daughter has some semblance of family. Eventually, she married a young man who also has special needs.

Janusz explained that in the early days of his employment at the shul, at times there could be a lull. In those moments he would go upstairs, grab a chumash, and read the English translation. This led to his "confronting what I learned as a Catholic." Some of the intricacies of Judaism were a learning experience for him. He recalled the time he found money in shul on Shabbos and couldn't understand why everyone he approached to turn it over to ran away from him. Other times he would be

CONTINUED ON P. 58




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A Special Shomrei Torah Dinner Honoree

CONTINUED FROM P. 56

asked to adjust the shul's air conditioning on Shabbos and wondered, "Why are they asking me to do it?" However, little by little he began to understand "and I liked it. I believed in Hashem all along. I just didn't know Him from this perspective."

Several years passed and in 1994 he approached Rabbi Yudin, stating he wanted to become a Jew. For a full year he was rebuffed. As he explained, "Rabbi Yudin would say 'you're a good guy. You keep your seven commandments and you do OK with it. Why take on so many more?'" Little by little he said he thought to himself "Why not?" Finally, in 1995, his persistence paid off. Rabbi Yudin agreed to have him converted. Three rabbis were in attendance, with the brit taking place across the street from shul at the Yudin home.

Following his conversion, Janusz' relationship with shul members, which had always been warm, in part due to his blunt sense of humor, truly blossomed. The rabbi's son Andi would study with him, and every Wednesday Dr. Zvi Fischer would share chumash and Rashi, and later mishnayot, a practice that has continued for decades. A year after Janusz converted, the Yudins welcomed him to live downstairs in their home, which has been his residence ever since. A steady flow of meal invitations has led to some very special relationships. He shared his feeling that "All people in Shomrei Torah are my family. Everybody."

Reflecting further, he said, "Becoming a Jew has made me a better person. By living with the rabbi and Shevi I witnessed how they had a heart to help everybody. I wanted to do the same. I think of the pasuk 'Love your fellow Jew as yourself' and understand that that was the pasuk that defined their lives. I love my fellow Jew more than myself. I didn't love myself before I became a Jew. Now I do." He also noted the impact weekly Shabbos meals had on his outlook, explaining, "As a Catholic there was a special meal only twice a year."



Janusz Legutko with Rabbi Benjamin Yudin.



Janusz and his refrigerator.

His relationship with the Yudins has been particularly poignant. He explained that he has shared in their simchas as well as their sad moments throughout the years, attending each of their children's weddings and celebrating the births of their grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He developed a particularly close and caring relationship with both of Shevi's parents when they moved to the Yudin home, treating them as his own. As Shevi remarked, "He was so caring and showed so much respect for them."

His interactions with children and those in need has been particularly noteworthy as well, which made his job as a night counselor at Sinai's SHELI House in Teaneck a perfect fit. He has been there since 2000, finishing his work at Shomrei Torah mid-afternoon and then spending the remainder of the day and overnight in Teaneck before returning to Shomrei Torah early the next morning. He was responsible for monitoring the overnight safety of the young men under his care. In short order he bonded with each of them, developing very close relationships. As Shevi shared, "He has a love for people who didn't have the easiest of lives."

Since COVID, Janusz extended his yearly visits to Poland from several weeks to several months due to the serious illness of his wife. Sadly, she passed away about a year ago. This prompted his decision to retire and move back to Poland so he can help take care of his daughter, who he said means everything to him, as well as her husband. He plans to make their apartment kosher and stay with them, noting that Krakow has a Chabad as well as a small beit midrash and kosher store. His official retirement date will be Nov. 30.

When asked a final question as to why he never continued as a math teacher when he first moved to the U.S., Janusz explained that besides the language barrier it's not an easy job. "If you want to be good, you have to put in the effort and do a lot of preparation." More than anything, that's a statement that defines Janusz.

Shomrei Torah's annual dinner will take place on May 19 at 5 p.m. at 19-10 Morlot Ave. in Fair Lawn. For questions, contact Barbara Topial at (201) 873-5746 or Carol Weissmann at (201) 390-6600.

Robert Isler is a marketing research analyst and freelance writer who specializes in Jewish issues. He can be reached at robertisler23@gmail.com.

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Jewish Campus Leaders Share Views on Encampments

Students shared their personal experiences regarding on-campus advocacy and their experiences with the encampments.

By Brooke Schwartz Bass

Editor's note: For an extended version of this piece with more comments from the students, visit [https://jewishlink.news/jewish-campus-leaders-share-views-on-encampments/].



Harvard student Shabbos Kestenbaum speaks at a post-October 7 rally. (CREDIT: X)

These past few weeks, campuses around the U.S, have been teeming with unchecked antisemitism, and it has reached a boiling point as pro-Palestinian protesters have set up encampments and/or checkpoints in the middle of campuses, restricting Jewish students from entering or moving through such areas. To understand better what exactly is going on and what is going through the minds of students as they confront these virulent forms of antisemitism and anti-Zionism, The Jewish Link interviewed a variety of Jewish students from across the political spectrum on a handful of campuses around the U.S. that have encampments: Harvard, University of Michigan, Yale and Columbia.



A anti-Israel card found on Yale's campus. (CREDIT: SAHAR TARTAK)

Josh Brown, a University of Michigan junior from Westchester, New York, explained that he leads the activism committee for Wolverine for Israel (Wolverine is UMichigan's mascot), the campus's Hillel-affiliated pro-Israel student group. Brown also attends campus pro-Palestinian events and documents the goings-on on social media. "I'm at virtually every protest and demonstration that they do," he explained.

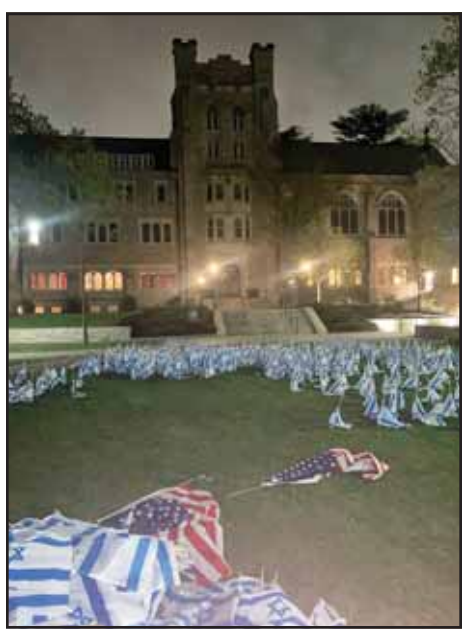
While Brown said that he is happy to engage with students at these protests and discuss the conflict, the students have a policy of not speaking with Zionists. "They have a very strict 'no engaging with Zionists' policy, so there is generally a minimal amount of dialogue at their events," he elaborated. Brown said that this policy had existed even prior to October 7.

Brown said that UMichigan is not as aggressive as places like Columbia and Yale in terms of protests, detailing that there are no physical altercations that he's heard of between students. "That being said, we do have an enormous amount of anti-Israel and antisemitic content on our campus," continued Brown, calling the antisemitism "unavoidable," especially since the students made an encampment in the center of campus. He further described incidents of anti-Israel messaging—chalk, posters and marches—that have taken place on campus recently. "There has been a complete saturation of anti-Israel and antisemitic content on campus since October 7," said Brown.

When asked how he thought these messages are influencing the student body, Brown explained that there is a factor of social pressure to the messaging, explaining that the Tahrir Coalition—a coalition of 90+ student organizations, and one of the leading coalitions who are leading these encampments and protests—creates an "enormous amount of social pressure to absorb anti-Israel and antisemitic messaging," due to how many student groups are involved. However, Brown continued by surmising that the majority of people on campus do not support the anti-Israel protests or movement.

Brown added that anti-Israel groups on UMichigan's campus "have shown a consistent endorsement and support of violence and terrorism and have held various events glorifying terrorists and terrorist organizations," detailing several examples, from before October 7, in the immediate aftermath (both on the day of and several days afterward), and several months later, in which these groups justified and celebrated both the attack and the taking of hostages, honored convicted terrorists, circulated PFLP propaganda posters, co-sponsored events with Samidoun, an Israeli-designated terror organization and worked with their affiliates.

Aharon Dardik, a sophomore at Columbia University who is from Gush Etzion, Israel, shared his more unique approach on the issue. He leads Columbia's J Street organization, as well as Columbia University's "Jews for Ceasefire" chapter. Dardik explained that Columbia's J Street chapter focuses primarily on starting conversations within the Jewish community that promote more nuanced takes on the issue, and that this semester, J Street has brought in several speakers, including people who work with improving relationships and creating community dialogue between Jews and Palestinians in Yehuda and Shomron.



Harvard student Shabbos Kestenbaum replanted 1,200 Israeli flags on the Harvard campus on May 6, 2024. (CREDIT: X)

Dardik said that Columbia's "Jews for Ceasefire" organization, which he leads, is closely aligned with the "If Not Now" movement, explaining that they "[serve] as a bridge between the Jewish community and the much larger and more public pro-Palestinian community on campus." Dardik's group spreads awareness throughout campus about a bilateral ceasefire, with Dardik explaining that he is in favor of "a bilateral ceasefire that returns all of the hostages in exchange for an end of the war, involving the beginning of diplomatic processes that involve a long-term peaceful solution, including demilitarization of Hamas."



Yale student Sahar Tartak's article was censored by the Yale Daily News, saying that Hamas barbarism crimes were "unsubstantiated." (CREDIT: SAHAR TARTAK)

Dardik is hesitant to label many of the people identifying as "anti-Zionists" as antisemitic; he elaborated that, in every popular definition of antisemitism, a specific clause includes a clarification that criticism of Israel, even if it is anti-Zionist in nature, is not by definition antisemitic. He then clarified that there have "definitely been antisemitic incidents on campus," although he argued that the label of antisemitism has been used as a "cudgel" toward these anti-Zionist movements. He further insisted that students in these protests are capable of determining what they are doing that is antisemitic: "People will be able to tell the difference between antisemitism and anti-Zionism if we as a community do a better job of defining each term and differentiating between them," concluded Dardik.

Sahar Tartak, a sophomore at Yale from Great Neck, New York, recently was in the news after being physically assaulted at a Yale protest. She described her activism as being primarily writing-based, saying that she released a controversial article in Yale Daily News shortly after October 7 called, "Is Yalies4Palestine a Hate Group?" She wrote this article following large celebrations and justifications of October 7 by Yale's student body, in which they chanted "resistance is justified" and called on other students to celebrate the "resistance" as a success. "Yale censored [my] article a few weeks later by cutting out references of Hamas raping and beheading people," continued Tartak, "so I came out with an article about in Washington Free Beacon about them denying this atrocity."

Tartak also testified to Congress in mid-November about her experiences on campus and wrote a piece in Tablet in early January that was "a more extensive discussion of how journalism, especially student journalism, has been corrupted by an 'oppressor/oppressed' dichotomy like the thing that happened in Yale Daily News with the denial of Hamas atrocities." She said she writes mostly articles in newspapers and magazines, and sometimes on Twitter, as well as appearing on the national news fairly often.

"More recently, I was assaulted at one of these rallies while being blockaded, and I was interviewed by The Free Press," said Tartak. "Earlier this year, I ran a small paper magazine called The Yale Free Press that is delivered door-to-door, in which I wrote a defense of Israel." Tartak explained that the paper is more well-distributed than any other campus papers, as it hits nearly every door on campus. Tartak wrote an article in this paper about the process of Israel giving up the Gaza Strip, and how Hamas manipulates the media and the Western world about Israel, and another article in which she interviewed a Yale student who was born and raised in Iran and called the Yale student keffiyeh-wearers "privileged," comparing their rallies to the ones in Iran in which people were shot.

Tartak said the encampments are impossible to avoid, as they are located at the entrance of the central library and central dining hall on Yale's campus. She explained that students either have to walk around the encampment or take a back door, as the students in the encampment won't let others through. Tartak continued that, when she would record these encampments, she was tailed by members of the encampment afterward on multiple occasions. "The encampment in front of the library, they'd ask whether you agreed with the community guidelines, and at one point kicked out multiple Yale Daily News reporters from the encampment," she said.

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‘National Emergency’ of Hate Toward Jews on Campus

By Debra Rubin

Anti-Defamation League CEO Jonathan Greenblatt spent two weeks traveling to college campuses across the country and has a disturbing assessment: “Seeing it firsthand it is worse than you get from watching these clips,” on the internet or on television.

He witnessed the glorification of terrorism by student pro-Palestinian protesters, vile antisemitic and anti-American chants and signs, spoke with Jewish students so terrified they burst into tears and college administrators losing control of their campuses.

Jewish students spoke of being abandoned by their “so-called friends,” of being isolated from normal college activities by classmates, being physically threatened and harassed and being forced off campus out of fear for their safety.

In some cases, public safety and police seemed unwilling or unable to handle the protestors and he chided administrators for not enforcing disciplinary and/or legal measures against protestors for entering buildings, vandalism, blocking other students from attending class and attacking, intimidating and harassing them, noting there should be consequences rather than concessions.

“I’ve never seen a moment like this before,” he said, calling it “a national emergency” during a virtual program on May 1, “Campus Antisemitism Crisis: Fighting Hate from Home.”

As the father of two college students himself, Greenblatt added: “We are well past the alarm phase. It is appalling and really heartbreaking. I have seen this myself, students crying, yelling, shaking with exhaustion and fear and frustration and, you know, rage as they share their stories of intimidation and harassment and the failure of administrations to help.”

He said it was long overdue for campus presidents to use their voices to call out unruly protestors.

“We wouldn’t tolerate this level of hatred being directed at any other minority group and we shouldn’t tolerate it against Jews,” said Greenblatt, who said while criticizing Israel or supporting Palestinians is acceptable, calling for the removal of Jews, Zionists and Israelis from campus is not.

His concern was echoed by New York Rep. Ritchie Torres (D-Dist. 15) who Greenblatt described as an ally, hero and champion to many in the Jewish community for his staunch support of the community and Israel.

Torres, who left the Congressional Progressive Caucus over its stance on Israel, acknowledged “many people are in a state of shock [that] a Black, gay, Latino member of Congress can care deeply about fighting antisemitism and I reject the notion that one must be Jewish to fight antisemitism, just like I reject that notion that one must be Black to combat anti-Black racism.”

Torres drew an analogy between the struggles of the LGBTQ community to come out of the closet and what is happening to Jews, including those who identify as progressive.

“Historically, society said to LGBTQ people, you have to be in the closet; you have to be ashamed of who you are,” said Torres. “But that is the same message the progressive movement is sending to young Jews, that in order to be part of our club you have to be in the closet about your Zionism. You have to be ashamed of your Zionism. That to me is not progressivism. That is a perversion of progressivism.”

He spoke of Jewish civil rights leaders, some who gave their lives so that Black people like himself could have the right to vote and live freely. “We are all in this together and we all have an obligation to fight hate and extremism no matter what direction from which it comes,” said Torres.

Responding to the alarming rise in campus antisemitism over last months, Torres said, “The post- Oct. 7 world did not change the state of antisemitism on college campuses, it reveals what higher education has become. There has been a concerted effort to indoctrinate our students with a hatred for Israel that is so visceral and so fanatical that it renders them indifferent to the value of Jewish life. That is what we’re seeing on college campuses.”

Torres noted the ideas of settler colonialism, decolonization, and intersectionality have been brewing in academia for a long time and have now reached the boiling point, driven by social media.

He said Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Law should protect Jewish students, but Torres said he believes “the federal government has been essentially ineffective in enforcing Title VI.”

Although the federal Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights has launched almost 100 university investigations across the country for Title VI violations for allegedly failing to protect Jewish students, Torres is proposing there be federal antisemitism monitors at universities to ensure compliance with a loss of federal funds for not doing so. He called on bipartisan legislators to come together to find a solution to a crisis that is so serious it transcends political allegiance.

“My message to the next generation of Jewish students is to be the Maccabees of the modern world,” said Torres. “If you censor yourself, if you are in the closet about your Zionism and your Jewish identity then you become part of the problem not part of the solution. So I would just tell people to stand up to the problem, stand up to the intimidation and harassment, to be proud of their Judaism, their Zionism. Because where there is fear there cannot be freedom.”

Equally disturbing for Greenblatt is that these pro-Palestinian demonstrations are being organized by outside organizations.

“These are not sudden swells of grassroots energy,” said Greenblatt, who singled out the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM), an organization he described as “openly glorifying terrorists,” including plane hijackers, endorsing the killing of college students at Hebrew University and celebrating Iran’s recent drone attack on Israel. On its website PYM describes itself as a “transnational, independent, grassroots movement of young Palestinians in Palestine and in exile worldwide as a result of the ongoing Zionist colonization and occupation of our homeland.”

Additionally, among the other key players he called out were Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), which has been causing unrest on campuses for years, who Greenblatt called probably the biggest driver of current campus turbulence and always refers to Israel as “the Zionists’ state.” He noted after the Oct. 7 terrorism attacks on Israel, SJP called it “an historic win for Palestinian resistance” and has called for “armed confrontation with the oppressors.”

Greenblatt also called out Jewish Voice (JVP), pointing out they are outliers “on the furthest fringes of our community” who claim that Israel is the “root cause” of the violence. He said the group retweeted posts stating, “Curse the Jews” and “Death to America.”

At UCLA he witnessed pro-Palestinian demonstrators chanting anti-American slogans and destroying American flags. Many there and at other universities had their faces covered by masks to conceal their identities, adopting the tactics of white supremacists like the Ku Klux Klan and their white hoods or the Proud Boys and their face masks.

“It is completely unacceptable,” he said. “I don’t think any university should permit full-faced masking, especially when it’s done in service of intimidating, harassing and tormenting other people. I don’t think it’s a free speech issue at all. I think it’s public safety.”

Greenblatt noted not every protestor wants to harm Jews or destroy Israel and reminded the Jewish community to have compassion and open hearts to innocent Palestinian civilians who are being killed or injured.

“The Torah teaches us, the Talmud teaches us that any innocent killed is like the loss of an entire world,” he said.

The program also featured Bari Seitz, a freshman at the University of Texas- Austin and vice president of Longhorn Students for Israel, who spoke about the problems on her campus and Francine Ephraim, the parent of a student at Tufts University, who organized with other parents to control the situation and ensure a smooth commencement.

Debra Rubin has had a long career in journalism writing for secular weekly and daily newspapers and Jewish publications. She most recently served as Middlesex/Monmouth bureau chief for the New Jersey Jewish News. She also worked with the media at several nonprofits, including serving as assistant public relations director of HIAS and assistant director of media relations at Yeshiva University.

Jewish Campus Leaders

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Shabbos Kestenbaum, a second-year graduate student at Harvard from Riverdale, New York, is the founder and president of the Harvard Divinity School Student Association, as well as being an active member of Harvard’s Hillel and Chabad. “During October 7, [Harvard] had 34 student groups representing more than 1,000 students claim that Israel was responsible for October 7,” said Kestenbaum.

Kestenbaum said that he planted 1,200 Israeli and American flags in the center of Harvard Community School “to draw attention to the plight of the hostages and to draw attention to the fact that American and Jewish values align.” He has given speeches at rallies, and on the night of May 7, will be saying the names of all victims of October 7 in the center of the encampments through a loudspeaker. “I’ve organized and prayed in front of the illegal encampments with my tefillin and said Tehillim for the hostages,” said Kestenbaum.

Kestenbaum said that he, along with five other unnamed students, filed a lawsuit against Harvard in January alleging that “Harvard has allowed pervasive and systemic antisemitism across campus generally, and in a way that has been inescapable since October 7.”

Tartak and Kestenbaum both said that they think non-Jewish American media is downplaying the intensity and violence in these protests. “When I was at MIT on Friday, I wanted to walk through [the encampment], and seven alleged ‘safety marshals’ who were students with no authority physically prevented me, initially, from walking in,” said Kestenbaum. “I know students who don’t wear kippahs anymore, who don’t talk about their Israeli identity in classes. These are real, ongoing threats.” Tartak said that, although many people believe these groups to be peaceful, “they are clearly not,” continuing that the practice of creating human blockades to stop Jews upon arrival to the encampments “is a step toward violence” and restricts people’s freedom of movement. Tartak explained that the human blockades are common and have been happening on campuses across the U.S., and also said that people at these encampments will chant things like, “From water to water, Palestine is Arab”—a call for genocide. However, Dardik disagreed that Western media has been downplaying the protests, arguing instead that the media has exaggerated the rallies and encampments at Columbia, elaborating that “something big...is made massive,” because the media cannot accurately capture the nuances of an on-campus experience and merely wants to dramatize the protests. Although the media tries to create a general picture, it became clear that students living with encampments right now are having a large variety of experiences that cannot be painted with a broad brush.

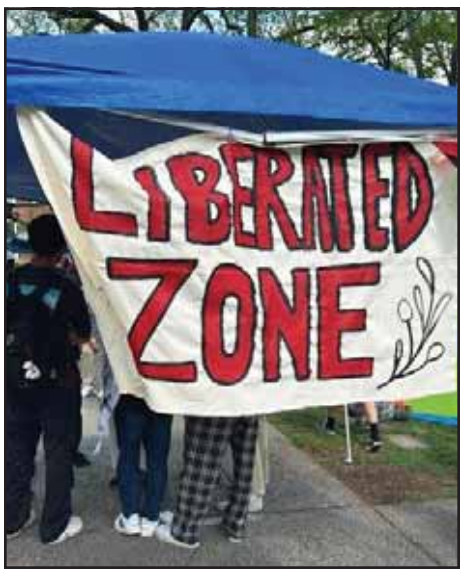
Brooke Schwartz Bass is a junior at Brandeis University. Originally from Englewood, she is a graduate of The Frisch School and studied at Midreshet Amudim in Israel. She is also a former Jewish Link intern and staff member.



Rutgers Under Fire

CONTINUED FROM P. 1

word that they planned to cause a classroom disruption forced the postponement of final exams scheduled to take place before noon. That prompted the university to order the encampment, which had been on Voorhees Mall for four days, be gone by 4 p.m. However, the students agreed to leave only after the university entered into negotiations with students and agreed to consider a number of demands, including divestiture from Israel, that have shocked the Jewish community.



Pro-Palestinian demonstrators at an encampment set up on Voorhees Mall at Rutgers University.

"I think some of the demands that are even being considered are dangerous," said Harris Laufer, director of the Jewish Federations of New Jersey, particularly the demand that the university divest from Israel. He noted that "dangerous appeasement" has long shown to be an ineffective tool to counter threats and violence.

"I think putting divestiture on the table is dangerous and it also is directly contrary to state law," Laufer said, and questioned the double standard the university was using in applying rules of conduct.

"You can do an encampment and get final exams canceled and that is OK, but you can't cheat on those exams or on a paper?" he asked and said that while he was on campus May 2 he had heard from many Jewish students who were afraid to wear Star of David necklaces or kippahs and encountered others holding up flags of terrorist organizations and yelling antisemitic slurs.

Of the 10 demands made by protesters, eight will be given some consideration by the university. Rutgers said the demand that it end its memorandum of understanding with Tel Aviv University to establish the Israeli educational institution as part of the Innovation and Technology Hub under construction in New Brunswick "was a matter of scholarly inquiry" and that the divestiture from Israel was "undergoing a review process."

However, University President Jonathan Holloway had already rejected a 56-page request made weeks before by the Endowment Justice Collective regarding those demands.

It did agree to develop an Arab cultural center, to work with a committee to bring 10 displaced Gazan students to the university to finish their education, and to establish a memorandum of understanding to establish a long-term educational partnership with Birzeit University in the West Bank as established by the precedent of William Paterson University. However, that collaboration was put on hold by that state institution after it drew threats of legal action because of Birzeit's support of the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel and its student governing body's support of Hamas.

Among the other agreement initiatives, Rutgers will work to develop training sessions on anti-Arab and anti-Muslim bias for administrators and staff and provide amnesty for students, faculty and staff who participated in the demonstration, although some individuals who participated in acts of bias or harassment may be subjected to action under the school's disciplinary code.

The agreement brought both relief that the university did not erupt in the violence seen at so many other campuses and sharp criticism that the administration gave in to demands. The encampment was dismantled peacefully as faculty members surrounded it to protect students.



Rutgers students celebrated Israel and the end of the school year on May 3 at a barbecue sponsored by Chabad, Hillel and Rutgers Jewish Xperience. The celebration was moved from the university to Buccleuch Park in New Brunswick at the request of the university to avoid conflict on campus with pro-Palestinian students.

"Many of us were shocked yesterday by the shameful, disgraceful, pathetic and reprehensible capitulation to lawbreaking Jew-haters at Rutgers University," wrote Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest CEO Dov Ben-Shimon in a statement on May 3.

"There appear to be no consequences for vandalism, destruction, hate-speech, intimidation or academic ignorance," he said, pointing out that nothing was ever said about how the Israel-Hamas war started and the Israeli hostages, rape and murder victims and "a vicious Islamicist ideology that hates Jews (and Americans and the West)."

Rutgers Chabad Executive Director Rabbi Yosef Carlebach said he believed there was enough evidence to conclude that "rabble-rousers from New York and others from outside" the university helped to instigate the encampment. "I think we need to work together as a community to demand Rutgers acts responsibly," he said, adding that he believed "many of these kids have zero clue" about the meaning of colonization and other things they were protesting.

Rabbi Carlebach said Chabad continues to have ongoing regular communications with Rutgers Police, administrators and county law enforcement.

By the late afternoon of May 2 the campus was peaceful. Along College Avenue, students were seen hanging out and studying, and rock music was blaring from frat houses.

However, interviews with students at Hillel and Chabad revealed much of the trauma they had experienced in the previous weeks and months.

Maayan Schlissel, a rising sophomore mechanical engineering major from Elizabeth, said she witnessed the tensions rising when she returned from Passover. Wearing Israeli flag earrings, she showed a photo on her phone of a "blood libel" poster claiming that Israel had prevented COVID vaccinations in Gaza, allowing the disease to continue killing Palestinians. It claimed demonstrators were wearing masks in support of Palestinians dying of COVID.

"They were chanting all Zionists were racists and that they're taking back their university," said Schlissel, adding she saw many people leaving the encampment who were not part of the university.

Lior Duerr, a rising sophomore meteorology major from Englewood, said he had not experienced a lot of hatred aimed at him, but knew of others who had heard such invectives as "Hitler was right."

Shalhevet Adler, a rising sophomore exercise science and pre-physical therapy major from Tenafly, said she was walking with a friend down College Avenue when someone advocating for divestment yelled at her friend that she was a snake.

Nechama Friedman of Highland Park said as she ate dinner at Chabad she had gone earlier to the encampment expecting a large police presence and watched the protesters leave peacefully although one called out, "F— Zionists." Several weeks earlier she was walking with someone wearing apparel with an Israeli flag and someone yelled, "White supremacists."



A pro-Palestinian encampment at Rutgers University was taken down after Rutgers negotiated an agreement with protestors that has drawn fire from many in the Jewish community.

Matthew Levine, a data analytics and supply chain major from Fair Lawn, said despite wearing tzitzit and a kippah he has had little said to him, although he had known others who had been spit on. "Everybody talks about how Rutgers is a terrible place, but our Chabad and Hillel have made this a great place," he said. "Chabad is a shelter."

Debra Rubin has had a long career in journalism writing for secular weekly and daily newspapers and Jewish publications. She most recently served as Middlesex/Monmouth bureau chief for the New Jersey Jewish News. She also worked with the media at several nonprofits, including serving as assistant public relations director of HIAS and assistant director of media relations at Yeshiva University.

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Federations Demand Rutgers Rescind 'Shameful' Encampment Agreement

By Debra Rubin

New Jersey's five largest Jewish federations are mounting a multi-pronged offensive in response to the "shameful" agreement negotiated by Rutgers University to get a pro-Palestinian encampment dismantled and are demanding it be rescinded or the university's president and chancellor immediately resign.

They have also vowed to instigate state and federal legislative inquiries into the agreement. Among the other actions, they are urging their constituents, friends and allies to sign letters they have drafted to state Senate President Nicholas Scutari (D-Dist. 22) and Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin (D-Dist. 19) calling for an investigation into the "negotiation and capitulation." Local legislators will also be copied.

Another letter will be sent to Rutgers President Dr. Jonathan Holloway and Chancellor Dr. Francine Conway.

Their demand was prompted by the May 3 agreement, which among other things, included a statement "acknowledging the ongoing genocide against Palestinians," hiring professors on Middle East and Palestine studies and establishing a full department for those subjects; and providing full amnesty for all students, student groups, faculty and staff who participated in the protests.

The five federations, which encompass much of the state, are: the Jewish Federation of Northern New Jersey, Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest, Jewish Federation in the Heart of New Jersey, Jewish Federation of Southern New Jersey, and Jewish Federation of West-Central New Jersey.

The action came following an emergency meeting on May 5 of the federations' chief executive officers in consultation with community members in reaction to "the pro-Hamas encampment" agreement.

For months Jewish students have been subjected to harassment and bullying, the occupation of buildings and disruption of classes. The final straw came on May 3 when protesters threatened to disrupt classes, forcing the postponement of morning finals and prompting the university to issue a 4 p.m. deadline for the dismantling.

"We need your help," said Rutgers Hillel CEO Lisa Harris Glass in a virtual program on the evening of May 5. "We need to stand up for what's right and for justice. I feel incredibly unsupported as I and many others work through the university processes."

The program was conducted by Linda Scherzer, director of the MetroWest federation's Jewish Community Relations Committee, and also featured Rutgers student Joe Gindi. Scherzer said that she was particularly troubled by the use of the word "genocide" by the university after months of propaganda from the demonstrators.

She noted that "while we all support the American value of the right to assembly and free speech," it felt like the university was picking a side.

"This isn't something any of us wanted," said Gindi. "I have never been more disappointed in the administration." He said after his appointment to the Chancellor's Committee on Jewish Life by Conway and following his testimony before Congress, where he said, "Jew hatred had become blatant at Rutgers," he thought things would get better.

"We are in a far worse situation," said Gindi, with Jewish students being harassed in class, in the streets and in their dorms.

Moreover, Gindi said Jewish students were totally cut out of the encampment negotiations by the university."We were never consulted by the university. The university just capitulated to this mob. My finals had to be moved, and these are the people that they are now negotiating with and are dictating university policy."

Harris Glass said the encampment violated several university policies, including rules against staying overnight, holding a demonstration in an unapproved area—Voorhees Mall rather than Brower Commons—and no amplified sounds.

She said "desperate communications" were sent to Conway and Holloway, but they were negotiating with the encampment's marshals. "It seems to me they were talking about capitulation," said Harris Glass, adding she would use the word "extortion" to describe the agreement. "They [the protestors] held the university's operations hostage."

Gindi said that over the course of months pro-Palestinian protesters had interrupted Jewish events, harassed Jewish students without consequences or suspensions, and shouted antisemitic slurs from the encampment.

"It feels like a double standard, and this is what our taxes are paying for," said Gindi, who cited Students for Justice in Palestine, which for years has been causing unrest and spreading antisemitic and anti-Israel propaganda at Rutgers and other campuses. The organization had been briefly suspended earlier in the school year for violating the university' s code of conduct and is now on a yearlong probation.

He noted as part of the deal, pro-Palestinian demonstrators agreed not to cause any more disruptions, but added, "Knowing their constituency, they're not going to abide. I guarantee you there will be disruptions at commencement. The administration didn't understand who they were dealing with." Commencement is scheduled for Sunday.

Scherzer, who said the federations would be in contact with Gov. Phil Murphy's office the next day, asked if the governor had interceded. Gindi, who previously served as a legislative affairs intern in Murphy's office, said he had not.

"From my perspective the governor has been shamefully silent," said Harris Glass. "He is the highest-ranking politician in the state, and I don't have the right words for how heartbreaking and frustrating it is."

Scherzer also expressed concern about faculty members who have clearly taken sides with the protesters and are standing with them, a concern also shared by Harris Glass. "I have absolutely been seeing faculty supporting and aiding the cause," she said, and knows Jewish students who feared speaking out of concern it would affect their grade because of the positions of certain faculty, a situation she called "outrageous."

Yet, Harris Glass believes that there is still a place for Jewish students at Rutgers, which has one of largest Jewish populations in the country. "If we stop showing up at our state university we have lost," she said, and had a message to parents who are concerned about sending their children to Rutgers: "Make sure they have a place to land." Along those lines, Harris Glass said Hillel had seen a surge in student participation this past school year.

In addition to the call for a state investigation, the federations will work with the House Education and Workforce Committee to support a congressional inquiry, will discuss the university's actions with donors and governors, and will discuss "potential budgetary implications" with state and federal legislators and representatives.

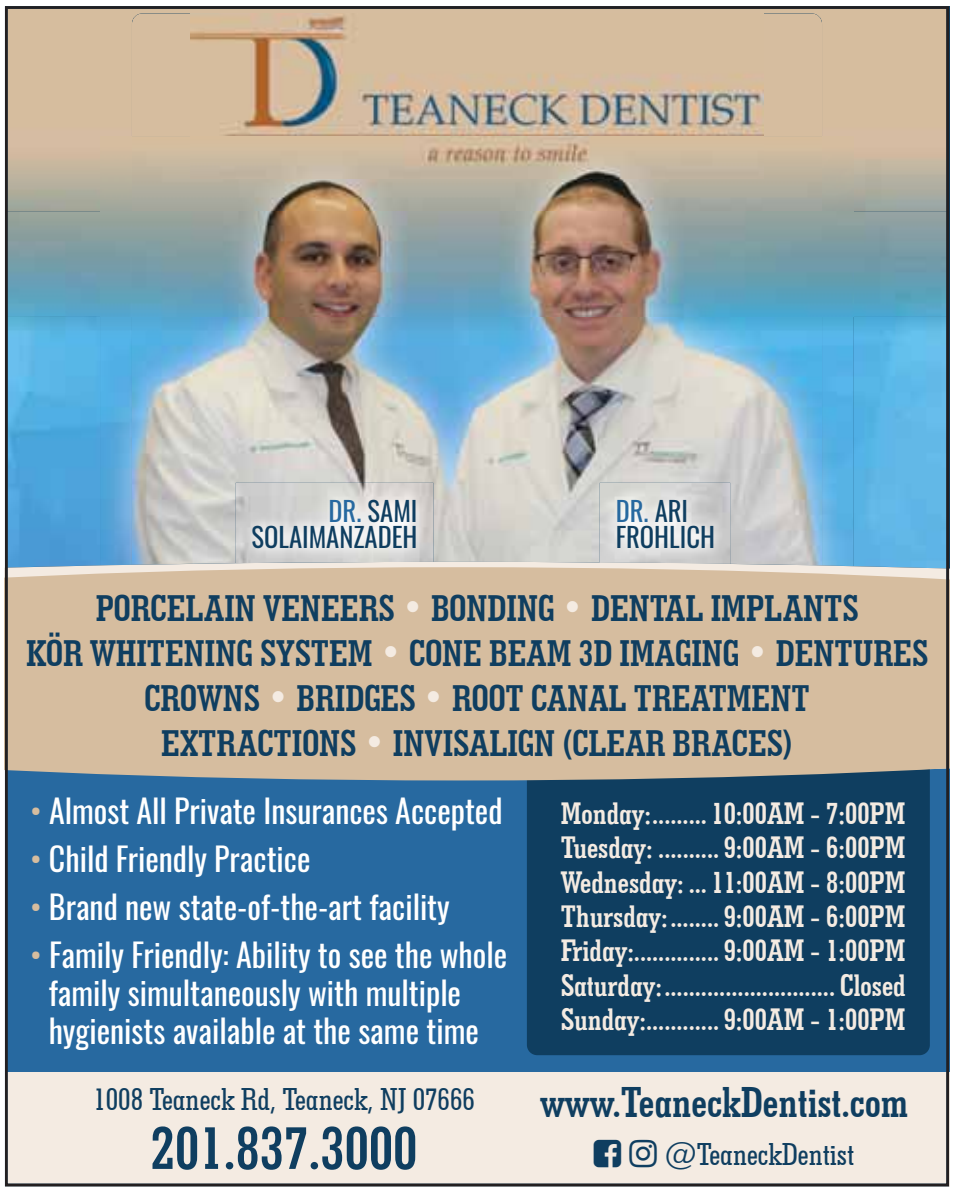
The federations are also urging the Jewish community, friends and allies to come to the Statehouse in Trenton on May 16 for a Senate committee hearing on legislation to curb antisemitism. They will also consult with student leaders, community representatives and allies in planning a large community rally at Rutgers in the near future "to articulate our pain and outrage."

Links to the letters are:

To NJ Leadership: Call for an Investigation: https://bit.ly/3Uvep8O

To Rutgers Leadership: Reverse Agreement With Encampment Protesters: https://bit.ly/3UPvCet

Debra Rubin has had a long career in journalism writing for secular weekly and daily newspapers and Jewish publications. She most recently served as Middlesex/Monmouth bureau chief for the New Jersey Jewish News. She also worked with the media at several nonprofits, including serving as assistant public relations director of HIAS and assistant director of media relations at Yeshiva University.





Jewish Faculty Member Faces 'Echo Chamber' of Radicalism at Raritan Valley Community College



By Anna Keiserman

For a few years now, I have served as an assistant professor of music in the arts and design department at Raritan Valley Community College (RVCC) in Branchburg, New Jersey, on a tenure track, working towards earning a permanent position on the faculty. I also serve as the artistic director of the Mozaika Concert Series at the college, a program that I created to foster multicultural dialogue through performances of music from the classical canon to contemporary works. I love teaching; performing with students, staff and faculty; and collaborating with colleagues.

My dream was always to teach in academia, and I pursued this path for the past 10 years, having completed my master's and doctorate degrees and working as an adjunct faculty member in various schools. That dream hit a high point when I joined RVCC in 2020 as a full-time faculty member, and I have devoted the past four years to building the music program. However, at this stage, I am no longer filled with optimism about a future in post-secondary education.

What prompted this stark inflection point was the emotionally wrenching and isolating experience of the past seven months, in which I experienced the echo chamber of pro-Palestinian radicalism and intolerance on campus with no efforts by the administration or colleagues to allow for alternative views. Over this time, it took enormous effort and energy to sustain the activities that had hitherto defined my life as a professor: teaching classes, running the program, performing in concerts, and supporting my students through scholarship initiatives, extra lessons, outreach concerts and educational guidance.

Confronting and combating antisemitism has consumed so much of my energy and focus that, for the first time ever, I have had to cancel my own concerts and abandon my creative projects. Like another of my esteemed Jewish colleagues (also a professor, albeit at a different institution) put it, I have found it difficult to breathe.

I am a proud Jew who was born in Russia and spent some time living in Israel before emigrating to the U.S. I have close family members living in Israel, some of whom serve in the IDF. After the deadly attacks by Hamas terrorists on October 7, the RVCC campus quickly transformed into a hotbed for anti-Israel and antisemitic activity by the Student Government Association, fomented in no small part by external activist groups like American Muslims for Palestine. This atmosphere has been reflected frequently in the college's social media channels, which ostensibly exist to further educational, nonpolitical objectives of the school.

Public lectures and social media posts on the campus spread deeply divisive views, stating that Hamas members are "freedom fighters," repeating slogans like "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free," and asserting that Zionists run the world. I have shared reports of these and other offensive assertions with members of the college administration, and no one has taken any meaningful action to respond to them.

Any efforts I have made to offer contrary views, and defend the State of Israel's right to exist, have been met with hostility. I have been labeled as an Islamophobe and someone who spreads "dangerous misinformation about the Palestinian genocide."

I have spoken out about this situation on my personal social media a few times, which RVCC students discovered and have used as a pretense to complain about me to the college administration. I subsequently met with the college president, provost and human resources officers, who instructed me to be careful, and that my position could be compromised.

In an effort to create a safe space for Jewish students on campus, I attempted to form a Jewish student club and applied to the student government to recognize the club. The student government recognized the club, but rejected me as their adviser, stating that I am Islamophobic.

I reached out to the RVCC Holocaust Institute on campus for support in creating educational events, but received no response. In addition, in early November the Holocaust Institute had posted a statement acknowledging the tragic events of October 7. However the statement was removed in early April. Witnessing this erasure of recent history—the biggest killing of Jews since the Holocaust—struck me as incredibly disrespectful to the hostages, and to all the Jews and Israelis who are working to bring them home.

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Columbia University Cancels Main Commencement After 'Difficult' Encampment Challenges

By Channa Fischer

In a letter to the class of 2024, Columbia University announced that it will be canceling its upcoming commencement ceremony on May 15 due to the ongoing protests on its Morningside Heights campus. Following weeks of pro-Palestinian rallies and encampments on the south lawn — all of which has been fraught with antisemitic speech and actions targeting Jewish students — the commencement cancellation saves President Nemat "Minouche" Shafik from having to address the disruptions in her speech to the graduating class.

In a statement on May 6, Columbia officials noted that the past few weeks had been "incredibly difficult" and students "emphasized that smaller-scale, school-based celebrations are the most meaningful." The announcement came after armed police officers dismantled a student occupation of Hamilton Hall and cleared the remaining pro-Palestinian encampments on April 30, during which a total of 112 arrests were made. According to the office of Mayor Eric Adams and NYPD Commissioner Edward Caban, approximately a third of the protestors who were arrested were not affiliated with Columbia in any way.

"We will not be a city of lawlessness, and we will not allow our youth to be influenced by those who have no goal other than spreading hate and wreaking havoc on our city," Adams wrote in an official statement. "As the anti-Israel protests began to escalate, it became abundantly clear that individuals unaffiliated with these schools had entered these different campuses and, in some cases, were even training students in unlawful protest tactics, many which we witnessed escalating into violent conduct ... Free speech and peaceful protest remain the fabric of our society, but that is not what we have been witnessing on these campuses."



A pro-Hamas protest encampment on the campus of Columbia University in New York City, April 22, 2024. (CREDIT: LEV RADIN/SHUTTERSTOCK VIA JNS.ORG)

The protests at Columbia University began in mid-April and were initially organized by student groups calling on the school to cut all ties with Israel. However, as these protests proliferated on campus, Jewish students reported that their safety had felt threatened specifically in regard to targeted harassment and violence simply due to their religion and ethnicity.

A report written by the student journalists at the Columbia Daily Spectator, published later in New York Magazine, surveyed those on campus who have been affected by the protests. While the vast majority of students interviewed were supportive of the encampments and the actions of the protestors, the Daily Spectator captured some of the troubling sentiments of the Jewish students.

Columbia freshman Rachel Freilich told the Daily Spectator that she would tuck in her Bring Them Home necklace as well as her Magen David when walking around campus, noting that she "didn't want to get harassed, and didn't want to get hurt." She added, "It felt like I had to hide an integral part of who I am." Similarly, freshman Parker De Deker reported that "antisemitism was rapidly increasing at a rate I had never seen before on our campus," recalling the verbal harassment he received while walking to the Chabad on campus and wearing a kippah.

"What we are witnessing in and around campus is terrible and tragic,"wrote Rabbi Eli Buechler, director of OU-JLIC at Columbia, on April 21. "The events of the last few days, especially [April 20], have made it clear that Columbia University's Public Safety and the (New York Police Department) cannot guarantee Jewish students' safety in the face of extreme antisemitism and anarchy." In the same letter, Buechler urged Jewish students to go home to avoid the rampant hate on campus.

In his official statement ahead of Passover, on the same day as Buechler's letter, President Joe Biden directly acknowledged the protests and the impact it has had on Jewish students at Columbia. "Silence is complicity," Biden's statement read. "Even in recent days, we've seen harassment and calls for violence against Jews. This blatant antisemitism is reprehensible and dangerous — and it has absolutely no place on college campuses, or anywhere in our country."

The White House also put out a statement of its own, condemning the violence and "physical intimidation targeting Jewish students and the Jewish community" on Columbia's campus.

On April 29, a complaint filed on behalf of Jewish students at Columbia requested an emergency injunction requiring university trustees to better enforce the school's code of conduct to allow class members to safely complete the semester in person.

"Indeed, despite its supposed commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, Columbia has allowed a small group of fringe demonstrators to target Jewish students and faculty with harassment, hate speech and violence for the sole reason that they are (or appear to be) Jewish. Columbia's inaction and willingness to allow for such vile conduct is antithetical to fostering an environment of diversity, equity and inclusion," read the complaint.

That same day, the pro-Palestinian protestors seized Hamilton Hall, prompting Shafik to call in the NYPD and have them cleared out from the building. On April 30, the 112 arrests on campus were made. "After the university learned overnight that Hamilton Hall had been occupied, vandalized and blockaded, we were left with no choice," Columbia said in a statement. "The decision to reach out to the NYPD was in response to the actions of the protesters, not the cause they are championing. We have made it clear that the life of campus cannot be endlessly interrupted by protesters who violate the rules and the law."

Since those arrests were made, the university formally requested that NYPD officers maintain a presence on campus through May 17, the end of Columbia's commencement events. Until then, the safety of Jewish students remains uncertain as Columbia continues to grapple with its own failures in dealing with these protestors.

Channa Fischer is a staff writer at The Jewish Link.

Jewish Faculty Member Faces 'echo Chamber'

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I cannot say with any certainty how the next chapter of my career will unfold. But I can say that the campus in which I work no longer feels like a safe or welcoming place for a proud Jew. Having directed all my career plans toward a life in academia, this crossroads fills me with great sadness and with genuine fear for the future of higher education in this country.

Dr. Anna Keiserman is a classical pianist who has performed at Carnegie Hall, the Strand Theater, the Ateneu Barcelones in Barcelona, Spain, Le Poisson Rouge, the Fete de La Musique, and other notable venues. She has won top prizes in international piano competitions in Russia and the U.S., and participated in concert tours in Italy, Spain and Russia. She has served on the faculty at NYU, Rutgers, William Paterson University and Raritan Valley Community College. She and her husband live in New Jersey. You can learn more about her at www.annakeisermanpiano.com





Followership

By Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, zt"l

There is a fascinating sequence of commands in the great "holiness code" with which our parsha begins, that sheds light on the nature not just of leadership in Judaism but also of followership. Here is the command in context:

Do not hate your brother in your heart. *Reprove [or reason with] your neighbor frankly so you will not bear sin because of him*. Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.—Lev. 19:17-18

There are two completely different ways of understanding the italicized words. Maimonides brings them both as legally binding. Nahmanides includes them both in his commentary to the Torah.

The first is to read the command in terms of interpersonal relations. If you believe some has done you harm, says the Torah, do not remain in a state of silent resentment. Do not give way to hate, do not bear a grudge, and do not take revenge. Instead, reprove him, reason with him, tell him what you believe he has done and how you feel it has harmed you. He may apologize and seek to make amends. Even if he does not, at least you have made your feelings known to him. That in itself is cathartic. It will help you to avoid nursing a grievance.

The second interpretation, though, sees the command in impersonal terms. It has nothing to do with you being harmed. It refers to someone you see acting wrongly, committing a sin or a crime. You may not be the victim. You may be just an observer. The command tells us not to be content with passing a negative judgment on his behavior (i.e., with "hating him in your heart"). You must get involved. You should remonstrate with him, pointing out in as gentle and constructive a way as you can, that what he is doing is against the law, civil or moral. If you stay silent and do nothing, you will become complicit in his guilt (i.e., "bear sin because of him") because you saw him do wrong and you did nothing to protest.

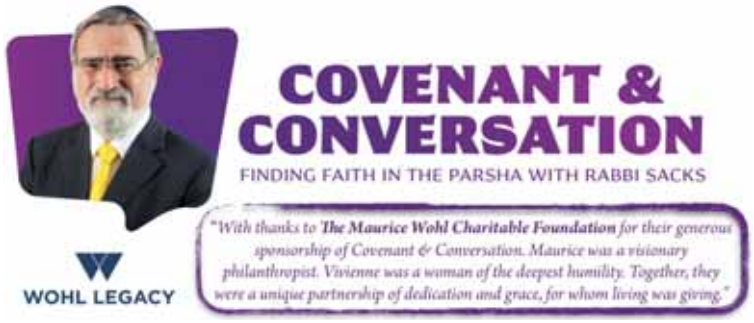
This second interpretation is possible only because of Judaism's fundamental principle that *kol Yisrael arevin zeh ba-zeh*, "All Jews are sureties [i.e., responsible] for one another." However, the Talmud makes a fascinating observation about the scope of the command:

One of the Rabbis said to Raba: [The Torah says] *hocheach tochiach*, meaning "you shall reprove your neighbor repeatedly" [because the verb is doubled, it implies you should reprove him more than once]. Might this mean *hocheach*, reprove him once, and *tochiach*, a second time? No, he replied, the word *hocheach* means, even a hundred times. Why then does it add the word *tochiach*? Had there been only a single verb I would have known that the law applies to a master reproving his disciple. How do we know that it applies even to a disciple reproving his master? From the phrase, *hocheach tochiach*, implying, under all circumstances.—Bava Metzia 31a.

This is significant because it establishes a principle of *critical followership*. So far in these essays we have been looking at the role of the leader in Judaism. But what about that of the follower? On the face of it the duty of the follower is to follow, and that of the disciple to learn. After all, Judaism commands almost unlimited respect for teachers. "Let reverence for your teacher be as great as your reverence for heaven," said the Sages. Despite this the Talmud understands the Torah to be commanding us to remonstrate even with our teacher or leader should we see him or her doing something wrong.

Supposing a leader commands you to do something you know to be forbidden in Jewish law. Should you obey? The answer is a categorical 'No.' The Talmud puts this in the form of a rhetorical question: "Faced with a choice between obeying the master [God] or the disciple [a human leader], whom should you obey?" The answer is obvious. Obey God. Here in Jewish law is the logic of civil disobedience, the idea that we have a duty to disobey an immoral order.

Then there is the great Jewish idea of active questioning and "argument for the sake of heaven." Parents are obliged, and teachers encouraged, to train students to ask questions. Traditional Jewish learning is designed to make teacher and disciple alike aware of the fact that more than one view is possible on any question of Jewish law and multiple interpretations (the traditional number is 70) of any biblical verse. Judaism is unique in that virtually all of its canonical texts—Midrash, Mishnah and Gemara—are anthologies of arguments (Rabbi X said this, Rabbi Y said that) or are surrounded by multiple commentaries each with its own perspective.



The very act of learning in rabbinic Judaism is conceived as active debate, a kind of gladiatorial contest of the mind: "Even a teacher and disciple, even a father and son, when they sit to study Torah together become enemies to one another. But they do not move from there until they have become beloved to one another."

Hence the Talmudic saying, "Much wisdom I have learned from my teacher, more from my colleagues, but most from my students." Therefore despite the reverence we owe our teachers, we owe them also our best efforts at questioning and challenging their ideas. This is essential to the rabbinical ideal of learning as a collaborative pursuit of truth.

The idea of critical followership gave rise in Judaism to the world's first social critics, the Prophets, mandated by God to speak truth to power and to summon even Kings to the bar of justice and right conduct. That is what Samuel did to Saul, Elijah to Ahab and Isaiah to Hezekiah. None did so more effectively than the Prophet Nathan when, with immense skill, he got King David to appreciate the enormity of his sin in sleeping with another man's wife. David immediately recognized his wrong and said *chatati*, "I have sinned."

Exceptional though the Prophets of Israel were, even their achievement takes second place to one of the most remarkable phenomena in the history of religion, namely that God Himself chooses as His most beloved disciples the very people who are willing to challenge heaven itself. Abraham says, "Shall the Judge of all the earth not do justice?" Moses says, "Why have You done evil to this people?" Jeremiah and Habakkuk challenge God on the apparent injustices of history. Job, who argues with God, is eventually vindicated by God, while his comforters, who defended God, are deemed by God to have been in the wrong. In short, God Himself chooses active, critical followers, rather than those who silently obey.

Hence the unusual conclusion that *in Judaism followership is as active and demanding as leadership*. We can put this more strongly: Leaders and followers do not sit on opposite sides of the table. They are on the same side, the side of justice and compassion and the common good. No one is above criticism, and no one too junior to administer it, if done with due grace and humility. A disciple may criticize his teacher; a child may challenge a parent; a Prophet may challenge a King; and all of us, simply by bearing the name Israel, are summoned to wrestle with God and our fellow humans in the name of the right and the good.

Uncritical followership and habits of silent obedience give rise to the corruptions of power, or sometimes simply to avoidable catastrophes. For example, a series of fatal accidents occurred between 1970 and 1999 to planes belonging to Korean Air. One in particular, Korean Air Flight 8509 in December 1999, led to a review that suggested that Korean culture, with its tendency toward autocratic leadership and deferential followership, may have been responsible for the first officer not warning the pilot that he was off-course.

John F. Kennedy assembled one of the most talented groups of advisers ever to serve an American president, yet in the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961 committed one of the most foolish mistakes. Subsequently, one of the members of the group, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., attributed the error to the fact that the atmosphere within the group was so convivial that no one wanted to disturb it by pointing out the folly of the proposal.

Groupthink and conformism are perennial dangers within any closely-knit group, as a series of famous experiments by Solomon Asch, Stanley Milgram, Philip Zimbardo and others have shown. Which is why, in Cass Sunstein's phrase, "societies need dissent." My favorite example is one given by James Surowiecki in "The Wisdom of Crowds." He tells the story of how an American naturalist, William Beebe, came across a strange sight in the Guyana jungle.

A group of army ants was moving in a huge circle. The ants went round and round in the same circle for two days until most of them dropped dead. The reason is that when a group of army ants is separated from their colony, they obey a simple rule: Follow the ant in front of you.

The trouble is that if the ant in front of you is lost, so will you be.

Surowiecki's argument is that we need dissenting voices, people who challenge the conventional wisdom, resist the fashionable consensus and disturb the intellectual peace. "Follow the person in front of you" is as dangerous to humans as it is to army ants. To stand apart and be willing to question where the leader is going is the task of the critical follower. Great leadership happens when there is strong and independently-minded followership. Hence, when it comes to constructive criticism, a disciple may challenge a teacher and a Prophet reprimand a King.



No Skipping: 'Eizehu Mekoman Shel Zevachim!'



By Rabbi Haim Jachter

I was shocked to hear that a prominent yeshiva omits the daily recital of "Eizehu Mekoman Shel Zevachim." The following are eight compelling reasons why this practice should not be emulated:

1) The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 50) dedicates an entire chapter to highlight the importance of saying this beautiful perek of Mishnayot. The Mishna Berura, Aruch Hashulchan and Kaf HaChaim cite no authority who disagrees with the Shulchan Aruch.

2) This perek does not present any *machloket* (dispute, although some of the matters are subject to dispute). The Kaf HaChaim presents the stunning fact that this perek is the only chapter in the entire mishna that does not record a machloket! Thus, this perek is a "Mishna Berura"—clear and straightforward.

3) This perek brilliantly presents the basic halachot of the various korbanot we offer in the Beit Hamikdash. It is a wonderful daily review of the fundamental rules governing korbanot.

4) I heard a questionable claim that this perek constitutes *bitul Torah,* lost time from Torah study. Quite to the contrary, if one devotes some time to studying and mastering this perek, then the daily recital of "Eizehu Mekoman" reinforces one's knowledge of the fundamentals of the avodah in the Beit Hamikdash service.

5) Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik observes that the Torah's detractors—from classic Christian anti-Jewish polemics to modern-day Bible critics—devote special effort to degrade korbanot. To combat these attacks, Chazal emphasized korbanot's centrality in several ways:

1. While the Talmud Bavli does not comment on almost all of Sefer Zeraim and Seder Taharot because—for the most part—it is not applicable outside of Eretz Yisrael, it devotes massive attention to the avodah in the Beit Hamikdash. Masechtot Zevachim and Menachot are among the longest tractates in Shas.

2. Traditionally, children are taught Sefer Vayikra before the rest of Chumash.

3. The daily recital of the perek "Eizehu Mekoman."

6) Rav Hershel Schachter goes as far as to say that the daily recital of korbanot constitutes a Torah-level mitzvah. His assertion stems from the following Gemara (Megillah 31b; translation from the William Davidson edition of the Talmud), which communicates the supreme value of our study of korbanot:

"And with regard to Abraham, it is written: 'And he said, "O Lord, God, by what shall I know that I shall inherit it?"' (Genesis 15:8). Abraham said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: "Master of the Universe, perhaps, Heaven forbid, the Jewish people will sin before You, and You will do to them as You did to the generation of the flood and as You did to the generation of the dispersion, i.e., You will completely destroy them?" God said to him: 'No, I will not do that.'

Abraham then said before Him: "Master of the Universe: 'By what shall I know this?'" God said to him: "Take Me a heifer of three years old," (Genesis 15:9). With this, God intimated to Abraham that even if his descendants will sin, they will be able to achieve atonement through sacrificing offerings. Abraham said before Him: 'Master of the Universe, this works out well when the Temple is standing and offerings can be brought to achieve atonement, but when the Temple will no longer be standing, what will become of them?' God said to him: "I have already established for them the order of offerings, i.e., the verses of the Torah pertaining to the halachot of the offerings. Whenever they read those portions, I will deem it as if they sacrificed an offering before Me, and I will pardon them for all of their iniquities.""

7) Yirmiyahu HaNavi (30:17) bemoans Jerusalem's neglect. The Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 30a), in turn, infers that Yirmiyahu charges us with the obligation to focus our attention on Yerushalayim (Derishat Tzion). *What better way to be Doresh Tziyon than the daily recital of "Eizehu Mekoman?"* In this manner, we maintain Yerushalayim "Al Rosh Simchati," (Tehillim 137:6).

8) Finally, and most importantly, Tosafot (Sanhedrin 24a s.v. Belula) mentions that the daily recital of "Eizehu Mekoman" ensures we do not miss a day of mishna learning.

Conclusion

If the Shacharit minyan you attend does not say "Eizehu Mekoman Shel Zevachim," politely suggest to the rabbi and gabbai that the policy be amended. If such efforts are unsuccessful, arrive a few minutes earlier to Shacharit to ensure you do not miss the opportunity to recite this wonderful perek. How can one even consider missing the precious opportunity to recite this magnificent perek?!

Rabbi Jachter serves as the rav of Congregation Shaarei Orah, rebbe at Torah Academy of Bergen County and a get administrator with the Beth Din of Elizabeth. Rabbi Jachter's 18 books may be purchased at Amazon and Judaica House.

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Yom Ha'Atzmaut in the Shadow of October 7



By Rav Moshe Taragin

This will be a very different Yom Ha'Atzmaut. We are in the middle of a war and our nation is still suffering from the barbaric attack of October 7. There are manifold layers of grief. One hundred and thirty-three hostages are still being held in the shadowy tunnels of Aza by homicidal maniacs. Thousands of Israeli families are mourning heartbreaking losses. Thousands of our soldiers are recovering physically and healing emotionally from their war wounds. Tens of thousands are still displaced from their homes, with no clear date for a return. We face military aggression, as well as a wave of rabid antisemitism. Our future feels uncertain. Celebrating Israeli independence while ignoring, or even momentarily setting aside, our anguish seems insensitive and callous. This year, our celebrations must be muted and low-keyed.

Not only must the festivities be restrained, but our attitude and our emotional mindset must be calibrated to the current situation. We cannot completely ignore this day, since it represents everything we currently fight and struggle for. How can we approach Independence Day during a period of such mourning, hardship and uncertainty? Perhaps, instead of joyous celebration, this year's Yom Ha'Atzmaut should be a day of historical reflection, of pondering Jewish sovereignty and of contemplating how the war has altered our collective identity.

This year we savor Jewish sovereignty more deeply than in the past, when we may have taken it for granted. October 7 demonstrated how vulnerable we continue to be and how vital Israel is to our future security and survival. Jew hatred isn't going anywhere, and, in the long term, no Jew is safe without a Jewish state. If anything, October 7 infuses this year's Yom Ha'Atzmaut with even more profound meaning.

October 7 was the first pogrom in history to be followed by a war. In the hours after the initial attack, soldiers, police, security teams and ordinary citizens rallied to defend our country, thereby preventing a potentially apocalyptic catastrophe. In the months since, we have courageously waged a just and moral war to dismantle the murder machinery of our enemies. We have doggedly persisted, even though much of the world cannot see through the smokescreen of hatred and antisemitism. Despite the swirling uncertainty, we remain strong and resilient. We will defend our country. We will dismantle terror and eliminate the subhuman murderers who burned, raped and mutilated. We will build a brighter future. On Yom Ha'Atzmaut, we will and we must affirm Jewish sovereignty and affirm our future.



Where Was Hashem?

Religiously, we continue to struggle with many vexing questions. How did this happen? How could Hashem allow a sadistic attack on our people in our homeland? Weren't these grisly and horrific scenes relics of our tortured past in exile? How could our enemies weaponize both the day of Shabbat and the day of Simchat Torah against our people?

> *"This war has reopened the book of Jewish history. We are living through a crucial chapter in that book."*

Intervals of confusion during which the hand of Hashem isn't evident are called periods of *hester panim*. In exile, we endured thousands of years of the obscuring of Hashem. We have just lived through more than six months of this murky obscurity.

Yet, our current period of divine concealment feels very different from the past. Despite the darkness, we have periodically seen Hashem's hand. This tragedy could have been much worse, had the genocidal plans of our enemies succeeded. Despite their attempts to ignite a regional war and despite ongoing tensions in the North, we are not entangled in a potentially more deadly and dangerous multi-front war.

On the eve of October 7, our society was badly fractured by a year of nasty and venomous social discord. Had this attack occurred a few months later, would we have been too badly splintered to mount a united defense?

A month ago, we faced a deadly barrage of Iranian ballistic missiles. After a night of fear and anxiety, we safely awoke to a quiet morning, grateful that we already possessed the technology to save thousands of lives.

Sometimes Hashem's presence is visible in the big picture. Sometimes, though, the larger calculus doesn't make sense, but we can still discern His presence in the smaller details.

Moderating Expectations

There is profound religious and historical meaning to our return to Israel. Never before has an entire nation migrated from across the globe, returning to their ancient homeland. This extraordinary voyage is exactly what our enemies cannot comprehend. Their only reference point is the exploitative colonialism of the past. Our national pilgrimage back to Israel is a fulfillment of a divine promise delivered thousands of years ago. It is our historical destiny.

Viewing our return as a religious and historical destiny, though, has triggered unrealistic and simplistic expectations. We haven't been warmly embraced by our neighbors, and local populations aren't just disappearing. We must still convince much of our world of the need for a Jewish homeland.

The past six months have reminded us that our epic historical project may be slower and more complicated than we expected. Our historical undertaking will take much longer than anticipated and will not conform to our simplistic expectations.

Discovery

The war has also affirmed or uncovered much about the nature of our people. This should provide optimism about our future.

The war has convincingly answered pressing questions about the current generation. How would a TikTok generation respond to adversity? How would a start-up nation of prosperity react to hardship and sacrifice? Could our children match the courage and dedication of previous chalutzim? The war has proven that love for our people and sacrifice for our land is woven into our national DNA regardless of ethnic, religious or political divides. Our future is in good hands.

Restoration of Our Story

October 7 thrust unity upon us. Fighting for survival, we were forced to band together to stem the initial wave of violence and to launch our counterattack. We were united by the immediate crisis. Long-term, though, durable unity requires a common story.

During the initial decades of our state, we shared a powerful and captivating common story. Our nation was chosen to inspire humanity by living a moral and religious lifestyle. Our failures cast us into exile. After 2,000 years of roaming the wastelands of history, we suffered the worst crime ever perpetrated against humanity. In the wake of this national horror, we returned home, cobbled together a robust democracy, crafted a free market economy and absorbed Jews from across the planet, while facing unending violence.

As we became successful, our story began to fade. The memory of the Holocaust gradually dimmed, and our success caused us to forget our story.

This war has resurrected our common story. We may have forgotten our story, but our enemies certainly haven't, and they never fail to remind us. This war has reopened the book of Jewish history. We are living through a crucial chapter in that book.

An International Community

This war has also strengthened the bonds of our international family. Fanatical antisemitism has reminded Jews around the world just how critical Israel is to their survival. The Jewish international community provided our people with billions of shekels of aid, loving emotional support and crucial political backing.

This is not the time for festive celebrations. This Yom Ha'Atzmaut will be a somber but meaningful day of gratitude, introspection and hope.

The writer is a rabbi at Yeshivat Har Etzion/Gush, a hesder yeshiva. He has semicha and a BA in computer science from Yeshiva University, and a master's degree in English literature from the City University of New York. He is the author of "Dark Clouds Above, Faith Below" (Kodesh Press, April, 2024), which provides religious responses to the massacres of Oct. 7 and the ensuing war.



Strengthening Relationships by Judging Others Favorably



By Rabbi Baruch Bodenheim

Rebbetzen Sima Spetner, a world-renowned expert in raising children, often tells the following story:There was a 3-year-old girl sitting on the floor, busy coloring a piece of paper with crayons. The mother walked into the room and saw crayon coloring...on the floor. She gently told her daughter, "Crayons are for paper, not the floor." The mother cleaned up, returned 15 minutes later and to her dismay, saw more crayon marks on the floor. She told her daughter, "Mommy said we don't color on the floor. Next time you color on the floor, Mommy will have to take away the crayons." A while later, the mother came and saw the same thing. She was upset. The little girl said, "But I didn't color on the floor, Mommy!" "We must only tell the truth, so now I have to take away your crayons," said the mother. That evening, the mother picked up her daughter's shoes and discovered there was a crayon lodged in the pattern of a shoe's sole! Suddenly, it was clear: The crayon marks on the floor were inadvertently made by the shoes and not by her daughter's coloring.

Rebbetzen Spetner uses this story to illustrate that one should initially give a child the benefit of the doubt.

In Parshas Kedoshim, there is a mitzvah, *"B'tzedek tishpot amisecha"*—"With righteousness you shall judge your friend." The Gemara explains that this pasuk is teaching the mitzvah to judge people favorably. Even if it seems someone did something wrong, we must give him the benefit of the doubt. Maybe he did something wrong, but it's best to assume it was unintentional or he didn't realize the sensitivity of the issue.

The Mishnah in Pirkei Avos quotes the teaching of Reb Yehoshua ben Perachia who taught this mitzvah within a group of three teachings: "Make for yourself a Rebbe, acquire for yourself a friend and judge each person favorably." The Maharal says that when a mishna lists a group of teachings, it indicates they are linked. Reb Chaim Volozhin explains the connection between these teachings: If someone is not careful to judge people favorably, then he will likely ruin his relationship with his Rebbe and with his friends.

I know a great rabbi who devoted many years to helping a student with a particular issue. During one phone conversation, the Rebbe pointed out something the student was doing incorrectly and told him he needed to fix it. The student disagreed, got upset and started to yell at his Rebbe! More shockingly, the student hung up the phone on him. A few years have passed since then, and the student has not called his Rebbe. This is a prime example of when a person does not judge his Rebbe favorably, he may lose his relationship with his Rebbe. The same applies to spouses and friends.

Rabbi Yechezkel Norman gave me advice when I was a chosson. "Anytime you start to get upset about something your wife did or said, stop and realize that your wife loves you and you are the most important person in the world to her. She definitely didn't do something to intentionally hurt you." This habit of judging others favorably is definitely worth developing and will dramatically improve all of our interpersonal relationships.

The Gemara relates a story of a person who went to work for a wealthy individual. He worked for him for three years. The day before Yom Kippur, he requested his salary for the three-year period so he could go home and provide for his family. The boss responded, "I don't have any cash." "Perhaps you have produce or cattle you can pay me with?" suggested the worker. "I apologize, but I don't have any." replied the boss. "Perhaps you have property, furniture or clothing?" Every item he mentioned, his boss told him he had none. The worker left home empty-handed to face his family, with nothing to show for his three years of work.

After Sukkos, the worker received a knock on his door. The boss presented him with full payment ...and a bonus...for his three years of labor. The boss asked the employee, "Tell me, when you asked for payment and I replied I didn't have any cash, what did you think?" The employee responded he thought the cash was tied up with a business deal. "That's exactly what happened," replied the boss. "When you asked me for property and I responded I didn't have, what did you think?" "I thought perhaps all your properties were given out to sharecroppers." And for each item the employer mentioned, the employee came up with some explanation of why it might not have been available. The boss replied that in all cases he was correct!

Sometimes we are very hasty to jump to conclusions. Sources say that the employee in this story was actually Rebbe Akiva. It's fitting indeed to work on the mitzvah of judging others favorably during Sefiras Haomer, a time of spiritual preparation for receiving and fully accepting the Torah on Shavuos.

Rabbi Baruch Bodenheim is the associate rosh yeshiva of Passaic Torah Institute (PTI)/Yeshiva Ner Boruch. Rabbi Bodenheim can be reached at rbbodie@gmail.com. For more info about PTI and its Torah classes, visit www.pti.shulcloud.com



TZAMA NAFSHI

‘And You Shall Love’



By Rabbi Judah Mischel

The heilige Rebbe Yisrael of Rhizin—the great-grandson of the maggid of Mezritch—was known for his righteousness and expansive sense of holiness. Brilliant, beloved and deeply committed to the wellbeing of klal Yisrael, the holy Rhizner shared the following maaseh on Shabbos Parshas Kedoshim:

“Reuven and Lazer were *chaverim*—best of friends—although they lived in different towns. One day, news spread of an accusation of rebellion against the king, which led to a death sentence. The accused provided clear evidence that he had no involvement in the crime, however, he was held up as a scapegoat. Ongoing threats of insurrection in the kingdom meant that everyone was ordered to watch the execution, and the horrible spectacle would serve as deterrence.

When Reuven arrived at the capital city for ‘the event,’ he was shocked to see that the man sentenced to die—standing there before the gallows in handcuffs—was none other than Lazer. He began to push through the crowd shouting, “Wait! It was me! You’ve got the wrong guy! It was me! I am the guilty one!” A policeman grabbed him and brought him before the king. Seeing his friend Reuven, Lazer spoke up: ‘It’s not true! He is innocent; I confess I was lying, I committed the crime and I deserve to die!’

Reuven pleaded with the king who was seated upon a high platform. “Your majesty, I have known this man my whole life and he is my closest friend. Believe me, he would never do what he is accused of—it’s not his personality. Please, I beg you, take me instead. I can’t bear the thought of my friend being killed. I would much rather die than stand by and watch him suffer.” Lazer refused to remain silent, and they both continued to contend that it was he who should be executed.

The king was always fearful that anyone—from his family to his ministers—could be plotting against him, and was deeply moved by the selfless love and loyalty of the two friends—each willing to die for the other. Finally, he couldn’t bear it and stood up. ‘I grant you both royal pardon,’ he said haltingly, ‘but on one condition ... Please, if you would, if you could ... just be my friend, like you are to each other!’”

~

וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ אֲנִי ה׳

“And you shall love your friend, ‘the other’, (just) as (you instinctively love and seek benefit for) yourself, ” (19:18).

Rashi quotes a medrash saying that this divine commandment is the “klal gadol baTorah”—it is not just one of the most important elements, but the central value and goal of Torah. Indeed, “loving others” is none other than the highest form of spiritual expression, and the most God-like activity that we can engage in.

Chazal place our religious experience in the context of an exclusive, intimate relationship with the Ribbono Shel Olam. Yet, the litmus test or barometer to measure our closeness with Hashem is our commitment to the mitzvah and value of v’ahavta.

“V’ahavta l’reiacha kamocha” is the most omnipresent of mitzvos; in every encounter with others, we have an opportunity to uphold and fulfill it. As the philosopher, Martin Buber, notes, in the intimacy of our religious lives, v’ahavta is so fundamental to our identity and practice that all of Yiddishkeit “lives in its light” and is animated by this mitzvah. Rabbi Klonimus Kalman Epstein of Krakow—the Maor VaShemesh—proclaims this mitzvah to be the *“yesod kol haTorah kulah*—the foundation of the entire Torah.”

~

This week, we mark Yom Hazikaron—Israel’s national day of remembrance for fallen soldiers and victims of terrorism. We honor the kedoshim who fell in sanctification of God’s Name, martyrs about whom our Sages say, “No one (is great enough to) dwell in their section of Gan Eden,” (Pesachim, 50a). An individual who has made the ultimate sacrifice for the Jewish people transcends their individual, personal status and becomes subsumed into the collective and comprehensive level of the holiness of nishmas klal Yisrael, and are elevated in their death and afterlife. Those who fell al kiddush Hashem have a portion in all of our accomplishments; for we who continue to live in Eretz Yisrael today do so in their merit.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe frames the bravery and sacrifice of chayalei Tzahal as the ultimate expression of shlichus and ahavas Yisrael. In sichos that he delivered during wartime, the rebbe refers to chayalei Tzahal as “tzadikim.” In the Rebbe’s elevated and expansive spiritual worldview, righteousness and spiritual heroism is expressed in many forms, but the willingness to give up one’s life to protect the Nation and Land is literal mesiras nefesh, self sacrifice, the holiest of all deeds.

Indeed, numerous sections of Mishneh Torah outline action-based mitzvos that are rooted in v’ahavta—including bikur cholim, ensuring proper burial of the dead, comforting mourners, dealing with others fairly in business, hachnasas orchim, providing for a kallah, tzedaka and redeeming captives. But there is no greater expression of “v’ahavta” than the willingness to sacrifice one’s life for the protection of one’s fellow. There is no greater *kedusha,* no higher level of dedication to Knesses Yisrael than the extraordinary commitment and sacrifice of our holy soldiers and their heroic families.

This perhaps is the intent of the Rhizner’s mashal for Parshas Kedoshim. When we live the full expression of *“v’ahavta*—self-sacrifice for one another,” then, אֲנִי ה׳—“I, Hashem, am manifest—for I want to be a part of that sacred bond of friendship as well.”

Let us reassert our commitment to one another and ensure that all of our efforts in Yiddishkeit “lives in the light” of the “klal gadol baTorah.” May the Ribono shel Olam avenge the blood of our fallen brothers and sisters, protect our beloved soldiers and may His mercy awaken in their merit, so that we be zoche to the complete redemption, bekarov mamash.

Rav Judah Mischel is executive director of Camp HASC, the Hebrew Academy for Special Children. He is the mashpiah of OU-NCSY, founder of Tzama Nafshi and the author of “Baderech: Along the Path of Teshuva.” Rav Judah lives in Ramat Beit Shemesh with his wife Ora and their family.

BRINGING THE PROPHETS TO LIFE

The Hidden Consolation



By Rabbi Neil N. Winkler

Parshat Kedoshim

There are different minhagim regarding the haftarah that is read when Parshat Kedoshim is separated from Parashat Acharei Mot. This article discusses the haftarah taken from Sefer Yechezkel although many Batei Knesset read the same haftarah that was read last Shabbat from Sefer Amos.

The haftarah for this week’s parsha of Kedoshim is one not commonly heard. On most years, the parsha is read together with Parshat Acharei Mot with the haftarah taken from Sefer Amos, according to Ashkenazic practice. When these portions are read separately, the haftarah is often “replaced” by the Rosh Chodesh reading or by the “Machar Chodesh” haftarah. In fact—believe it or not—the last time Ashkenazim read this haftarah was ... 27 years ago! It, certainly, is a rare privilege to hear this nevuah chanted in our batei knesset ... but, in truth, I would not say it is a “pleasant” one.

The 22nd perek of Sefer Yechezkel is filled with some of the strongest denunciations of Israel found in all of the Tanach. This haftarah selection does not focus upon those many mitzvot we hear throughout the parsha—mitzvot that would help bring the nation closer to Hashem and place them on a greater level of kedusha. Instead, Chazal chose this nevuah that connected to the final section of the parsha—where the Torah warns Israel against the practice of the lowest forms of human behavior, including adultery, incest and child sacrifice. Indeed, Rav Amnon Bazak brilliantly points out how the prophet lists nine of his generation’s abominations (in verses 7-11)—and all of them are included in the two chapters of the parshat Kedoshim (19-20)!

Now, there is little question as to why Yechezkel attacks Israel with this powerful prophecy as God Himself refers to Yerushalayim as “Ir HaDamim”—a city of bloodshed! The generation of Yechezkel was guilty of committing the worst of atrocities, including bloodshed and idolatry. The Navi knew that these people needed to hear these harsh words in the hope that they would change their sinful behavior. However, the question that concerns us is why our ancient scholars chose this prophecy to be read for all future generations on this Shabbat. And, truthfully, I find it especially troubling that our generation—a generation whose parents and/or grandparents survived the destruction of one-third of our nation—must now hear these painful words on the very Shabbat when we look forward to the upcoming celebration of Yom Ha’atzmaut! *Would it not have been more fitting to have chosen a haftarah—even one that harshly criticized the sinful nation—but would have included some message of hope and promise for the future? Would that not have been a message more timely and appreciated by our generation, rather than one that closes with the prediction of exile and dispersion?*

Yes. It is as I said, a very unpleasant message for us to hear on this Shabbat. Which is why it is so important to review the entire haftarah carefully—which is what I had to do. Because the key to “unlocking” the hope hidden in this depressing and frightful prophecy can be found in the final two pesukim. After warning of the coming of galut, Hashem promises: *“ ... v’hatimoti tumatech mimech”*—that in the diaspora, God will “remove your contamination”—a divine pledge that the oppression of exile will purify you. Hashem predicts that the many years of suffering in hostile lands will bring the nation to recognize their misdeeds and cleanse them from the sins of the past. Indeed, the very last pasuk guarantees that at that time, Israel would return to their land—a return that would be witnessed by all—and this, the prophet closes, will prove to His children that He is Hashem, their God.

This is the consolation that we find in our haftarah, and this is what we—our generation—are witnessing today.

Rabbi Neil Winkler is the rabbi emeritus of the Young Israel of Fort Lee, and now lives in Israel.

What We Want



By Rabbi Reuven Taragin

הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר,
עֲשֵׂה רְצוֹנוֹ כִּרְצוֹנֶךָ, כְּדֵי
שֶׁיַּעֲשֶׂה רְצוֹנְךָ כִּרְצוֹנוֹ.
בַּטֵּל רְצוֹנְךָ מִפְּנֵי
רְצוֹנוֹ, כְּדֵי שֶׁיְּבַטֵּל רְצוֹן
אֲחֵרִים מִפְּנֵי רְצוֹנֶךָ.
(אבות ב:ד)

Rabban Gamliel—the son of Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi—encourages us to "make His will like your own, so that He will make yours like His" and to "nullify your will before His so that He will nullify the will of others before yours," (Avos 2:4).

Identification

Rabban Gamliel emphasizes not only "nullifying" our will before Hashem's, but also transforming it to match His. Instead of just submitting to Hashem's will, we should identify with it. In addition to fulfilling Hashem's will, we should teach ourselves to want what He "wants." We should aim to value what He "values" and feel what He "feels.

We learn this from Pinchas, whom Hashem described as *"kano et kinati,"* (Bamidbar 25:11). Pinchas did more than just act in response to sin. His reaction was more profound—it was visceral. He empathized with Hashem's "pain" and "jealousy."

Form: Passionate Heart and Soul

Identification with Hashem's will affects both the form and scope of our avodat Hashem. It impacts the form by enabling us to serve Hashem with a full heart. The Ramban (Asei 5) saw this level of avodah as the intention of the command to serve Hashem *"bechol levavcha*—with all your heart," (Devarim 11:13). When fulfilling mitzvot, we should focus fully on avodat Hashem and act wholeheartedly.

This wholeheartedness should express itself as passion. The Ramban in Bereishit 18:7 highlights Avraham's rushing to serve his guests as expressing exactly this passion. Avraham did not just do chesed; he ran to chesed.

We see the relationship between "running" and "will" through the similarity between the Hebrew word for "will—*ratzon,"* and the abbreviated form that means "running—*ratz."* We run to that which we are passionate about.

This is why Rabbi Yehuda ben Teima links the two words and concepts when he encourages "running *(ratz)* like a gazelle to fulfill the will *(ratzon)* of your Father in Heaven," (Avot 5:20).

Scope: What Hashem Wants

Aligning our will with Hashem's means seeking to fulfill not just His commandments, but everything He "wants." We should commit ourselves to doing whatever Hashem stated explicitly, as well as what we infer "between the lines." This commitment is a testament to our devotion and dedication to our faith.

We ought to relate to Hashem the way we relate to those we love and care deeply for. When we care about someone, we address not only their formal requests, but also whatever we think will make them happy.

Avraham's actions at the Akedah demonstrated this attitude. After Hashem commanded him to spare Yitzchak's life, he searched for something else to sacrifice (Bereishit 22:13). Avraham could have headed home, satisfied with Hashem's praise for his willingness to sacrifice Yitzchak. But he thought Hashem wanted him to go further and actually sacrifice something. Even though Hashem did not command Avraham to sacrifice something, he sought the opportunity. Interestingly, Hashem blessed Avraham only after he offered this voluntary sacrifice (Bereishit 22:15-18). The brachot were given to Avraham because he was not just a loyal servant of Hashem, but that he acted out of love for Hashem as well.

Mordechai's words to Esther in response to her hesitance to approach Achashveirosh are another example of pursuing Hashem's unspoken will. Mordechai told Esther that interceding with Achashveirosh may be "the moment for which you became queen," (Esther 4:14). Hashem commanded neither Esther nor Mordechai to take action. Like Avraham, Mordechai reflected on the circumstances and estimated what Hashem wanted. This estimation was something for which he felt Esther was responsible to risk her life!

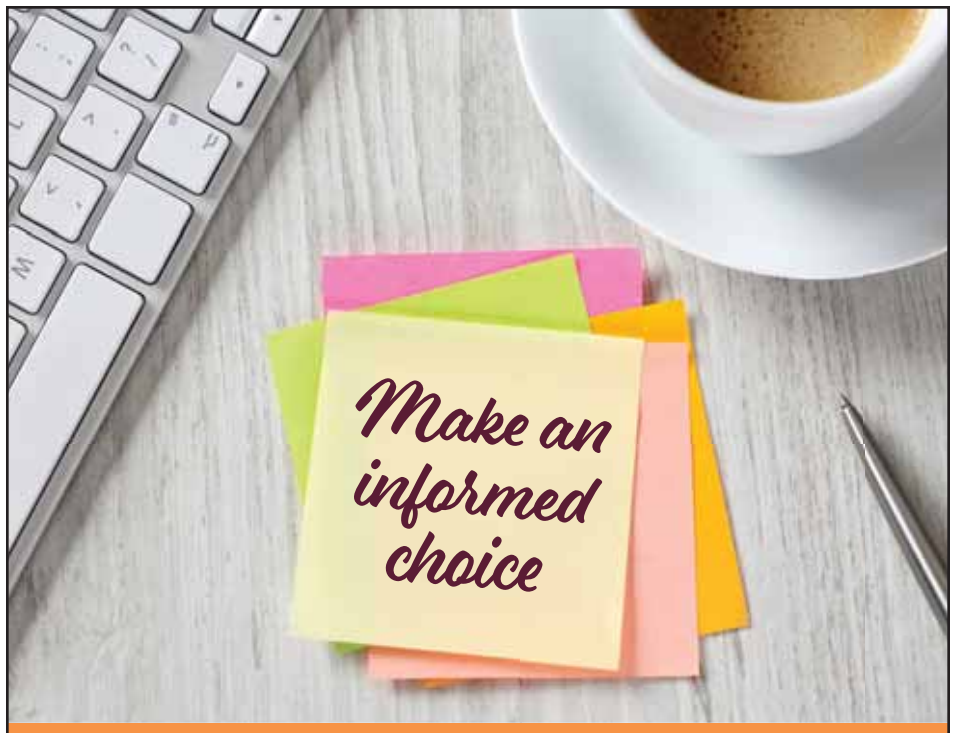
The Chatam Sofer (Chelek 1, Orach Chaim 197) used this idea to explain the surprising statement of the Gemara that "one who says that they have only Torah, lacks even Torah," (Yevamos 109a). *What besides Torah does "having Torah" depend upon?*

The Chatam Sofer explained that the Torah—as eternal and universal—can mandate only the generic responsibilities of all Jews at all times. Each of us has additional, personal responsibilities we are meant to divine from the unique abilities with which Hashem creates us and the circumstances in which He puts us. Those committed to Hashem's will seek to determine and commit themselves to these additional responsibilities. Having "only Torah" is not enough; one must join to it the desire to understand and carry out Hashem's will writ large.

May It Be Our Will

May we successfully sync our will with Hashem's, in a way that brings us to identify with His goals and inspires us to serve Him fully and comprehensively!

Rav Reuven Taragin is the dean of Overseas Students at Yeshivat Hakotel and the educational director of World Mizrachi and the RZA. His new book, "Essentials of Judaism," can be purchased at rabbireuventaragin.com.



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Counting Sefirah Somewhat Early



By Rabbi Daniel Mann/
Eretz Hemdah

לעילוי נשמת
יואל אפרים בן אברהם
עוזיאל זלצמן ז"ל

Question: My shul davens Mincha right before sunset and Maariv right after it. During the Sefirah period, may I rely on Sefirat HaOmer done at that time?

Answer: We find different starting times for mitzvot of the night/next halachic day. The time for evening Kriat Shema is *tzeit hakochavim* (the emergence of three stars) (Brachot 2a; Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 235:1). The main mitzvot of Seder night are also from tzeit hakochavim (Rosh, Pesachim 10:2). In contrast, one may make kiddush on Shabbat from plag hamincha, well before sunset (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 267:2), and according to many, can also daven Maariv then (Brachot 27a; Shulchan Aruch and Rama, Orach Chayim 233:1).

Regarding Sefirat HaOmer, the Rashba (Shut I:154) posits that counting while it is still daytime is worthless, because the number day counted is wrong, and one must repeat it at night. He and the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 489:2) say that "those who are careful" count after tzeit hakochavim.

However, there are halachic indications for leeway. The Avudraham (see Beit Yosef, Orach Chayim 489), says that one who davens in a minyan for Maariv before the end of the day, counts with them without a bracha and should plan to repeat the counting at night with a bracha. He explains that he should do this with the intention that if he forgets to repeat it later, the earlier counting can be of some value. The Beit Yosef is skeptical of this condition's efficacy, but he cites the halacha anyway (Shulchan Aruch ibid. 3). The assumption, though, is that we do not want to rely on the early Sefirah.

However, regarding bein hashemashot—between sunset and tzeit hakochavim—there is significant room for leniency, especially because it is likely that Sefirat HaOmer in our times, when no korban haomer is brought, is only a rabbinic obligation (see Tosafot, Menachot 66a; the Rambam, Temidin 7:24 posits it is still from the Torah.) The Magen Avraham (489:6) says one who counted during bein hashemashot fulfills the mitzvah. The Mishna Berura (489:14) explains that since bein hashemashot is a safek of whether it is night or day and since we assume the mitzvah is rabbinic, leniency is understandable.

However, many poskim frown upon counting during bein hashemashot. Some warn against dismissing the Rambam's opinion that the mitzvah is still from the Torah (see Eliya Rabba 489:10). Others point out that we avoid relying on doubts regarding rabbinic mitzvot when we can do them without doubt; this is especially so when a bracha is involved and when one night of invalid Sefirah can disqualify future nights' Sefirah and their brachot (see Divrei Yatziv, Orach Chayim 214).

The exact time of your shul's Sefirah can be impactful. The earliest time that might be tzeit hakochavim is 13.5 minutes after sunset (there are different opinions, by a few minutes, of when sunset is in hilly regions); many posit that tzeit is approximately 20 minutes after sunset. On the other hand—according to Rabbeinu Tam's approach (albeit our communities mainly do not factor it into their decisions)—bein hashemashot starts only around an hour after sunset.

There are often strong communal reasons to have no break or a short one between Mincha and Maariv, and these can justify an earlier than ideal Sefirat HaOmer. For the individual, the best practice from a purist perspective is to count on the basis of the "Sefirah leader's" bracha (who should have in mind to be motzi anyone who wants/needs it—see Pri Chadash, Orach Chayim 489:8) and then repeat the Sefirah without a bracha when it is definitely time. This is different from the Avudraham above, who had people do their main Sefirah at night without a minyan and the earlier counting was "just in case." Here, we assume the main counting is during bein hashemashot with the tzibbur (it is generally better to count with the tzibbur—see Ba'er Heitev, Orach Chayim 489:20; Minchat Yitzchak IX:56) and the repetition is in case it had been too early. Nowadays, if one uses apps and alarms to remind him to count, there is little room for concern. If one is self-conscious about just answering "amen" or fears it can be divisive, he may join the community's practice and make the bracha during bein hashemashot.

Rabbi Mann is a dayan for Eretz Hemdah and a staff member of Yeshiva University's Gruss Kollel in Israel. He is a senior member of the Eretz Hemdah responder staff, editor of Hemdat Yamim and the author of "Living the Halachic Process, Volumes 1 and 2" and "A Glimpse of Greatness."

The Feds, Power and Courage: Reflections on Yom HaShoah 2024



By Rabbi Moshe Hauer

Following a recent meeting between increasingly concerned Jews and the government agencies charged with protecting them, I approached the senior agent representing the FBI and asked him to explain their declared policy of not monitoring protests until violence or threats of violence ensue. I was dismayed by the response.

The post-October 7 campus climate, where rallies extol and promote Hamas, predictably produces violence. We were not surprised by the Cornell student who rode the wave of those protests to the point of threatening online to "shoot up 104 west" (the kosher dining hall at Cornell University), to "stab" and "slit the throat" of any Jewish man he saw on campus, to rape and throw off a cliff any Jewish women he saw, to behead any Jewish babies, and to "bring an assault rifle to campus and shoot all you pig jews." In that case, federal authorities rapidly identified and apprehended the offender, who eventually pleaded guilty. But there is much more where that came from.

How could the FBI not monitor protests when they were clearly the breeding ground for more of this violence?

The agent's response came with a wry smile: "We tried that once before, in the 60s, and it did not end well."

I pushed further. True, but do you think this hands-off approach will end well? How do we let the campus temperature rise while engaging in a whack-a-mole response to the resulting flood of violent threats? We are constantly asked by members of our own community, when we will finally realize that the current situation is not different from Germany in 1933 or 1938. What should we say to that? Why do we find ourselves having to regularly answer that horrible question?

This time the agent did not smile. "That will not happen here. In Germany in the 1930s, the government, police and army were the problem, whereas in the United States our government and law enforcement officials are the solution. Our people are not haters. We take every agent to the Holocaust Museum, and we stand firmly committed to learning the lessons of its history and never letting those horrors happen here."

He is right. Those charged with law enforcement in this country are nothing like those university professors, department heads, and DEI officers who have defined Jews and Israelis as privileged and powerful white colonizers. They are not to be lumped together with the virtuous champions of human and women's rights—except those of the Jews. And they are certainly not to be compared to the many large Muslim American groups who have yet to condemn the actions of Hamas on October 7 and are nevertheless invited to weigh in on the evils of Islamophobia.

We have no doubts about the sincerity of the FBI's support of our community, just as we do not question the seriousness of the many government officials who have been working overtime to address the rising tide of American antisemitism. They are neither antisemitic nor apathetic to our plight. But they have yet to display the courage needed to boldly address the violent antisemitic anarchists.

Today is Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day. The choice to mark this day during the Jewish month of Nisan was made because of the desire to include in its commemoration of the Holocaust the courage of the Warsaw Ghetto resistance fighters whose rebellion was initiated on Pesach. Theirs is a story of people who courageously stood up to evil but whose powerlessness made their effort doomed to fail.

What we have been seeing too often in the government response to the continued anarchy on campus is the very opposite: a government with all the power and the tools but lacking the courage. We tried it before, they say, and it did not end well.

Is the lesson of the campus protests of the 60s and the BLM rallies of 2020 that law enforcement must always stand down? Must we allow violent rallies because we are fearful of being accused of suppressing the truly sacred right of peaceful protest? Does our concern for police overreach move us to handcuff law enforcement? Does our sensitivity to racism and Islamophobia justify our acceptance of Islamic-driven hatred and violent antisemitism?

As we mark this Yom HaShoah, we note how blessed we are to live in this country where our President is dedicated to addressing the growing scourge of antisemitism and where government and law enforcement agencies listen to us, work with us, and share deeply our concerns and our fears.

What we tried once before, in the 60s, did not end well, but the strategy of choosing not to get involved in demonstrations does not seem to be ending well either. To learn the lessons of history we must try it again and do it better, aiming to get it right by preventing violence without throttling peaceful protest. As Jews read from the Torah (Leviticus 19:17) today, "you shall not stand by when the blood of your fellow is threatened." We appreciate sincerity, but we need courage.

Rabbi Moshe Hauer is the executive vice president of the Orthodox Union (OU), the nation's largest Orthodox Jewish umbrella organization

Flowing With Milk and Honey



By Rabbi Dov Kramer

The Torah describes the Land of Israel as "a land [where] milk and honey flows" numerous times, although its appearance in Parshas Kedoshim is the only time in Sefer Vayikra (20:24). What does this expression mean? What kind of milk and what kind of honey?

In his commentary on Shemos 13:5, Rashi says, "Milk flows from the goats and honey flows from the dates and from the figs." Putting aside why Rashi waited until the third time the Torah uses the expression to explain it, his explanation differs from how he explains it in the Talmud (Megillah 6a), where he says, "The goats eat figs and the honey drips from them and the milk flows from the goats and they (the goats' milk and the figs' honey) form something that resembles a stream." Although the milk is the same in both explanations, in the Talmud the honey is "fig honey," while in the Chumash it's both "fig honey" and "date honey." It should be noted, though, that his explanation on the Talmud is based on how the Talmud itself (Kesubos 111b) describes a first-hand account of seeing the land "flow" with milk and honey, where the honey came from figs.

As far as why Rashi includes date honey in his commentary on the Torah, the honey of the seven species (Devarim 8:8) refers to date honey (see Rashi on Devarim 26:2, but it's implied in the verse itself, since—as Ibn Ezra on Vayikra 2:11 points out—figs were already mentioned as one of the land's seven special species). Therefore, the starting point is that the land flows with date honey, with the first-hand account of goats eating figs and honey dripping from them adding a second type of honey. Elsewhere (Vayikra 2:11), Rashi says that "honey" refers to fruit-based sweetener, implying the sweetness of any fruit (not just dates and figs), something he says explicitly in Shevuos 12b.

Just as "honey" can refer to the extraction of any sweet fruit, "milk" is not limited to goat milk. As Ramban puts it (Shemos 3:8), "It's a land [fit] for cattle because it has good pasture (for grazing) and its waters are nice, so the animals produce a lot of milk—as good, healthy animals that produce an abundance of milk require a good climate, lots of vegetation and good waters. And because that occurs in marshes and or on top of mountains—where fruits aren't so plump or nice—(the Torah) says that the fruit is so plump and sweet that honey oozes from them."Nevertheless, since the eye-witness accounts were of goat milk and fig honey, and the "honey" of the seven species is date honey—not to mention that these are the ones normally abundant in the Land of Israel—this is the "milk" and "honey" that are most associated with the land..

In Mechilta d'Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai (on Shemos 13:5, quoted by Midrash HaGadol), R' Eliezer doesn't understand "milk' ' to mean animal milk, but the liquid that oozes from fruit. (He also says "honey" refers to date honey; I assume date honey is a separate category because it's thicker than what oozes from other fruits.) Rabbi Akiva argues, insisting that "milk" means animal milk. He brings two proof-texts, one (Yoel 4:18) to prove that "milk" refers to animal milk, and the other (Shmuel I 14:26) to prove that "honey" is not limited to date honey. Interestingly, honey (which was in a forest) is not fruit honey. According to Rashi, the "forest" refers to sugar canes, with the "honey" being sap that flowed from them. Radak disagrees, saying the "forest" refers to trees (as it usually does), with honey flowing from the beehives in those trees. If we connect the dots (Rabbi Akiva using the verse to "prove" which honey flows in the Land of Israel and Radak saying it was bee honey), one could argue that the expression (also) refers to bee honey. But the simpler, more straightforward way to understand it is the honey that oozes from its fruits, which usually manifests itself in date honey and fig honey. Similarly, "milk" is commonly understood to be animal milk (not the liquid that oozes from overly plump fruit), as one of the reasons given (Bechoros 6b) for the permissibility to drink the milk of kosher animals is that the Torah praises the Land of Israel for its milk.

Midrash Lekach Tov (Bamidbar 13:27) describes the report of the scouts—when they verified that the land flows with milk and honey—being "the honey flows from the trees, and the goats graze underneath and the milk of the goats flows underneath them, and the honey and the milk mix together." Although this sounds similar to Rashi's commentary on Megillah 6a, there the type of fruit was mentioned, and the goats were eating the fruit, causing the fruit's honey to ooze out and mix with their milk. This Midrash has the goats grazing there (implying that they were eating the vegetation growing on the ground), without mentioning any fruit, with the implication being that the "honey" was the sap that flowed directly from the trees rather than liquid that oozed from fruit. Either way, it indicates how bountiful the land is.

Two other things caught my eye as I was researching this topic. In Shemos 3:8, Shadal instructs us to see his commentary on 13:5, but in the most widely available editions, his commentary there has been edited out. I'm not sure whether leaving in the reference was an oversight, and when it was decided to take out his quotes of non-Jewish sources they forgot to take this out too, or to give them credit for leaving evidence that they censored his commentary. (In the unedited editions, Shadal quotes non-Jewish poets who included flowing milk and honey as indications of bounty and said the expression was meant as poetic hyperbole. I am more uncomfortable with not taking the eye-witness accounts of the Talmud seriously enough than I am about quoting non-Jewish poets.)

Abarbanel (on Shemos 3:8) says that the expression is designed to contrast the Land of Israel with Egypt, since the latter does not support livestock well nor are there many trees, whereas the Promised Land supports its animals so well that they produce an abundance of milk, and its trees produce fruits so luscious that there is an abundance of fruit honey. I found this interesting because Dasan and Aviram told Moshe he had taken them out of a land that flowed with milk and honey and they were referring to Egypt! Nevertheless, they were contrasting their situation in the desert with how things were in Egypt; they used this expression for effect, even if—in the context they were using it—it was technically inaccurate.

Rabbi Dov Kramer prefers honey in his fruit-flavored herbal tea, and only eats dates on Rosh Hashanah. As a kid, he enjoyed dried/pressed figs, but is wary of infestation, so has avoided them. After giving up coffee post heart attack, milk is no longer part of his diet either. Most importantly, he hasn't moved to the Land that flows with milk and honey—yet, but yearns for the redemption, when we can all return there.





When to Invade Rafah



By Rabbi Gil Student

I. A Time for War

Koheles (3:6) notwithstanding, there is never a good time for war. We hope and pray for a time when there will be no war. But when war is necessary, presumably there should be no time constraints to it. However, the halacha states otherwise, as we will see. If the Israeli Defense Forces were run completely according to Halacha, which they currently are not, when would be the right time to begin a battle?

As of the time of this writing, Israeli forces are preparing to enter the Gaza city of Rafah in order to subdue Hamas troops and free hostages. At the same time, negotiations for a truce are ongoing. We will discuss here the halachic considerations for an IDF invasion of Rafah, even though it may not happen or may have already happened by the time this article appears.

II. Three Days Before Shabbos

The Gemara (Shabbos 19a) quotes a baraisa which says: "One may not lay siege to the gentiles' cities fewer than three days before Shabbos. If they have already begun, they need not stop. And so Shammai would say: '[And you should build a siege against the city that is waging war with you] until it falls' (Deut. 20:20), even on Shabbos." According to this view, we may not begin a battle within three days before Shabbos. Rashi (Deut. 20:19) quotes the Sifrei which says that this rule is derived from the preceding verse, "If you besiege a city many days to wage war against it to capture it...." The plural word "days" (*yamim*) implies two days. The additional word "many" (*rabim*) implies more than two days, namely three days. Rav David Segal (known as the Taz) explains that you wage war "until it falls," even on Shabbos, only if the war started at least three days earlier (Divrei David, ad loc.). However, most commentators agree with Rav Eliyahu Mizrachi (commentary, ad loc.) that this is a rabbinic ruling.

Commentators offer different reasons for this rule of starting a battle only three or more days before Shabbos. Rav Yitzchak Alfasi (Rif, Shabbos 7b) explains that it takes three days to calm down after an attack and enjoy Shabbos. Rav Zerachiah Ha-Levi ("Ha-Ma'or Ha-Katan," ad loc., 7a) explains that if within three days before Shabbos you put yourself in a position in which you will have to violate Shabbos, it is as if you are intentionally violating Shabbos. Later commentators accept one or the other explanation.. However, the first approach requires more elaboration. It assumes that a battle will take only one day and then the soldiers rest and calm down until Shabbos. Is that always, or even usually, the case? We will return to this question below.

Rambam seems to contradict himself about this three-day-before-Shabbos rule. In two places in the Mishneh Torah (Hilchos Shabbos 2:25, 30:13), Rambam writes that we may not lay siege to a city within three days before Shabbos. He explicitly adopts Rav Alfasi's explanation, that this rule is to allow soldiers to calm down in time for Shabbos (30:13). Rambam distinguishes between laying a siege and fighting a battle. You may not lay a siege within three days before Shabbos, but you may fight a battle any day of the week. However, elsewhere Rambam omits the three-days-before-Shabbos rule:

"One may lay siege to the gentiles' cities and one may engage in battle with them every day, even on Shabbos, as it says, 'until it falls' (Deut. 20:20), even on Shabbos. This applies to both a mitzvah war and a permissible war." (Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Melachim 6:11)

III. Two Approaches

Why doesn't Rambam mention the limitation of three days before Shabbos in Hilchos Melachim? There are two main approaches to answering this question. Rav Yosef Karo (16th c.,, Israel) asserts that the text must be mistaken and therefore he amends it to: "One may lay siege to the gentiles' cities three days before Shabbos" (Kessef Mishneh, Hilchos Shabbos 2:25). Later commentators explain that according to this approach, the key distinction is whether the army is laying a siege or engaging in battle. A siege requires an initial effort to surround a city and then a lengthy period of waiting and holding the siege. An army should lay a siege at least three days before Shabbos so that the siege will be complete and soldiers will have time to calm down by Shabbos. In contrast, a battle lasts a long time. Therefore, it does not matter on which day it begins. Only a siege has the three-day-before-Shabbos rule.

Rav Moshe Lifschitz (16th c., Russia) takes a different approach (Lechem Mishneh, Hilchos Melachim 6:11). He argues that Rambam mentions the three-day-before-Shabbos rule in Hilchos Shabbos and therefore does not need to repeat it. The key distinction for Rambam is between a mitzvah war (*milchemes mitzvah*) and a permissible war (*milchemes reshus*). A permissible war, whether a siege or a battle, must be started at least three days before Shabbos. A mitzvah war may begin on any day of the week, even Shabbos.

Rav Yitzchak Ben Sheishes Prefet (Rivash, 15th c., Spain-Algeria) seems to follow an approach similar to Rav Lifschitz's explanation of Rambam's view. He applies the three-day-before-Shabbos rule only to a permissible war (Responsa Rivash, no. 101). Rav Ya'akov Ben Asher (14th c., Spain) writes likewise (Tur, Orach Chaim 249). In contrast, Rav David Ibn Zimra (Radbaz, 16th c., Egypt) seems to take an approach similar to Rav Karo's explanation of Rambam's view. He does not distinguish between a mitzvah war and a permissible war (Responsa Radbaz, vol. 4, no. 77). However, rather than amending Rambam's text, Radbaz suggests that Rambam is discussing holding a siege, not laying it. You may hold the siege any day of the week, even Shabbos. But you may only lay the siege at least three days before Shabbos.

Rav Shlomo Goren (20th c., Israel) follows Rav Yosef Karo's approach, that a siege must be laid at least three days before Shabbos but a war may be started any day of the week (Meishiv Milchamah, vol. 1, part 1, no. 2). Rav Eliezer Waldenburg takes this approach as well (20th c., Israel; Hilchos Medinah, vol. 2, part 10, ch. 3, par. 11). Rav Nachum Rabinovitch does also (Melumedei Milchamah, no. 36). According to these authorities, you may begin a battle any day of the week. Since the entry into Rafah is a battle and not a siege, the three-days-before-Shabbos rule does not apply.

However, Rav Rabinovitch's colleague, Rav Yitzchak Shilat, adopts the approach of Rav Lifschitz and not Rav Karo. Rav Shilat has not only retranslated and published many of Rambam's writings, he has also published an edition of Mishneh Torah titled "Rambam Meduyak" (Jerusalem, 2021), which is based on the best Egyptian, Syrian and Israeli manuscripts. In his recently published "Medinah, Halachah Ve-Kavanos Ha-Torah" (Jerusalem, 2023), Rav Shilat says that there is no textual basis for Rav Yosef Karo's emendation (pp. 300-305). Instead, he accepts the distinction between a mitzvah war and a permissible war. Rav Yitzchak Herzog (20th c., Israel) rules likewise (Heichal Yitzchak, Orach Chaim 37:3). The question then becomes whether invading Rafah is a mitzvah war or a permissible war.

IV. Practical Applications

It is notable that, as mentioned above, Rav Ya'akov Ben Asher includes this law in his Tur even though he usually omits laws with no practical implications in his day. Why does he include a law of war when there was no Jewish state or Jewish army in 14th century Spain? Rav Yoel Sirkes (17th c., Poland) suggests that this rule was practical even in medieval times if Jews were captured by bandits—other Jews can go together with gentiles, as a group, to fight to free those captives, even on Shabbos (Bach, Orach Chaim 249). This seems to apply directly to the proposed invasion of Rafah, where many hostages are believed to be held.

Rav Goren (Ibid., pp. 86-87) also discusses a prolonged war with multiple starts and stops to the battles. Does each new battle (or rather, siege) require beginning at least three days before Shabbos because it is a new start, or is it a continuation of an existing war? Rav Goren suggests that any battle of a similar nature against the same army constitutes the same war, even if the battles take place over decades. The battle in Rafah would be part of the war against the PLO and Hamas, which has been ongoing for decades, and therefore would be a continuation which does not fall under the three-days-before-Shabbos rule. Additionally, Rav Herzog (ibid.) rules that once we are attacked, any military response constitutes a mitzvah war. Since the entry into Rafah is part of the response to the October 7 invasion, it constitutes a milchemes mitzvah that can be done any day of the week.

Rabbi Gil Student is the editor of TorahMusings.com

Born to Be Different, Born to Be Like Hashem



By Shira Sedek

At the beginning of Parshat Kedoshim, it says קְדֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ, that we are kadosh. Not only are we told that we are kadosh, we are kadosh because Hashem is kadosh. Some people define kadosh as holy, but what does that mean? What does it mean that we are kadosh?

The word *kadosh* means separate or different. Hashem, in Parshat Kedoshim, is reminding us that we are different and separate from other nations, like Hashem. There is no one like Hashem, and there's no one like the Jewish People.

Nowadays, we are hearing this wake-up call loud and clear. Hashem is screaming these words at us. He is screaming to us: *You ARE Jewish. You ARE different. And you should be proud because I, Hashem, am with you.*

Even though some of our mitzvot may appear burdensome, today we are reminded that these commandments and mitzvot from Hashem are what not only distinguish us from other people but also make us good individuals. The mitzvot we have and actions we do when we follow the Torah and become moral people are what it means to be kadosh.

Now, more than ever, we need to take a stand and be unique. In an era of lies, it is our duty to disseminate the facts. We have to bring love into a hateful world. In an age where people are rejecting God's will, we have a duty to propagate godliness. Because Hashem knows we can change the world, He chose us, the Jewish people, to be different. Hashem is with us! He is kadosh like us! With His help, we can create a better world with peace, happiness, love and blessings.

Shira Sedek is a passionate educator currently working toward a master's degree at Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration.

Ruling Like Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel II: Bava Metzia 38a



By Rabbi Dr. Joshua Waxman

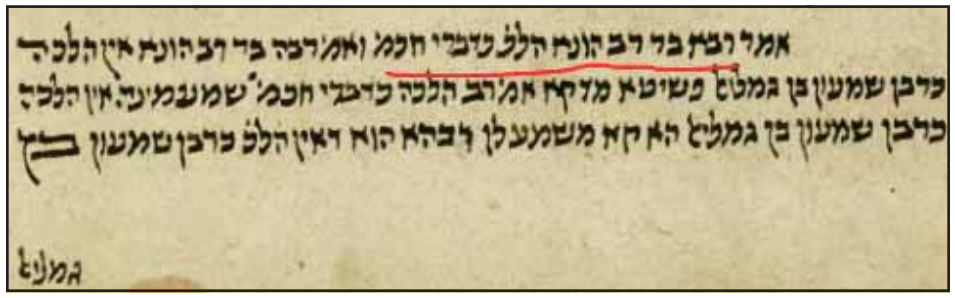
The Mishna in Bava Metzia 38a records a dispute about what to do if someone deposited produce with you and the produce has started to degrade (e.g., due to spoilage or vermin). The Tanna Kamma says that, even so, you shouldn't touch it. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel II says you should sell it before the court.

In Yerushalmi Bava Metzia 3:4, both Rabbi Abba bar Yaakov and Rabbi Abahu cite (second- generation) Rabbi Yochanan that we rule like Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel. As an illustration, Rabbi Yochanan of Chakok deposited a saddlebag of chametz with Rabbi Chiyya Rubba, who asked Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi what to do. He was told to sell it at the time it would have to be destroyed. Similarly, someone deposited *kutach* (which involves moldy bread and cheese) with Rabbi Chiyya bar Ashi who asked Rav. Rav instructed to do the same.

The Later Amora Wins

In the Bavli, while Rabbi Abba bar Yaakov quotes Rabbi Yochanan that we rule like Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, Rava cites his teacher Rav Nachman bar Yaakov that we rule like the Sages (Tanna Kamma). Who wins between Rabbi Yochanan and Rav Nachman? The Rif says that (third- generation) Rav Nachman wins, because he's *batrai*, a later generation than Rabbi Yochanan.

The Rosh takes issue with this batrai argument. We only apply that decisive principle of הלכה כבתראי from the days of Abaye and Rava and on. However, in earlier generations, we instead say אין הלכה כתלמיד במקום הרב, the halacha is not like the student before the teacher. (I'd react to that by objecting that that works with. Rava and Rav Pappa, or Rabbi Yochanan and Reish Lakish. However, Rav Nachman isn't Rabbi Yochanan's student.) Further, if it's because Rava is the *batra'a*, he's not speaking for himself. If it's because we generally rule like Rav Nachman in monetary matters, that is specifically when arguing within his own scholastic generation (e.g.,against Rav Sheshet) and not against his teachers. (I'd respond that Rabbi Yochanan isn't his teacher; we don't necessarily have the full citation chain, and perhaps Rav Nachman is channeling not Shmuel, but second- generation Rabba bar Avuah.) Finally, we rule like Shmuel in monetary matters, and Shmuel rules like Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel. Therefore, it seems to him that we should side with Rabbi Yochanan.



Yad HaRav Herzog manuscript, Sanhedrin 31a.

A bit earlier in the Gemara, in explaining the Tanna Kamma, Rav Kahana explained that, despite the spoilage, a person prefers a kav of his own stuff to nine kav of someone else's stuff. Fifth-generation Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak says there's a concern the owner had rendered it terumah for produce in another place. This dispute has practical ramifications, so how do we rule? The Rosh says that since (fifth generation) Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak is the later figure, since he's Rava's student, therefore, the Sages agree that he should sell it. However, see inside for further caveats and restrictions.

The problem with this argument is that there were several Amoraim named Rav Kahana, with perhaps different biographers categorizing them and the textual evidence differently. According to Rav Aharon Hyman in "Tol-dot Tannaim ve-Amoraim," Rav Kahana II was Rav's student; Rav Kahana II was first Rav Yehuda's and then Rabba's student; and Rav Kahana IV, head of Pum Nahara, was Rava's student and Rav Ashi's teacher. Presumably, Rav Kahana IV is arguing with Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak,as they are both fifth-generation students of Rava, with no הלכה כבתראי to invoke. We can see from these two topics how important Talmudic biography is in determining halacha.

Amoraim Within Rabbi Yochanan

Within our *sugya*, the Talmudic Narrator wonders why bother quoting Rabbi Yochanan that we rule like Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel II. After all, this is already captured in a more comprehensive statement by another of Rabbi Yochanan's students, Rabba bar bar Chana, that we rule like Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel whenever he appears in the Mishna, except for three cases: the responsibility of the guarantor (Bava Batra 173b), the incident in Tzaidan (Gittin 74a) and evidence in the final disagreement (Sanhedrin 31a). The Gemara answers that these are two Amoraim within Rabbi Yochanan. While they agree locally that Rabbi Yochanan says we rule like Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, they might disagree about other cases.

This general Rabbi Yochanan rule is invoked across the Talmud;aside from the three cases, there's Bava Kamma 69a, Bechorot 24a, and Ketubot 77a, sometimes as a question. Why bother stating that Rabbi Yochanan rules this way? Or, doesn't this contradict the other general Rabbi Yochanan principle, that we rule like an anonymous Mishna?

Aside from Rabbi Abba bar Yaakov and Rabbi Abahu (in the Yerushalmi), we also have Rabba bar Rav Huna citing Rabbi Yochanan in Sanhedrin, where the import of his statement, according to theTalmudic Narrator, is that it's the one time we rule against Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, but we rule like him in Bava Batra and Gittin. It seems unlikely that Rabba bar Rav Huna, a third-generation Amora in Sura, Babylonia, has the standing to cite Rabbi Yochanan against the latter's students. We should ignore the printings and Reuchlin manuscript that have him citingRabbi Yochanan, and follow the Harav Herzog 1, Munich 95 and Florence 8-9 manuscripts that bring this as a standalone statement.

Rabbi Dr. Joshua Waxman teaches computer science at Stern College for Women, and his research includes programmatically finding scholars and scholastic relationships in the Babylonian Talmud.

The Blue, White and Beautiful Land



By Rabbanit Shani Taragin

Five months after the establishment of Israel, we adopted the flag we know today. A blue Magen David on a white background, between two horizontal blue stripes symbolizing the stripes on a tallit and the blue dye, the techeilet, of the tzitzit. We are commanded to look at these tzitzit "and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them" (Bamidbar 15:39). Chazal explain that the techeilet corresponds to the color of the Divine Revelation (Sifri, Bamidbar 115) and deters us from sin.

The context of the mitzvah of tzitzit reveals added significance to the colors, and hence the Israeli flag. The mitzvah appears with other mitzvot connected to the Land of Israel after the Sin of the Spies, who dissuaded the nation from entering the Land (Bamidbar 15:37–41). Ibn Ezra (ibid., 15:2) explains this juxtaposition as indicative of consolation and assurance for the people that they will indeed enter the Land. And the tzitzit in particular will remind them not to rebel against God.

How do the tzitzit remind us not to rebel? In addition to several expressions in the Parsha of Tzitzit that hint at the spies' sin – e.g. "to explore (*latur*) the land"... "You shall not *explore after* (*lo taturu acharei*) your hearts"... "You shall *see* the Land" (13:18)... "We were in our *eyes* like grasshoppers, and so we were in their *eyes*" (13:33)... "after which you *stray*" (15:39)... "Your children will wander in the desert for 40 years and will bear [the consequences of] your *straying*" (14:33), and more, we also find parallels in the garment itself. The garment upon which the tzitzit are placed remind us of the garments torn by Calev and Yehoshua upon hearing Bnei Yisrael's pleas to return to Egypt. The tzitzit remind us that we should stay focused on our national destiny of living in Eretz Yisrael!



That is why the term *kanaf* (lit. corner), generally a word connoting direction, is used (Bamidbar 15:38 and Devarim 22:12). It reminds us of the four directions the spies took in the Land of Israel. A thread of techeilet among the white threads at each of these corners reminds us of the colors of the Land of Israel, particularly those of Nachalat Yehuda, in which Moshe had commanded the spies to tour (Bamidbar 13:17). These are the colors with which Yaakov blesses Yehuda and his land: "His eyes shall be 'red' with wine, and his teeth white with milk" (Bereishit 49:11–12). The Ramban explains that the eyes will not be red, but rather colored blue (*kachol*) with the oxidized wine that grows in the mountains of Yehuda, as the teeth will be whitened by the milk of the flock in the deserts of Yehuda.

The tzitzit and our flag remind us not to rebel nor lose sight of God's commandments, particularly not to lose sight of the beauty of Eretz Yisrael. The tzitzit remind us of the majesty and love relationship with God in the Land of Israel and console us after years of wandering. And the Israeli flag waves in the Land of Yehuda as a constant reminder not only not to explore elsewhere, *velo taturu*, but that there is nowhere else to explore.

Rabbanit Shani Taragin is Educational Director of World Mizrachi and teaches at Matan and other educational institutions in Israel. She is a member of the Mizrachi Speakers Bureau (www.mizrachi.org/speakers).
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TORAH INSPIRATION

The Gods of Silver and Gold



By Rabbi Dr. Avi Kuperberg

In this week's parsha of Kedoshim, we read the admonition, "You shall not turn towards worthless idols, nor shall you make for yourselves molten deities," (19:4). Rashi explains that, at first, these idols seem powerless and worthless. However, as we begin to turn to them, we start to respect them and they become deities in our estimation.

Looking back at history as described in the Tanach, we see that the attraction towards idol worship was very strong. The kings of Israel were drawn towards the dark side and idol worship was rampant. The Gemara in Sanhedrin (63b) described the strange ways that idols were worshiped, some in—what would otherwise be considered—disrespectful manners. We wonder to ourselves, "What were these people thinking?"

The Rambam (Moreh Nevuchim) explained that the average idol worshiping person felt that Hashem was very busy. He did not get involved in the day-to-day operations of the universe. He, therefore, delegated the various powers associated with running the world to these idols. Therefore, the sun was to be worshiped for providing us with daylight and energy, etc. This followed the Roman model where Zeus delegated authority to the various sub-Gods who were then to be invoked when personal requests were being made in their domain.

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 64a) related that the rabbis were finally able to tame the evil inclination towards idol worship. They tell the story of how this inclination manifested itself as a fiery lion cub that was captured and subdued by the sages of Israel. Today, we no longer have this desire. In fact, it can be difficult to imagine what it was once like.

However, we should not deceive ourselves into thinking that this desire has completely vanished. Perhaps, in modern times, it has taken another direction. Rabbi Eli Mansour points out that no one worships money as a divine being. Sadly, however, many people afford too much importance to it—seeing it as the ultimate value. There are some people who are preoccupied with money and the pursuit of wealth most of the time. They may sacrifice family time, time for Torah study or sacrifice their health in order to earn extra wealth and buy more and more luxuries. While our religion is not opposed to accumulating wealth, we are warned in this week's parsha not to make anything other than God our highest priority. We need to keep money and wealth in its proper perspective, recognizing the other areas in our lives that are far more valuable and important.

Rabbi Nesanel Quinn—my former menahel at Mesivta Torah Vodaas—used to quote the verse from Tehillim (Psalm 115) which describes, "their idols are silver and gold." He told us not to read that the idols are made of silver and gold. Rather, these people worship the actual silver and gold. Once they only value wealth to the exclusion of all else, they have a mouth but cannot speak. They have eyes that cannot see. They have ears but cannot hear. They become impervious to the needs of their friends and family.

Although classic forms of idol worship may no longer exist, may Hashem bless us so that we recognize our priorities in life. While we need money to pay our bills, we need to especially value our spouses, our children, our spiritual pursuits and the way we spend our time.

Rabbi Dr. Avi Kuperberg is a forensic, clinical psychologist and a member of the American Psychology-Law Society. He is the coordinator of Bikur Cholim/Chesed at Congregation Torah Ohr in Boca Raton, Florida. He can be reached at Psychologist@Juno.Com.

ZERA SHIMSHON

Zera Shimshon on Parshas Kedoshim

לֹא תִשְׂנָא אֶת אָחִיךָ בִּלְבָבֶךָ הוֹכֵחַ תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת עֲמִיתֶךָ וְלֹא תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חֵטְא:
(ויקרא יט:יז)

"You should not hate your brother in your heart, you should repeatedly rebuke *(hochiach tochiach)* your neighbor and like this you will not sin because of him," (Vayikra 19:17).

Chazal explain that the double wording of rebuke *(hochiach tochiach)* teaches us that if a person rebukes his neighbor and the neighbor doesn't change and improve his actions, then he is required to rebuke him again and again (even 100 times) until his neighbor finally changes.

Zera Shimshon gives two other explanations: The first one is that teshuva is a gradual process. It is rare that one is reprimanded once and immediately changes their ways. Instead, the first instance of hearing that one is doing something wrong evokes feelings of remorse. Only after one feels bad in their heart, does further criticism possess the power to elicit real change.

Therefore, the purpose of the dual expression of "hochiach tochiach" is to encourage individuals to avoid despondency or agitation in the event that—after reprimanding someone for a misdeed committed—no immediate improvement is observed. Rather than giving up or becoming angry, one should recognize that change is a gradual process and exercise patience both towards yourself and towards your friend—while awaiting the desired transformation.

The second explanation is that halachic *tochacha,* rebuke, is only considered valid if it is appreciated by the recipient. If not, it can be perceived as belittling or demeaning rather than the halachic tochacha. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that the recipient of the rebuke does not harbor ill feelings towards the person offering the criticism.

The Gemara (Arachin 16b) tells the story of Rabbi Yochannan Ben Nuri, who reported Rabbi Akiva's misdeeds to Rabban Gamliel, their rebbe. As a result, Rabbi Akiva was frequently reprimanded and punished by Rabban Gamliel. Rabbi Yochanan Ben Nuri said that this did not create any animosity between Rabbi Yochannan Ben Nuri and Rabbi Akiva. Instead, it strengthened the love between them. This story illustrates that the true indication of rebuke is not only when the person being corrected does not harbor ill feelings towards the individual offering the rebuke, but rather, it even increases the love between them.

Zera Shimshon explains that according to this the double wording of "hochiach tochiach" represents two stages in rebuking. Firstly, rebuke someone once and observe whether the recipient appreciates the criticism and shows increased love towards the person who offered the rebuke or not. Only then—even if there was no change—since this was a halachic rebuke, should one proceed to offer further rebuke which will eventually lead to change.

However, if the recipient does not appreciate the criticism, not only is the person exempt from rebuking further, but they should refrain from doing so—as learned from the Gemara (Yevamos 65b). Just as there is a mitzvah to say something that will be heard; so too, is there a mitzvah to refrain from saying something that will not be heard.

To summarize: there is a mitzvah in the Torah of "tochacha," to rebuke someone who is about to transgress a mitzvah. Interestingly, the Torah employs a double expression of the word "tochiach" when discussing this mitzvah. Chazal asks why the Torah chooses to use this double expression and what it signifies. Chazal answers that it teaches us that if a person rebukes his neighbor and the neighbor doesn't change and improve his actions, then he is required to rebuke him again and again (even 100 times), until his neighbor finally changes.

Zera Shimshon offers two additional explanations for the Torah's use of the double expression of "tochiach." The first explanation is that teshuva—or repentance—is a gradual process, and people do not typically change their behavior immediately. Thus, the double expression serves to remind individuals that for their rebuke to be effective, it will often require multiple attempts. As such, they should not become frustrated with themselves or with the person being rebuked. The second explanation for the use of the dual expression "tochacha" is that for rebuke to be valid, the person receiving the criticism must appreciate it and it should increase the love and affection between the two. Otherwise, it is considered simply belittling or demeaning speech. Thus, the Torah employs the double expression to convey the message that one should first rebuke and then verify if there is an increase in love between the parties. If there is, one should continue to rebuke until the desired transformation is achieved.

HaRav Shimshon Nachmani—author of Zera Shimshon—lived in Italy, about 300 years ago, in the time of the Or HaChaim HaKodesh. The Chida writes that he was a great mekubal and wrote many sefarim—including sefarim about "practical Kabbalah"—and asked that all of his sefarim be buried after he passes away, except for Zera Shimshon and Niflaos Shimshon on Avos. HaRav Shimshon Nachmani had one child who died in his lifetime (hence the name "Zera Shimshon") and in the preface, he promises for people who learn his sefarim after he dies, "... And your eyes will see children and grandchildren like the offshoots of an olive tree around your tables, wise and understanding, with houses filled with all manner of good things ... and wealth and honor ... "

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What We Can Become



By Binyamin Benji

The Torah states: "You shall be holy, for holy am I, Hashem." Fascinatingly, the midrash says that from the words, "You shall be holy," it could have been thought that Bnei Yisrael could actually reach the lofty level of holiness commensurate to Hashem's holiness; thus, the words, "for holy am I," come to teach that Hashem's holiness is above our holiness. Similarly, the Torah (Devarim 28:13) states, "You shall be only above," and the midrash likewise says that it could have been thought that Bnei Yisrael can reach the supreme level of eminence much like Hashem's; thus, the word "only" comes to place a limit, indicating that Hashem's greatness is above our greatness (Vayikra Rabbah 24:9).

Some ideas and notions are so out of the realm of reality that one would never have thought of them in the first place, even as a mere possibility. This midrash seems to indicate that our potential spans to such a large extent that it could have been thought that we can become as great and holy as Hashem;can such a possibility even be raised and thought of?!

Says Rav Henach Leibowitz, the very fact that it could have been thought that Bnei Yisrael could reach the level of sanctity like Hashem's, shows the enormous, innate strengths and abilities that we indeed possess ("Chiddushei Halev," Vayikra). For—as Rav Chaim Shmulevitz explains—while Chazal knew much more than us of the greatness and holiness of Hashem, they also, perceived of the strengths and abilities of Jews and how great we can become ("Sichot Mussar"). Hence, it could have been thought that we can become even as great and holy as Hashem.

Rav Shmulevitz clarifies that even though the pasuk states "only"—expressing a limitation, yet, that word doesn't come to limit a person's abilities and potential, but rather simply to show Hashem's supremacy over our massive potential and abilities (ibid). Our potential for greatness and holiness is thus, perhaps, unlimited; it's just that Hashem's greatness and holiness will simply always be above ours.

Regarding the enormous potential that we possess, Rav Leibowitz points to a midrash which says that when Hashem created Adam HaRishon, the ministering angels erred with regard to Adam and sought to declare before him, "holy" (for—as Rashi explains—since Adam was created in the image of Hashem, the angels thought that Adam was the Divine Presence). The midrash gives a parable of a king and a prefect who were together in a carriage, and the people of the province through which the king was traveling, wished to declare before the king, "Master," but they did not know which one was he (Bereishit Rabbah 8:10).

How is it possible for angels to make such a mistake to think Adam was Hashem?! Says Rav Leibowitz, it's therefore implicit from this midrash that Adam—before he sinned—was on such a lofty level of holiness to the point that the angels couldn't tell the difference between him and Hashem, and hence, they wanted to declare before him, "holy." Rav Leibowitz clarifies that even after Adam sinned and fell from his original, towering level of greatness,, the Alter of Slabodka says that despite this, we still possess an innate ability to become so great and thus return to that former level of outstanding greatness that Adam was on before he sinned.

The Gemara (Yoma 35) says, a poor person, a wealthy person and a wicked person come to judgment. To the poor person they say, "Why did you not engage in Torah study?" If he says, "I was poor and was preoccupied with my sustenance," they say to him, "Were you any poorer than Hillel?" (Hillel lived in dire poverty, and still engaged in Torah study.) To the wealthy person they say, "Why did you not engage in Torah study?" If he says, "I was wealthy and was preoccupied with my possessions," they say to him, "Were you any wealthier than R' Elazar [ben Charsom]?" (R' Elazar, although fabulously wealthy, still engaged in Torah study.) To the wicked person they say, "Why did you not engage in Torah study?" If he says, "I was handsome and entangled with my yetzer [hara]," we say to him, "Were you any more handsome than Yosef?" The Gemara concludes by saying: "Hillel obligates the poor people, R' Elazar ben Charsom obligates the wealthy people, Yosef obligates the wicked people."

Rav Nosson Wachtfogel asks: How can these three individuals obligate other people? After all, these three were exceptionally righteous people and were on a greater spiritual level than everyone else! Who can even reach their ankles?! Says Rav Wachtfogel, the answer is simple. If we see that these three were able to attain the level of spirituality they reached, this is proof that it's within a person's ability to reach such levels as well (and we perhaps see from here that this holds true despite very difficult challenges one may face).

The pasuk says, "And now, Israel, what does Hashem, your God, ask of you, but merely to fear Hashem, your God." The Gemara (Berachot 33) asks: Is *Yirat Shamayim* (fear of God) a small matter (as the pasuk seems to imply)? The Gemara answers that for Moshe (who was relating this pasuk to Bnei Yisrael) it was indeed a small matter.

The Gemara's answer seems to imply that while Yirat Shamayim was a small matter for Moshe, however, for other people—such as the rest of Bnei Yisrael (who are the audience)—it is a difficult matter. So if this pasuk is being told to Bnei Yisrael for whom it is a difficult matter, why is it being related to them that it's a small matter?

Based on the above, Rav Wachtfogel seems to explain this Gemara in a similar fashion: Moshe Rabbeinu wasn't born as "Moshe Rabbeinu"; he had to toil for many years to reach the greatness he achieved. Thus, Yirat Shamayim wasn't always an easy matter in Moshe's eyes, but only due to years of effort he invested to attain it did he then perceive it as an easy matter. Hence, much like Moshe was able to attain it and it thus eventually became an easy matter, so too—with the proper amount of diligence and effort—it's within our potential and ability as well to reach such a level of Yirat Shamayim like Moshe Rabbeinu, to the point that the attainment of Yirat Shamayim no longer seems difficult, but instead, an easy matter in our eyes ("Noam HaMussar," Tetzaveh).

Our extraordinary abilities and vast potential of what we can achieve and become may not necessarily be so apparent, but it's nevertheless within our makeup. As Rav Leib Bakst seems to say, in truth, when man was created, he was endowed with tremendous abilities; and although after he sinned they are no longer apparent to us, nevertheless, they still exist within us. Even the strengths and abilities which we are able to see and perceive in another person would still be an inadequate assessment of his potential, for that is only revealing of a minimal amount of the depth of potential that resides hidden within that person ("Kol Aryeh," Vayakhel-Pikudei).

And perhaps everyone, even those very distant from Hashem and Torah, carry within them such hidden, yet enormous, abilities and potential to achieve greatness and holiness. The Rambam (Hilchot Teshuva 5:2) says that "Every single person is fit to become a tzaddik like Moshe Rabbeinu." By stating "every single person," Rambam is perhaps teaching us that even the person who is currently far from spirituality and righteousness still maintains this vast potential and is gifted with tremendous strengths and abilities to persevere, rise above the challenges and become so great and holy, ultimately achieving a level of righteousness of even Moshe Rabbeinu.

Binyamin is a graduate of Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yitzchak Elchanan, and Wurzweiler School of Social Work.





Greater Adventure



By Rabbi Dani Staum





A few years ago ago, a good friend invited me and my wife to his home for a meeting he was hosting. He told me that it could be very beneficial for me, and so we joined.

After the program was presented with great excitement and encouragement, a woman addressed the assemblage to relate her personal experience. I must admit that when it comes to these types of programs, I have a hard time following. There were, however, some key phrases she used that resonated with me; quips such as "It's a no brainer" and "Have your money do the work for you."

Even though the program was not for us, I realized that there was great wisdom to be gleaned from the idea of "having your money work for you," as I will now explain.

A few years ago, after spending Pesach in Lakewood at the home of my in-laws, we lingered there for a day or two of Chol HaMoed. My in-law's neighbor and dear friend, Rabbi Eli Oelbaum, invited me and our oldest son Shalom (then 9 years old), to join us at a Chol Hamoed learning program he initiated at a local shul. It was cleverly called "Greater Adventure."

We accepted the invitation and were grateful that we did. We were very moved by the program. There was a packed bais medrash full of young men, some with their fathers and grandfathers, and many with chavrusos, learning with gusto for the better part of an hour. That was followed by brief *divrei chizuk* (words of encouragement) from a distinguished rabbinic personality, which was followed with a daily grand raffle, with numerous exciting prizes raffled off every day. After that first time, we almost always made it our business to be in Lakewood for some part of Chol HaMoed so we could join the program.

In 2016, with the encouragement and guidance of our rebbe, Rabbi Chaim Schabes, as well as the local rabbonim of our community and a few generous donors, we were able to initiate a similar learning program in our community in New Hempstead. It was truly gratifying to see over 50 boys learning Torah on a Chol HaMoed morning with their fathers and grandfathers. (This past Chol Hamoed there were over 100 boys...) More than one father expressed to me the same sentiment that I had conveyed to Rabbi Oelbaum after the first time we attended his program a few years ago: "It was so special! It really transformed our Chol Hamoed!"

A few years later, we branched out and included the Wesley Hills community, with the backing of their rabbonim, in the Chol HaMoed learning program. This learning program has become a beloved and central part of our Chol HaMoed experience. We can begin the irksome, "What do you think we should do today?" a little later. Often, my wife is able to decide the answer to that question before we return home from the learning program.

I thought about what a great zechus the program was, not only for our community, but also for Rabbi Oelbam. The words that woman had uttered regarding that financial program are surely true regarding spiritual matters: "It's a no-brainer!" "Have your mitzvah do the work for you ..."

What a wonderful idea! Just do something great and you never know who will be inspired to follow your lead. And if they inspire someone else, who knows what kind of merits it can generate for you and for so many others.

It's truly a Greater Adventure!

Rabbi Dani Staum, LMSW, is a rebbe in Heichal HaTorah in Teaneck and an experienced therapist who sees clients in private practice as part of the Rockland CBT group. To schedule an appointment call (914) 295-0115 or email stamtorah@gmail.com.

God Has No Interest: Bava Metzia, Daf 75



By Rabbi Dr. Daniel Friedman

Where did the legal system of the Torah come from? Scholars point to other ancient societies whose legal systems appear similar to the Torah. "Gotcha," they exclaim, smugly thinking they've proven the human origins of the Bible. The irony, of course, is that the Torah itself acknowledges contemporary juridical contributions. Why was Moshe's father-in-law Chovav known as Yisro? The name derives from the word יתר, meaning "addition," a nod to the additional parsha he added, the section dealing with our legal system. And it's not just for any random parsha that Yisro merits the naming rights—his name is the title of the portion containing the giving of the Torah!

Let's recap. God has redeemed millions of Israelites from slavery in Egypt. He has crossed them over the Red Sea on dry land and drowned their oppressors. He has granted them victory over the Amalekite warriors, and He has provided sustenance for them in the wilderness. Now they are marching to Sinai, preparing to receive the Torah. Meanwhile, the Midianite priest Yisro has heard about all these miracles and sets out to the Israelite camp.

We are preparing to read about the Revelation at Sinai, but then the Torah digresses to tell us the story about Yisro's redesign of the Jewish legal system. That episode probably didn't even occur prior to the Giving of the Torah. At that point, we hadn't yet received most of the laws, so what could Moshe have been adjudicating? Why then does the Torah insert the story of Yisro immediately before the greatest moment in history?

Today's daf discusses the logical basis for the prohibition of interest-bearing loans.

תניא ר"ש אומר מלוי רבית יותר ממה שמרויחים מפסידים ולא עוד אלא שמשימים משה רבינו חכם ותורתו אמת ואומרין אילו היה יודע משה רבינו שיהיה ריוח בדבר לא היה כותבו

Rabbi Shimon says: Lending with interest we lose more than we gain. Furthermore, we present Moshe Rabbeinu as this wise man and that his Torah is so true, saying: Had Moshe Rabbeinu known the profitability (of interest-based loans), he would not have inscribed it (as a prohibition in the Torah).

When Rabbi Shimon teaches that advocates for interest call Moshe "wise," the commentators read their words as sarcastic criticism of the Torah's prohibition of charging interest. Anyone who has ever taken out a mortgage understands the importance of credit to the economy. If you have to pay for it, that's okay. Every rental has a price, and money should be no different. If I rent a car, it costs me a rental fee. Upon returning it, I give you back the car and a sum of money for the time you allowed me to use it. Likewise, if I borrow money from you, it only makes sense that upon returning the money, I should add a premium to compensate you for the rental period.

Nevertheless, the truth is, such derision is a backhanded recognition of the Divine origin of the Torah. No mortal leader would ever prohibit lending on interest. If a man as wise as Moshe had written the Torah, he would never have included such an unreasonable law. It is illogical to place such an impediment on the health and prosperity of the national economy. The only conceivable conclusion is that Moshe didn't write it. Only God could have composed such an apparently obstructive institution.

Rav Hirsch explains the Torah's insertion of the Yisro narrative in a similar vein. Lest anyone later question the Divine origin of the Torah, we are preempted with a story that paints Moshe as so incompetent that he needs assistance from a Midianite priest to formulate a viable court system. It's a far stretch to suggest that this Moshe

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Scalpers: האנוא

Bava Metzia 50b and 56a

By Raphael Grunfeld

If you sell 34 cent postage stamps for 40 cents, you may get a nasty letter from the Attorney General. You will also have violated a Torah law.

Price gouging is referred to in the Torah as אונאה - ona'ah. "If you sell to your neighbor or buy from your neighbor, you shall not defraud one another." The Torah prohibits the sale or purchase of an item at a price more than, in the case of a sale, and less than, in the case of a purchase, the regulated price or the market price for the item in a given place at a given time.

The remedies available in Halachah to the victim of ona'ah depend on the extent of the ona'ah.

If the price hike was less than one-sixth (16.66%) there is no remedy and the victim must absorb the loss.

If the price hike was exactly 16.66% the aggrieved party has the right to demand the return of the overpayment.

If the price hike was more than 16.66%, the sale is deemed null and void. The aggrieved party is entitled to the return of the full purchase price paid or the return of the item as the case may be. Alternatively, the aggrieved party (but not the offender) has the option to confirm the transaction.

Unlike in the days of the Talmud, today, fixed prices are rare and each store may charge a different price for the same item. Accordingly, except for a few isolated instances of fixed prices, such as the price of stamps, the middle level of ona'ah of exactly 16.66% is largely inapplicable today.

The right to a refund or to the return of the purchase price or the item, as the case may be, is subject to a time limit. This right expires and is deemed to have been waived after the victim allowed sufficient time to elapse before bringing his claim, during which time he could have investigated the true price by checking with other stores or with his friends and family.

Some items are not subject to the laws of ona'ah at all. Included in this category of "ona'ah exempt items" are land and documents, such as promissory notes, which have no intrinsic value but merely attest to the existence of an underlying value. Included also in this category of ona'ah exempt items are items that have no fixed price but whose price is determined by on the spot mutual bargaining such as etrogim on Succot as well as antiques and collectibles. For the same reason, the laws of ona'ah do not apply to auctions.

As with all monetary matters, the parties may stipulate in advance, that as between them in a given transaction, the laws of ona'ah shall not apply. But the stipulation must be specific and the amount of the overcharge must be articulated and mutually agreed to.

All of the above applies to situations in which the buyer and seller themselves are parties to the transaction. If a buyer or seller appoints an agent or if a court appoints a guardian to enter into a transaction on behalf of the principal or minor as the case may be, then the sale may be canceled for any deviation in price, even less than 16.66%. This is because the terms of the agency are breached and the agent has no authority to bind his principal to the unauthorized transaction.

Not only do deceitful transactions hurt people but also deceitful words. Ona'at devarim, hurtful words, cause suffering and are regulated in halacha by their own set of rules.

Raphael Grunfeld received semicha in Yoreh Yoreh from Mesivtha Tifereth Jerusalem of America and in Yadin Yadin from Rav Dovid Feinstein, zt"l. A partner at the Wall Street law firm of Carter Ledyard & Milburn LLP, Raphael Grunfeld is the author of "Ner Eyal: A Guide to Seder Nashim, Nezikin, Kodashim, Taharot and Zerayim" available for purchase at www.amazon.com/dp/057816731X and "Ner Eyal: A Guide to the Laws of Shabbat and Festivals in Seder Moed" available for purchase at www.amazon.com/dp/0615118992. Questions for the author can be sent to rafegrunfeld@gmail.com.

The Daf, the Insults and the Solutions



By Rabbi Aaron I. Reichel, Esq.

One of the classic approaches to our behavior that should guide us at all times is to avoid insulting each other. The Talmud says, *"Kol hamalbin pnai chaveiro b'rabeem k'ilu shofech damim,"* "Anyone who humiliates another in public, it is as though he were spilling blood" (Bava Metziah 58, recent daf yomi studied with synchronicity around the world). The simple reading is that insulting someone in public is tantamount to murder—after a person blushes, the redness leaves his face and pallor comes in its place, sometimes literally resulting, over the years, in death by consequences of depression, descent into dungeons or prisons, duels or outright warfare.

What is not often noted is that the Talmud says that issuers of such insults are among the three categories of sinners who do not rise up from *Gehinnom* (Hell), even though this isn't explicitly categorized as one of the 613 commandments, positive or negative (though it can be indirectly included in at least one of them).

On the very next page (Bava Metziah 59), the Talmud goes so far as to say, citing King David, that "One who engages in [relations] with a married woman (technically before witnesses and with forewarning, which may as a practical matter somewhat limit its application), his death is by strangulation, but he still has a share in the World to Come, but one who humiliates another in public has no share in the World to Come" (although he may not get the death penalty in the world as we know it, even with witnesses and warnings, and although the Rambam says this applies only to habitual humiliators).

The significance of the gravity of the sin of humiliation is further evidenced by the Talmud then saying, in the name of no lesser an authority than Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai, "It is more comfortable (or pleasing, or better) for a person to cast himself into a fiery furnace (although not everyone would exactly find this to be terribly comfortable or pleasing or better—AR) than to humiliate another in public" (to avoid being cast into the furnace) based on the incident of Tamar and Yehuda (Bava Metziah 59).

What is also not often noted is that the comparison of a humiliator to a murderer is one of the only instances where a statement is made in the Talmud, and immediately corroborated without even being disputed! The Talmud says this lesson was recited before Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak, and then Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak commented, "You have spoken well."

How often does this happen in the Talmud? (Rabbis are lucky if their arguments aren't immediately challenged or rebutted; they are not known for complimenting each other in this way! So this adds unusual gravitas to this statement.) The applications to current events may be more plentiful and powerful than ever before. On a simple direct level, there are more insults being thrown around in courts for and against household names than ever before—without our casting judgments, it is quite apparent that people who do cast judgments are insulting the Trumps, the Bidens, the active lawyers and the accusers, and what is particularly intriguing is that the accusations are not one way, but pro and con in virtually each case! The accuser is the accused as well in almost each instance.

But the applications go further. This passage in the Talmud appears in the daf that was studied on Pesach this year, and many commentators point out that when dealing with the Four Sons, the "wicked" one should not necessarily be described as wicked (an obvious form of humiliation), but should be addressed as a person who went astray (or "off the derech") because of disinformation and/or a lack of empathy. More and more contemporary rabbis are following the antidote famously set forth by Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach z"l, at a Yavneh symposium in 1972, and by others at other times: If young people in general, and a son in particular, seem(s) to be alienated from Judaism, the best way to win him/them back is to "love him (them) more."

In a way, the insults this year, this season, and this week, go even deeper, more so than ever before. There have been blood libels in the past, leading to pogroms seemingly from time immemorial, when Jews were accused of not living "up" to the Aryan "culture," leading to the Holocaust, but rarely if ever before have Jews in general (let alone Israelis in particular) been accused by so many people throughout the world—not just on college campuses, where intellectuals should know better—of genocide for fighting a war of self defense, taking more steps than virtually any other army to protect innocent civilians. Instead of "carpet-bombing" cities as was done by both sides in World War II, or nuking cities as was done by the Americans whose successors now seek to impose ceasefires on their Israeli allies, or surprise attacks like what happened on October 7, killing and maiming so many civilians, by contrast the Israeli army gives up the element of surprise—and more—by warning civilians in advance of targeted attacks to seek shelter elsewhere, so that many Gazan civilians (especially recently in Rafah) "complain" about having moved many times, to stay alive (due to the super-humanitarian warnings and other actions of the Israelis) rather than being maimed or killed by staying in the line of fire (when serving as human shields of "fighters" of Hamas).

The humiliating insults on a personal level and on a national and international level cannot possibly be more painful. The antidote is the dissemination of information by finding ways to get the truth to penetrate all too many uninformed and misinformed and closed minds in the halls of academia and in the studios of the media.

The writer, who is as comfortable in the court of public opinion as he is in a court of law, believes that all Jews and other peace-loving individuals should try to do their share in finding ways to disseminate the truth to as many people as possible.



Arthur Ruppin (1876-1943): The Early Zionist Land Purchaser



By Mitchell First

There are many streets named "Ruppin" in Israel. There are also many buildings named after him, such as one at Hebrew University. *Who was he?*

He was born in Germany, but in 1908, became the director of the "Palestine Office" of the Zionist Organization—in charge of the organization's land purchases in Eretz Yisrael in its critical early decades. He is widely recognized as the founding father of Zionist settlement.

In Germany, his family was very poor. At fifteen, his family's poverty forced him to leave school and work in the grain trade for several years. He succeeded there. He was later able to study law, philosophy and economics at the university level in Germany. He was very gifted intellectually. From 1902 to 1907, he worked in the court system. He then became interested in the sociology and demography of the Jews. In 1904, he published a study on this topic. This work based its conclusions on demographic and statistical analysis, instead of the propaganda that had governed previous views of the Jews.

Beginning in the early 1900s, while in Germany, he began to think of himself as a Jew and decided that the Jews needed to reconstitute themselves as a nation elsewhere. As he confided in his diary at this time, there were only two choices: "Zionism or complete assimilation." In 1905, while still in Germany, he joined the Zionist Organization.

1907 was the year of the Eighth Zionist Congress, where a key decision was made. It was decided that it was not enough for the organized Zionist movement to proceed only with "Political Zionism," with international efforts to obtain a charter for the Jews to settle in Eretz Yisrael. To give further background, "Political Zionism" had been the approach of Herzl, who died in 1904. Herzl had rejected the idea of the organization buying land and settling people in the land without a "charter." He characterized such immigration as "infiltration." Of course, there were Jewish individuals buying land in Eretz Yisrael. Our issue is how the Zionist Organization was going to spend its money.

At the Eighth Congress, it was decided that "Practical Zionism" (land purchase and settlement) needed to be undertaken as well and would further the goal of "Political Zionism." The new philosophy was "Synthetic Zionism," with concurrent action on both tracks. The movement realized that this was a good plan because the "practical" settlement would help achieve the "political" results, i.e., you need to show the world positive agricultural work that you have accomplished in order to convince them that you deserve more rights. Moreover, the settlement of your population helps define your future borders.

Accordingly after the Eighth Congress, the Zionist Organization hired the young sociologist Ruppin to go to the land of Israel and investigate the possibilities for development of agriculture and industry there. After his time in the land in 1907, he decided to move there. No matter how successful he had been in Germany, he always felt like an outsider. In Eretz Yisrael, he could create and shape something new.

In 1908, he opened the "Palestine Office" of the Zionist Organization in Jaffa to direct the purchasing of the land and the establishment of the settlements. His work shaped the direction of the various waves of Jewish immigration over the next several decades. A leading scholar on Zionism has written: "No better man could have been selected. For more than three decades, he showed an astonishing measure of foresight, initiative and humanity in all his actions ... Jewish settlement in Palestine owes more to him than to anyone else."

Ruppin chose Jaffa for the office for a variety of reasons. It was closer to the settlements that had already been set up in the northern section of the country. It was also where some of the wealthiest Arab landowners came to enjoy the nightlife, and potentially to make land deals.

As Amy Marcus has written: "When Ruppin needed to check out the site of some land he wanted to buy or drop in on one of the settlements he was supporting, or quietly meet a prospective landowner who he heard might be willing to sell some of his properties to Jews ... it was easier to get a train, hire a horse or secure a berth on a small ship headed to Beirut from Jaffa than from virtually any other city in Palestine," (see Amy Dockser Marcus, "Jerusalem 1913").

Marcus also explained: "Ruppin had made a point almost from the very beginning of staffing the Palestine Office mainly with Jews who were Ottoman citizens and native Arabic speakers ... He firmly believed that ... it was almost always better to send a native Arabic speaker to negotiate on behalf of the Palestine Office. So many of the tensions between Jews and Arabs, Ruppin was convinced, grew out of simple miscommunication ... (Native Arabic speakers) knew how to get along with their neighbors; they were usually able to close a deal, or—if not—to leave matters in a cordial way to be discussed another day."

When Ruppin realized that it would be impossible for him to travel to the far-flung Jewish settlements except by horse, he taught himself how to ride. His long trips on horseback throughout the country helped him learn the terrain.

Ruppin became the chief Zionist land agent. Among his many accomplishments, he helped to get a loan for Ahuzat Bayit (which later became Tel Aviv), and acquired land in Haifa on Mount Carmel, in Afula, in the Jezreel Valley and in Jerusalem.

Ruppin changed the paradigm of settlement to be the collective and cooperative kibbutzim and moshavim that became the backbone of the state. He came up with this idea after a workers' strike at a private settlement. He was not a socialist but this type of structure helped maintain the goodwill of the workers. Ruppin was involved with the planning of the first kibbutz, Degania, as well as helping to organize Kinneret, Merchavia and many other settlements. Later, he worked with Yehoshua Henkin in the purchases of large tracts of land in the Galilee.

Ruppin foresaw earlier than others did that it would be the Arabs—and not the Turks—that would be the main obstacle to the Jewish plans. It was Ruppin's idea to focus Jewish land-buying in areas that were close together—rather than scattered—so that they would be easier to defend. Ruppin was among the founders of the Brit Shalom movement in 1926, which supported a binational state, but he changed his mind after the 1929 Hebron massacre. He headed the Jewish Agency from 1933 to 1935, and helped settle the large numbers of Jewish immigrants from Germany, who began to come at this time and in the years thereafter.

In 1926, Ruppin began to teach at the Hebrew University and, eventually, founded the Department for the Sociology of the Jews. Ruppin died in 1943. He is buried in Degania Alef. Much of his writing survives: e.g., speeches, diaries and letters, giving us clear expressions of his views and their evolution. (Some of his views were controversial.)

Mitchell First can be reached at MFirstAtty@aol.com. Unlike Ruppin, he has not trained himself to ride horses.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

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New Car Purchases and Sefirah



By Rabbi Yair Hoffman/
TheYeshivaWorld.com

Move over Toyota Sienna and Honda Odyssey – the Hyundai Santa Fe is fast becoming the go-to new car in the frum world. This, of course, brings up an interesting question: May a person plan to purchase a new car during the Sefirah period?

The Wording of The Mishna Brurah

The Shulchan Aruch (OC 493:1) tells us that during this period it is our custom not to conduct weddings. The Mishna Brurah explains that one should not partake in matters of great joy. "Nonetheless," he writes, "if it happens that one has the occasion to recite a Shehecheyanu, then he may do so."

This sentence written by the Chofetz Chaim in the early 20th century has developed a surprising amount of halachic literature over the years.

What exactly did he mean by the term "if it happens?"

Rav Karelitz's View

Rav Nissim Karelitz, zt"l (in his Chut HaShani halachic work cited in the Dirshu Mishna Brurah) explains that the Chofetz Chaim means that one should not plan one's happy purchases to occur during this time. For example, an application of this pshat would be – if one wished to purchase a new car, one should not, at the outset, plan to purchase the car during the Sefirah period. If, however, one's previous car has developed problems and a new car purchase is necessary, then, of course, one may make the purchase.

Rav Chaim Kanievsky's View

Rav Chaim Kanievsky, zt"l disagrees. He explains that the language utilized by the Chofetz Chaim here is "lav davka" not precisely worded. He writes that there is no problem at all in reciting Shehecheyanu blessings during the Sefira period. Rabbi Ben Tzion Abba Shaul, zt"l and Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt"l also agreed with this reading of the Mishna Brurah. Thus, during the mourning period of the Sefira, one may recite a Shehecheyanu with no qualms. This period is different from The Three Weeks that occur during the summer where Shehecheyanus should be avoided.

Those Who Disagree With the Mishna Brurah

Not everyone, however, agrees with the Mishna Brurah's permitting the recitation of a Shehecheyanu during the mourning period of Sefirah. The Divrei Malkiel, as well as numerous other Poskim, do write that one should avoid reciting Shehecheyanu blessings during this time. The custom of Klal Yisroel, however, is to be lenient and follow the ruling of the Mishna Brurah.

Shehecheyanu Versus Hatov VeHametiv

There is another issue too. Whenever we make a new and exciting purchase there are two possible brachos that may be recited. At times we recite a "Shehecheyanu," and at times we recite a "Baruch HaTov VeHamaitiv." The Shulchan Aruch (OC 222:1; 175:4 and elsewhere) tells us that "Baruch HaTov VeHamaitiv" is recited when someone else also benefits from the item. A "Shehecheyanu" is recited when only one person benefits from the item.

Thus, if two or more people are benefiting, which is usually the case when purchasing a family car, then a "Baruch haTov VeHameitiv" is recited instead of a "Shehecheyanu."

Would this make a difference to the followers of either Rav Nissim Karelitz or those who have the stringent view?

Two Views on the Nature of the Issur

Perhaps it might. The reason is that the words of the bracha of Shehecheyanu indicate an expression of thanks for having allowed us to reach this "special" time. The problem is that the tragic losses we as a nation have experienced may make this time period not so "special."

Regarding The Three Weeks, the Mogain Avrohom (551:42) explains that the idea of not reciting a Shehecheyanu is because of the wording and not because of the idea of mourning. He writes, "However, the reason is not on account of mourning, for we do not find that a mourner is forbidden in reciting a Shehecheyanu." Presumably, the same logic may apply to the Shehecheyanu here. Thus according to the Mogain Avrohom one may be permitted to plan to purchase a family car even at the outset.

Not everyone agrees with the Mogain Avrohom's contention that it is the Shehecheyanu that is the issue rather than the underlying purchase. The Maamar Mordechai (also discussing The Three Weeks in 551:12), rules that the reason the blessing is not recited is, in fact, because of our mourning and pain. Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l, discusses the purchase of cars during The Three Weeks in his Igros Moshe (OC III #80) and rules in accordance with the aforementioned Mogain Avrohom and no with the Maamar Mordechai.

A Lease

One final thought. Even for those who wish to follow the more stringent view of Rav Nissim Karelitz that the purchase cannot be planned at the outset, one may, however, decide to lease a car. After a lease, one does not end up owning the car and therefore there would be no Shehecheyanu recited. The very low interest rates that are available now for new car purchases are currently a deterrent to the idea of leasing.

So whom do we follow? What is the bottom line halacha? It would seem that the majority of Poskim understand the Chofetz Chaim's words as permitting the purchase of a Shehecheyanu during this time and even permit the planning of making such a purchase during this time as well.

The author can be reached at yairhoffman2@gmail.com





Soldiers With and Without Uniforms



By Tzvi Goldstein

Newsies

In the previous two articles, we presented the sources for the perspective of the Jewish people as Hashem's army, and highlighted three takeaways from that perspective. To get a powerful, poignant sense of what such an approach should feel like, let's turn to the Broadway musical "Newsies."

"Newsies" describes the plight of a ragtag group of street kids, selling newspapers on the streets of New York in the 1890s. Barely eking out a living, they are outraged to discover one day that the owner of the paper they sell has raised the cost per paper, making it almost impossible for the "newsies"—as they're called—to make ends meet. To fight back, they form an impromptu union and call for a strike; they won't distribute the papers at this new price, hopefully forcing the owner to back down. Unfortunately, most of the newsies can't honor the strike; they need the money—even with the higher costs—and show up to distribute the papers in defiance of the strike. Arranged outside the distribution center, the handful of striking newsies begin to sing:

"Behold the brave battalion/that stands side by side;

Too few in number/and too proud to hide;

Then say to the others/who did not follow through;

You're still our brothers/and we will fight for you."

They conceived of themselves as a battalion in an army, fighting for their rights. Movingly, they called out to those who should have been standing with them, but weren't: "You're still our brothers, and we will fight for you." They recognized that not only were they standing up for themselves, they were standing up for all the newsies in the city—whether or not the others had the courage and bravery to join them in their fight.

That is exactly the attitude we are looking to cultivate: A great battalion, proud to be part of the *tzivos Hashem*—God's army. Each soldier would recognize that he lives not for himself, but for the battalion; his goals are not his to decide, but are determined by the commander-in-chief. Each member of the battalion would know their place; each would recognize the necessity and importance of his own contributions, along with the importance of his fellow soldiers. And each would receive specific missions to spearhead and accomplish—something concrete and manageable, not insurmountably large and undefined.

Responding to October 7

Does this sound far fetched or unrealistic? I can understand why. *Who thinks of himself as a soldier?* However, we just got an unbelievable example of what this approach can look like in real life. Klal Yisrael's response to the Simchas Torah massacre is an all-too-real demonstration of what can happen when we are moved to rise to the challenge at hand. Everyone—not only our heroic soldiers, but also civilians who have never touched a gun and entire communities overseas—found some way to contribute to the war effort—and the result was nothing short of breathtaking. A consistent theme I noticed was that as hard as so many people were working, they didn't view it as a drain or something they felt "forced" into doing; instead, people felt energized and appreciative of the opportunity (literally using that language!) to contribute in some way.

Can we be motivated to contribute in such a way when we're not faced with a brutal enemy that wants all of us dead? Can we see ourselves as soldiers when not fighting a literal war?

Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness

Adopting such a perspective is no simple task; it relates to the most fundamental way a person sees his life and resources. Naturally, we see ourselves as the captains of our own ships; the essential question we ask when making decisions is how something will benefit us. In the words of the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed ... "

Every individual is entitled to liberty—the freedom to do as he pleases. Government—the rule of law—is meant to protect that right, not impinge on it. The imagery of the battalion—of the "tzivos Hashem"—argues that this is not the way we—the Jewish people—soldiers in God's army, are meant to approach life. Instead, everything we do is meant to be oriented toward the service of our Master, to further His project of creating a world that reflects His value system.

Of course, Hashem is no despot. He gives us total independence, refusing to force us to comply with His directives. Nonetheless, the fundamental point stands: we are meant to see our lives not through the lens of liberty, but of service.

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Awaken Yourself



By Rabbi Paul Bloom

Each Friday evening, as part of our sacred tradition, we chant the verses of "לְכָה דוֹדִי." Within these timeless words, one stanza resounds with profound relevance in today's landscape, defined by the alarming surge of global antisemitism:

הִתְעוֹרְרִי הִתְעוֹרְרִי

Awaken yourselves! Awaken yourselves!

כִּי בָא אוֹרֵךְ קוּמִי אוֹרִי

For your light has come! Get up, my light!

עוּרִי עוּרִי שִׁיר דַּבֵּרִי

Wake up! Wake up! A song, speak out!

כְּבוֹד ה' עָלַיִךְ נִגְלָה

The glory of Hashem upon you is revealed!

Traditionally, these verses have been interpreted as a call for Jerusalem to awaken from the slumber of exile and reclaim its brilliance as the center of the world. Yet, there exists another poignant interpretation directed at Jews in the Diaspora. It implores us to awaken to the profound miracles Hashem has bestowed upon our people over the past 76 years. These miracles, whether concealed or overt, bear witness to His enduring presence and protection. Consider, for instance, the recent Iranian assault on Eretz Yisrael, where a miraculous shield of protection enveloped our land, thwarting the majority of incoming threats.

However, amidst these wonders, we must wake up and confront the disquieting surge of antisemitism sweeping the globe, particularly in the United States. In 2023 alone, the Anti-Defamation League documented a staggering 8,743 antisemitic incidents, marking a distressing 140% increase over the previous year and an 875% surge from a decade ago. This wave of hatred targets Jewish communities across various spheres, from college campuses to businesses to our own neighborhoods, with over 400 attacks on Jewish-owned establishments.

Many dismiss this rise in antisemitism as a passing phase, hoping for a return to normalcy post-conflict or post-election. Yet, such optimism is misplaced. Regardless of electoral outcomes, the threat persists, fueled by entrenched prejudices and political scapegoating. Under any administration, Jews find themselves ensnared in a perilous web of blame and hostility.

Antisemitism, an ancient malaise, has resurged with virulent force, exacerbated by geopolitical tensions and ideological rifts. Its resurgence signals a profound societal malaise, one that imperils the safety and well-being of Jewish communities worldwide. In the face of this escalating threat, we are reminded of our collective destiny as a people and have witnessed an increase in Jewish unity.

Biblical and rabbinic teachings underscore the imperative of Jewish unity as a prerequisite for redemption. Just as Yaakov exhorted his sons to assemble before revealing their fate (Genesis 49:1), so too must we unite as one nation, heeding the call of our sages to stand as a single, indivisible entity.

As we navigate this tumultuous terrain, we must also reckon with the decline of the American Jewish community. Once a beacon of prosperity and opportunity, it now grapples with dwindling numbers and waning influence. In 1950, the American Jewish population stood at 6 million; today, it hovers around 4 million, while it should naturally have grown to around 50 million. The prophetic words of the Neviim echo through the ages, foretelling the dissolution of Diaspora communities and the search for refuge elsewhere.

Yet, there exists a refuge in a Jewish homeland, where opportunities abound. As written in Yechezkel 37:17, "And join them one to the other and they shall become united in your hand." Indeed, Hashem orchestrates the intricate tapestry of Jewish history, offering clues to our collective destiny. As galut draws to a close, we are faced with a pivotal choice: to passively witness the fading embers of our legacy in the Diaspora or to ignite the flames of renewal and resilience in Israel.

The responsibility rests with each of us to heed the wake-up call, to safeguard our heritage for future generations, and to embrace the dawn of a new era with courage and conviction. As articulated in the closing verse of last week's parsha, Acharei Mos:

וְנָטַעְתִּים עַל־אַדְמָתָם וְלֹא יִנָּתְשׁוּ עוֹד מֵעַל אַדְמָתָם אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לָהֶם אָמַר ה' אֱלֹקיךָ׃

"And I will plant them upon their soil, nevermore to be uprooted from the soil I have given them," said the eternal your God (Amos 9:15)."

Rabbi Paul Bloom lives in Jerusalem with his wife, Ettie. Paul is a retired IBM Research executive and is currently CEO of PDB Futurecom, helping Israeli startups connect with American partners and investors. He is also on the Board of Directors of the NY Israel Chamber of Commerce.

Maimonides on Sacrifices



By Norbert Strauss

Readers of The Jewish Link might recall that in 2019 I wrote a two-part article entitled "When Moshiach Comes." The article discusses what the situation will be when Moshiach comes, regarding bringing sacrifices in a rebuilt Beit Hamikdash. Setting aside all the political problems, I commented only on logistics and the physical condition of the present State of Israel. I specifically took only a small part of the sacrifices that would be brought throughout the year—namely the availability of bulls and whether, if they would be available, how, logistically they could be brought into and through Jerusalem. After presenting the facts I concluded that it would not be possible for many reasons.

As we all know Israel is an industrial society now, and not anymore an agricultural society as at the time of the first and second Beit Hamikdash. The size of Bnei Yisrael then was a fraction of what it is now. Without going into detail at this point, everyone can visualize, if he/she is familiar with the workings of bringing sacrifices, that it would not be possible. I concluded in my article that when Moshiach comes, God will show us what to do.

That brings me to today's subject. Setting aside the logistics, would God even want to reestablish the sacrifices whenever the time comes?

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, zt"l, in the third essay to Parshat Vayikra in his "Covenant and Conversation" remarks that Maimonides (1135-1204) already wrote on this subject at the time.

Maimonides, after having written numerous other books, addressed himself to a young man by the name of Joseph ben Judah, in his philosophical masterwork "The Guide of the Perplexed." Joseph had applied to Maimonides to study with him, and he had been accepted.

Maimonides stated (in the introduction to the book) that the need for sacrifices existed then because of the "superstitious beliefs and observances" that were in existence at the time in all the countries that the Jews had been in, and still were in contact with. Maimonides called these pagans "Sabians." He stated that the Jews, after knowing no other customs, needed time and guidance to make changes to the service of God. He felt that, in accordance with the nature of man, the Jews could not, and would not, suddenly serve the one God after having been subjected to slavery and experiencing the type of worship they had seen in Egypt.

Consequently, God had given Moses the Torah, which prescribed rituals and sacrifices for the Jews, similar to what they had seen in Egypt, but now directed to Hashem instead of the multitudes of gods that the Sabians served. All this could not happen from one day to the next. God directed the Jews to wander in the desert for 40 years until they could accept the idea of one God, with the sacrifices leading the way to the belief of one God. Hashem does not need the sacrifices these former slaves had seen in Egypt, but ordered them so the Jews could learn, over time, that the service is not to the multitudes but to the one God.

Maimonides further states that the cessation of sacrifices at the time would have been unacceptable to the Jews, just as the cessation of prayer would be unacceptable now.

When Moshiach comes there will be no need for sacrifices since the Sabian influences have been completely eradicated, and the belief in the one God has been firmly established. At this time prayers have taken the place of sacrifices and God will eventually, through Moshiach, may he come soonest, tell us whether the Beit Hamikdash should be rebuilt, or something else will take its place.

On this subject the following question is raised by both Maimonides as well as Rabbi Joseph Albo in his treatise "Sefer Ha Ikkarim." (Albo, a Spanish rabbi, lived in Daroga in the 15th century. This sefer might be of the last philosophical and theological classics of medieval Judaism, as stated by Isaac Husic in 1929. Husic was the editor and translator of the sefer).

How can we state that there will be no sacrifices when Moshiach comes, when it is stated specifically that one cannot make any changes in the Torah nor subtract from it? The meaning of that prohibition is discussed by Albo (Chapter 14, Page 296), who gives numerous examples of changes made by Hashem. For example, Adam was not permitted to eat the flesh of an animal whereas Noah was permitted to do so. The conclusion is that the divine law did change depending on the time. This was the situation during the times of Adam, Noah and Abraham, until Moses. After Moses no change has come about until this day. The prohibition, therefore, refers to human beings. But what is to stop Hashem, who wrote the Torah, from making changes to His work in the future, when Moshiach comes?

Rabbi Dr. J.H. Herz, chief rabbi of the British Empire, also comments (Vayikra XVII-7) that the main purpose of the sacrifices was to gradually get Israel to discontinue the primitive practices over a period of time.

Also Rabbi Mordechai Willig, rosh yeshiva, RIETS, in a footnote to his article "All the Days of your Life" in the latest Torah To-Go issue, remarks that in the Sefer Ha Ikkarim, Joseph Albo questions the statement by the Rambam that the Torah is unchangeable, giving as proof the change of the months.

What can take the place of sacrifices? In my humble opinion, instead of bringing animal sacrifices, tzedakah can take its place. Tzedakah to eradicate poverty, or at least to reduce it, could be an alternative. Poverty has always existed, and I think will always exist—the Torah makes provision for it—but it can be, and should be, reduced as far as possible.

Norbert Strauss is a Teaneck resident and Englewood Hospital volunteer. In the early days of The Jewish Link he wrote a regular column that was loved by all. He frequently speaks to groups to relay his family's escape from Nazi Germany in 1941.

Foreign Rituals at Military Ceremonies



By Rabbi Dr. Shlomo Brody

Anyone who has attended the funeral of an Israeli soldier immediately notices how the IDF adopts many practices used in military funerals around the world, such as laying wreaths on the grave and the three-volley salute by a rifle party. Similarly, state ceremonies can include moments of silence, memorial sirens and the lowering of flags. While these rituals may evoke strong emotions, they also raise important halachic questions regarding the propriety of adopting non-Jewish rituals.

After condemning the unethical practices of ancient Egyptians and Canaanites, the Torah demands, "You shall not walk in their ways," (Vayikra 18:3). Commentators have interpreted this exhortation—colloquially known as "chukat hagoyim"—in various manners. Some suggest that the verse particularly targets the sexual debauchery exhibited in those ancient societies or provides additional prohibitions against ancient practices of sorcery.

The dominant strand of commentators contends that these verses proscribe imitating the behaviors of foreign cultures, including not only rituals, but also seemingly innocuous mannerisms like dress and hairstyle (Sifra Acharei Mot 9:9). Some asserted that the rationale was for Jews to bear a unique external appearance to signify their distinct worldview from idol worshippers. Most applied it more broadly to all non-Jewish cultures—including those of monotheists—with the intent of preventing acculturation and unwanted influences (Chinuch 262). Dispensations, however, were issued to "court Jews" whose frequent interaction with government authorities required them to follow general etiquette and decorum (Yoreh Deah 178:2).

Yet the Talmud permits the honorific burning of beds and artifacts of kings after their demise, despite its similarity to idolatrous practices (Avodah Zara 11a). This, seemingly, indicates that Jews of antiquity shared memorial practices with their neighbors. The Talmud elsewhere indicates that there was a biblical precedent for these honorific pyrrhic rites (Sanhedrin 52b). On this basis, the Vilna Gaon asserted that all gentile customs remain prohibited unless they have Jewish origins or could have reasonably emerged without non-Jewish influence (Gra, Yoreh Deah 178:7). Others more liberally asserted that only rituals with idolatrous associations, or rituals which are non-idolatrous but nonetheless foolish or haughty, were prohibited (Tosafot Avodah Zara 11a).

Rabbi Moshe Isserles established the normative position to only proscribe foreign rituals which are idolatrous in nature, or alternatively, those with no apparent reason (Yoreh Deah 178:1). The latter customs are prohibited because we suspect they have (forgotten) idolatrous origins, or that the otherwise senseless act is being adopted for the sake of acculturation or immodest desires. Yet any reasonable, non-idolatrous custom—ranging from honorific rites to professional uniforms like medical gowns—remains permissible when adopted for pragmatic benefits, and not just to mimic others (Bach, Yoreh Deah 178).

By its nature, the contemporary application of this law remains difficult, since motivations are difficult to gauge and societal norms remain subjective to time and place. Moreover—as Rav Asher Weiss has noted—some poskim have applied the strict position of the Vilna Gaon in various cases where they fear that the practice indicates bad influence or will impart a harmful message. Yet the mainstream position of the Rama permits any non-idolatrous rituals which are being done for a reasonable goal.

On this basis, a small group of religious Jews refuse to stand silently during the memorial sirens on Israel Memorial Day. This causes much animosity because it breaks the feeling of unity intended to be created by everyone standing silently together to remember the fallen. As Rabbis Yehuda Henkin and Eliezer Melamed contend, this action commemorates the mitzvah of army service. Some recite Tehillim privately during the siren. That's certainly fine, but not necessary—for as Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Kook argued, "Standing silently for the fallen soldiers of Tzahal contains within it the holy mitzvah of remembering the glory of the holy ones." Unfortunately, some people don't recognize army service as a mitzvah. Yet there's no reason that all shouldn't be able to stand quietly in respect of communal sensitivities.

Rabbis Ovadiah Hedaya and Bezalel Zolty (Noam 2) scorned the laying of memorial wreaths at Israeli funerals as an unwanted emulation of non-Jewish rituals. By their acknowledgement, this was only a halachic problem if one sided with the Vilna Gaon. Yet they felt Jews should preserve their own funeral minhagim and not adopt the military culture of others. While not a fan of such wreaths, Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef noted that many rites—including the use of horse-drawn caskets—were historically adopted by Jews because they found them meaningful (Yabia Omer, Yoreh Deah 3:24).

Following Rama's ruling, these practices are permissible. Many Israelis, it seems, find these popular military rituals to be profound expressions of the distinct circumstances of the death. Deaths in uniform require unique funerals. For this reason, the IDF's rabbinate participates in these rites, while also ensuring the inclusion of traditional rituals like the lighting of candles and the recitation of the Kel Malei Rachamim prayer. In this way, Israelis can unite around rites that try to capture the uniqueness of the moment and give proper tribute to the ultimate sacrifice made for the Jewish people.

Rabbi Dr. Shlomo Brody is the executive director of Ematai and the author of "Ethics of Our Fighters: A Jewish View on War and Morality," (Maggid).

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Unstructured Productivity



By Rabbi Dani Rockoff

With Pesach so recently in the rear view mirror, the memories created are still at the top of my mind. As a head of school, father and uncle, a highlight of the holiday for me was the time my family spent sitting around a table or on the floor playing a variety of board or card games. Perhaps those moments seem unremarkable to you. You may even fault me for not highlighting the Pesach seder, the time spent davening or the special foods.

Yet, the time during Pesach spent playing games stands out because those moments—i.e., unstructured time—seem harder to come by these days. It has become more and more rare to have a time to disconnect from devices, structures and routines, and connect with others in a fun, creative and relaxed way.

In his book How to be a High School Superstar, noted author Cal Newport argues that students should create blocks of unstructured time in their weekly schedule to allow for exploration and creativity. The "under scheduled" student thinks about how to use time efficiently and develop focused study habits in an intentional and systematic way, thus freeing up time to nurture talents and interests. These students stand out from their peers as interesting and accomplished, while also being what he calls the "relaxed superstar."

Whether school-age students or career-driven adults, we can all benefit from unstructured time to use towards endeavors that nurture our interests. So many children and adults live in a structured world going from one calendar appointment or class to another, with hardly a moment to breathe in between.

In the first verse of Sefer Vayikra, God calls to Moshe ויקרא אל משה וידבר ה אליו. Rashi comments that God spoke to Moshe but also gave him time to process and ponder in between each section and topic לְתֵת רֶוַח לְמֹשֶׁה לְהִתְבּוֹנֵן בֵּין פָּרָשָׁה לְפָרָשָׁה וּבֵין עִנְיָן לְעִנְיָן. Even Moshe Rabbeinu, who took in God's teachings for 40 days and 40 nights without food or drink, needed breathing room between his classes to let his mind be freed to think openly.

It has become more and more rare to have a time to disconnect from devices, structures and routines

Many of us get nervous when confronted with unstructured moments. Being overscheduled offers comfort and security. We can run from one thing to the next and finish our day or week feeling accomplished because we did what we set out to do. We are so accustomed to a packed schedule that we seek to plug any "open" moments with time fillers rather than embrace the mental quiet and pause.

One time filler, of course, is the ubiquitous smart device. Filling time with device-use is not analogous to unstructured time. There is growing concern that our extra moments are becoming consumed by our computers, smartphones or tablets. We live in a digital age in which we are all attached to these devices in one fashion or another. The concern is especially pointed for the younger generation, who are growing up surrounded by smart devices.

Jonathan Haidt, in his book The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness, argues that access to smartphones and social media from a young age has contributed to a mental health crisis in teens. He, too, advocates for creating unstructured time for young people to explore and interact in environments that are free from devices.

The Jewish Parents Forum of the Tikvah Fund recently held a Jewish Schools & Technology Summit for schools nationwide to share this research and different approaches that parents and educators are taking to create new, healthier norms around the use of technology. Aside from the detrimental effects from the use of social media and other content, being tethered to devices robs us all of the ability to have the unstructured time we need to nurture talent and creativity and connect with others.

Much wisdom and research has been shared by colleagues at the Summit and in subsequent articles in The Jewish Link, and many initiatives are underway at schools to create initiatives to regain control of the unstructured time we all need and cherish. We are already blessed with the beauty of Shabbos and the oasis of time it affords us away from the distractions of technology and overscheduled school and work weeks.

I will just add my plug for the timeless endeavors that I believe will always have a healthy place in human development and growth:

- Read a book! Notwithstanding how much is available digitally, I believe that there will always be a place in this world for books and print. בתי מדרש and libraries are not a thing of the past; they are the refuge of the past, present and future.
- Play a game! Even though I'm not such a "game" person myself, the act of engaging can be so fulfilling.
- Get outdoors! Research and personal experience show that spending time outside and staying active boosts energy and mood. I personally enjoy taking work calls or meetings while walking and am spotted regularly on the paths and streets around my school.

Part of the beauty of Pesach and all our chagim is the opportunity to reset and reconnect with ourselves and others. As we look ahead to the warmer weather and summer breaks, it is the perfect chance to evaluate how we can build in open time, broadening and nourishing our souls, away from the distractions and our over-routinized lives.

Rabbi Dani Rockoff is the head of school at Westchester Day School.

Addicted to Controversy: Modern Wisdom?



By Dovidchai Abramchayev

"I'm just asking questions." This has become the motto of today's "alternative facts" or "controversial takes" pundit. While it is always a noble undertaking to attempt to reach the truth (whatever that truly means), it is another matter altogether to think that truth only exists in what is not agreed upon by society. The pseudo pursuit of truth today is an unbelievably selfish affair. Pundits will espouse extremely controversial "alternate facts" simply because that is what will get them a larger following. Inevitably, these modern fact makers (for lack of a better term) always somehow come to denying the atrocities of the Holocaust. Now, I do not like to look at history in a vacuum—the 20th Century was truly one of the bloodiest in history, but these fact makers for some reason rarely doubt Mao's atrocities. Only when the Jews are involved does there seem to be a need for alternative facts. Perhaps it is the beginning of an attempt to justify the idea that humanity was capable of such torment against its fellow. That is a subject for psychologists and sociologists.

I am interested in a more fundamental and philosophical question—why does seeking alternate facts seem to work? Why do so many people seem addicted to controversy? When thinking about this question, a verse from Amos (8:11) kept popping up in my mind, *"A time is coming—declares the Sovereign God when I will send a famine upon the land: not a hunger for bread or a thirst for water, but for hearing the words of God."* Usually when reading this verse, I imagine one thinks about the Messianic age, a time of pure bliss when only theology and ethics are what people hunger for. This being the case, one would surely expect that Amos would reassure the people that once they seek, they shall find. But this is not the case. The next verse says, *"People shall wander from sea to sea and from north to east to seek the word of God, but they shall not find it."* What does Amos mean to tell us? I believe Amos is conveying a message very apropos for our times. In a generation such as ours which contains much information but little wisdom, people will search for that feeling one gets when information converges with life in such a way that it penetrates the soul—*"the word of God."*

This is what wisdom essentially is—the capacity of using the information one has at hand to better oneself and come closer to God. Of course, if true wisdom penetrates the soul, then a cheap knockoff such as alternate facts can garner a similar feeling. Rather than penetrating the soul, however, alternate facts masquerade as wisdom and penetrate something far more superficial—our tendency to want the world to be as we wish. This tendency is one all of us share. This is why "people shall wander from sea to sea...but they shall not find it." It is extremely difficult to see the world for how it truly is. The picture we have painted of our world is not only guided by experience and observation, but also heavily layered with genetic and environmental markers. The only hope we have of approaching reality is by using wisdom as our guide. Alternate facts may seem like the exit of the informational maze we all share, whose true exit is wisdom. In reality, however, alternative facts are simply another wrong turn, one which makes it all the more difficult to correct course. To seek wisdom, one must "learn from every person" while simultaneously acting as though "one knows nothing." If the overwhelming evidence for a societal truth points to one conclusion, it should take more than an addiction to controversy to sway our opinion to a different one. *I would like to thank my amazing wife for inspiring this article and for her constant support of my work.*

The Power of Remembrance



By Sivan Rahav Meir

Strengthening Others in a Big Way

Eden is the sister of IDF Sergeant Roi Dawy, who fell in battle in Gaza. She made sure that everyone who passes through the entrance of Jerusalem will see this huge billboard with a message from her brother: "Just be strengthened from everything."

Eden shared that when she contacted the Mega Media company to order the billboard, they unexpectedly offered to give her the first two days free of charge. "My hope is to find a way to keep the message up until after Yom Ha'Atzmaut!" she said.

Post-Pesach Inspiration

"My Seder was nothing special and I was irritable and stressed out during the entire holiday. I feel like I missed Pesach."

After reading this message, I was reminded of a quote I once heard:

"Our feelings are not the measure of the value of our mitzvah observance."

Regardless of whether we did or didn't feel anything special at the Seder, we all received a significant spiritual infusion that affected us and the whole world. As long as we ate matzah and maror, drank four cups of wine, and heard the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim, even if we didn't feel the holiness, our ancestors' Pesach experience became part of us and was absorbed into our souls. Within every crumb of matzah and every drop of wine there was a dose of faith and hope and meaning.

And now, as we go back to our everyday routine, let's try to find joy and elevation in the mundane. Most of life is not made up of the dramatic Ne'ilah prayer on Yom Kippur or the Seder night. As Yechezkel Hanavi stated: "Does anyone scorn little things?" He was telling us not to minimize the little things in life. The days that follow a holiday are also holy and full of meaning.

Our Power of Choice

Rabbi Eliezer Silver, a leader of American Jewry in the 1940's, was the president of the Vaad Hatzalah, the committee established during the Holocaust to rescue Jews from Europe and to help the survivors.

A short time after the war ended, Rabbi Silver arrived at one of the Displaced Persons (DP) camps. He organized a prayer service and invited one of the survivors to participate. This man adamantly refused to take part in the prayers, explaining his position by way of the following story:

"In the camps, there was a religious man who had somehow managed to smuggle in a siddur which he gave other prisoners to use. At first, I admired him for his courage and compassion for others, but I soon found out the rest of the story: This man would "lend" people this siddur in exchange for food, thus taking advantage of them in their weakened state. Starving Jews would hand him their last morsel of bread in exchange for a few minutes with his siddur. If this is the way Jewish people act, I will never open a siddur again!"



Rabbi Silver listened to this story, thought about it for a moment, and responded gently: "My dear Jew, I understand how you must be feeling. It is difficult to judge a person in such horrific circumstances, and you are correct that he should not have used his siddur this way. But I have only one question for you: Why do you focus on the man who used his siddur to take food away from starving Jews? Why not focus, instead, on those starving Jews who were willing to give up their last piece of bread for a chance to pray from a siddur? And, now, how can we not continue to do that for which they were willing to sacrifice their lives?"

I don't think it's a coincidence that I heard this story for the first time this year. Because even after we have come face to face with absolute evil, we can still choose what to focus on, how to respond, and how to interpret events.



We can easily point to the mistakes made (on October 7), the horrific slaughter of innocents, oversights and failures yet to be analyzed—all the horrors of that Simchat Torah. Or, instead, we can choose to focus on the triumph of the human spirit, on the will to carry on, on the outpouring of love and caring, and on the incredible faith and strength that have emerged since that day.


Sivan with her grandmother Ada.

Five Guests for Holocaust Remembrance Day

This week in Israel we commemorated Holocaust Remembrance Day. A mere three years after a third of our people were exterminated, the Jewish nation emerged from the ashes of the concentration camps to declare an independent state. Today, our focus must be on revival. We need to learn and teach how to rise from the ashes of Be'eri, Nahal Oz and all the other communities attacked on Simchat Torah. We must heal the hearts of the wounded and the mourners, and together write a new inspiring chapter in our collective history.

I've chosen to honor the memories of certain individuals who have excelled in inspiring hope. Take, for instance, Elie Wiesel, a Holocaust survivor and Nobel laureate who educated millions and became a symbol of Jewish resilience. Wiesel once wrote: "Because I remember, I despair. But because I remember, I am obligated to push despair away."

Viktor Frankl, a Holocaust survivor and psychiatrist, developed his theory not from the comfort of his study but through his harrowing experiences at Auschwitz. In his view, the question is not about what others do to us, but about how we respond and the meaning we attach to our experiences. Even amidst absolute evil, individuals can choose their attitude and act accordingly. We must choose life, goodness and meaningful pursuits.

Regarding the Holocaust, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks often said that we cannot base our identity solely on the designs and actions of external enemies. He begged us to remember that we are ultimately defined by our greatness and the message we impart to the nations—not by our persecution and suffering. The world, he said, is not interested in how forlorn we might be, but waits expectantly to hear our unique voice. In other words, we are not meant to stand out among the nations solely through the horrors of the Holocaust or Simchat Torah, but to be distinguished through the light of Torah that we utilize to illuminate the world. If, in every generation, we represent the enemy of absolute evil, we must strengthen our resolve to attach ourselves to absolute good.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, whose mission was to revitalize the Jewish world after the Holocaust, taught: If Hitler (or Sinwar) wanted to reach every Jew, no matter how distant from his faith, in order to eliminate him, how much more so must *we* reach every Jew, no matter how distant from his faith, in order to embrace and revive him. This is the message that reverberates in the Chabad movement: We will find each and every individual that the Nazis wanted to burn in their crematoria, even if we need to comb the globe, from Kathmandu to Alaska, in order for that soul to kindle Shabbat candles and be renewed in the glow of their life-affirming flames.

Finally, I'd like to honor my grandmother, Ada Rosenstruch, a survivor of Bergen-Belsen. She didn't write books or give lectures; she simply made aliyah to the Land of Israel, building a life for herself and bringing life into the world. It is in her merit that these words have been written.

**Translated by Yehoshua Siskin, Janine Muller Sherr*

Want to read more by Sivan Rahav Meir? Google The Daily Thought or visit sivanrahavmeir.com

Soldiers With and Without Uniforms

CONTINUED FROM P. 83

It is hard to overstate how radical of a shift this is; it literally touches every decision that you make in life. Rather than everything being about your best interests, the question you are meant to ask is, "What does God want me to do at this moment?"[1]

Next week, we'll explore the impact of this identity shift on two levels: the theoretical and practical.

Tzvi Goldstein graduated from Yeshiva University with semichah and a degree in Psychology. After making aliyah, he taught in Yeshivat Hakotel for five years and now edits sefarim for a number of publishers. He recently published a sefer with Mosaica Press called "Halachic Worldviews," exploring Rav Soloveitchik's approach to developing hashkafa from halacha, and writes at tgb613.substack.com. You can reach him at goldsteintzvi@gmail.com.

1 Devarim 10:12. The Rema incorporates this idea into the opening lines of the Shulchan Aruch: "Shivisi Hashem l'negdi tamid—I place Hashem before me at all times." It is also recorded as the sole content of Siman 231: "That all your actions should be for the sake of heaven."



A Curriculum to Combat Antisemitism



By Adina Shoulson

On Oct. 7, 2022, Ye (the artist formerly known as Kanye West) accused the rapper Diddy of being controlled by Jews, followed by a tweet about "going death con 3 on JEWISH PEOPLE." Ye's comments sparked additional antisemitic outbursts by other entertainers and led to widespread concern about the proliferation and acceptance of antisemitism in the public sphere.

This was the context that gave birth to our Innovation Lab project, funded by the Covenant Foundation, a series of new lessons on antisemitism to enhance our 10th grade Jewish history curriculum. The goal of the curriculum was to educate students on the history of antisemitism, to help them understand the origins and contemporary manifestations of antisemitic tropes, and to explore ways that Jews have responded to the challenges of antisemitism. Included in our goals was the desire to explore contemporary antisemitic language and imagery and to bring in members of the community who are on the front lines of combating antisemitism today.

We began this project not a moment too soon. Soon after Oct. 7, 2023, the start of this school year, our students' social media accounts were flooded with images and memes taking aim at Jews and Zionism. What began as a pilot for two 10th-grade sections became mandatory for the whole grade. This initiative has offered the space and structure in our classrooms to discuss pressing questions surrounding antisemitism and to provide some crucial context and knowledge for our students at this fraught time.

Our first step was defining the term "antisemitism." We compiled an assortment of contemporary images, quotes and video clips about Jews. Students explored these examples and identified what, if anything, made them antisemitic. Some were obvious ("it's all about the Benjamins baby"). Some required explanation (an image of a seeing eye dog with Netanyahu's face leading a blind Donald Trump). Others were subject to debate (when Larry David's Swedish lawyer uses Yiddish expressions and displays a shofar on his desk). Some seemed to shift as the year went on ("From the River to the Sea").

Students then drafted their own definition of antisemitism and we examined the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition. The most useful part of this exercise was identifying a series of categories (control, conspiracy, greed, authenticity) that we returned to as we turned to study historical manifestations of antisemitism.

We first examined tropes in our Enlightenment unit, which provided an opportunity to explore 17th- and 18th-century expressions of antisemitism. A central theme of the 10th-grade history course is the emergence and flourishing of liberalism as well as the challenges this ideology continues to face. Beginning with John Locke and other social contract theorists, students learn about the role of government in protecting the natural rights and liberties of individuals.

Enlightenment thinkers believe in equality before the law and value reason over superstition and tradition. Religious tolerance is an outgrowth of these ideas, and indeed, some attest to their acceptance of Jews as equal citizens. Therefore, students were surprised to read Voltaire's assessment of Jews: that they are a barbarous, fanatic and alien people who threaten Western culture. And while Immanuel Kant viewed Christianity as a rational religion, he denied that Judaism is a religion at all because it has no moral foundation. Assessing excerpts of these thinkers against the tropes that we had previously identified enabled students to see that, as Noah Feldman has argued, "antisemitism is actually a shape-shifting, protean, creative force. Antisemitism has managed to reinvent itself multiple times throughout history, each time keeping some of the old tropes around, while simultaneously creating new ones adapted to present circumstances."

As we moved forward chronologically and eastward geographically, we enriched our course through a focus on the Kishinev Pogrom and the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion." In retrospect, it is embarrassing that we hadn't taught these topics previously! But with so much to cover, we had never focused on these topics, except a passing mention of the Protocols in units on Nazi propaganda or Henry Ford.

This new focus on antisemitism shone a spotlight on the pogroms of 1903 and Chaim Nachman Bialik's influential poem "In the City of Slaughter." This poem played a key role in the nascent Zionist movement, and the lesson that Jews moved to the land of Israel because they were unwelcome in Europe, not because they were European colonizers, was particularly important this year. "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" is a clear example of a conspiracy theory, and there is no shortage of contemporary examples for students to consider.

We have been teaching an integrated Jewish and general history course in our 9th- and 10th- grades since SAR High School began, and we believe that the study of Jewish history is essential to forming a robust and proud Jewish identity. The focus of our curriculum has been, and will continue to be, Jewish thriving: Jewish adaptability, Jewish creativity, and Jewish contributions to the broader society. And while we do not embrace a lachrymose conception of Jewish history, it has felt appropriate and necessary to add this new focus on antisemitism. To fight antisemitism, we first have to recognize it. Understanding the historical origins of present day defamation guards our students against falling prey to negative portrayals of Jews and empowers them to correct misinformation.

Our additions this year have helped students to recognize, name and explain many of the antisemitic tropes that they have unfortunately encountered over the past few months. While we wish these lessons were not necessary, they have become indispensable in today's world, and we plan to continue educating students to be informed and resilient Jewish leaders who are prepared to navigate the complexities of the world with confidence and conviction.

Adina Shoulson chairs the SAR High School History Department. Adina received her bachelor's from Columbia University and earned her master's in the NYU Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies.

About Machon Siach:

Machon Siach was established in 2015 with a legacy gift from Marcel Lindenbaum z"l honoring the memory of his wife, Belda Kaufman Lindenbaum, z"l".



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India The Golden Triangle
18-28 Nov



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Financial assistance & job development

201-569-9047 | info@ezrah.org

TEANECK/BERGENFIELD GEMACH
Interest Free Loans

info@tbgemach.com

FOOD INSECURITY



TOMCHEI SHABBOS OF BERGEN COUNTY
Fresh Shabbos food for those in need

info@TomcheiShabbosOfBergenCounty.org



SHEARIT HAPLATE /BERGEN COUNTY KOSHER FOOD PANTRY
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bckosherpantry@gmail.com



BAGEL AND SUSHI SAVING
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REBECCA ROSENTHAL
201-923-7622

DRIVES



BERGEN COUNTY CHANUKAH TOY DRIVE
Distributes toys to community chessed institutions

Joysklar@gmail.com



TEANECK CHILDRENS CLOTHING DRIVE
Annual collection and sale of gently used children's clothing. (Clothing is collected and organized for sale one week each summer).

childrensclothingdrive@gmail.com

MENTAL HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

JEWISH FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES
Mental health therapy for all ages, kosher food pantry, career counseling, emergency financial assistance. Older adult services, kosher meals on wheels, Holocaust survivor services and case management.

201-837-9090 | info@jfcsnnj.org

PROJECT SARAH
Offers support and resources for New Jersey residents impacted by domestic violence and sexual abuse.

973-777-7638 | hereforyou@projectsarah.org

SISTER TO SISTER
A support group that aids single mothers navigate all aspects of life.

MIRIAM LIGHTMAN
917-992-4962

ROCHEL FELD
201-417-2713

HEALTH SERVICES

BIKUR CHOLIM BERGEN COUNTY
Helping families in medical crises with hospital apartments, meals, equipment, rides and facility guidance

Infobergenbc@gmail.com | 201-579-3066

ROFEH CHOLIM CANCER SOCIETY (RCCS)
Aid patients and families inflicted with illness with access to doctors, financial assistance and guidance through every stage of the illness.

718-722-2002 | info@rccscancer.org

SHARSHERET
The Jewish breast cancer and ovarian cancer organization, provides free and confidential genetic and mental health counseling, emotional support, financial assistance and lifesaving education.

201-833-2341

SOCIAL SERVICES

CHABAD SENIOR CIRCLE
Cheer and companionship to the lives of senior citizens in our community.

201-907-0686 | nechamy@chabadhouse.com

THE BAYIT ASSOCIATION
Developing shomer shabbos housing for adults with IDD in the Northern NJ community. Caring for our most precious and beloved community members.

646-228-4506 | info@bayitnj.org

THE FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE
Provides a range of social opportunities for kids with special needs.

www.bcfriendship.com | zeesy@bcfriendship.com

OHEL CHILDREN'S HOME AND FAMILY SERVICES
Services for adults with developmental disabilities.

718-686-3313 | NJservices@ohelfamily.org

YACHAD
Enriching the lives of Jewish individuals with disabilities and their families.

212-613-8229 | yachad@ou.org

CHILDREN SERVICES

ISHINE
An after school program for children whose families have been impacted by illness.

212-465-1300 | alauber@chailifeline.org

MY EXTENDED FAMILY
Weekly club meetings that offer dinner, homework, 1 on 1 mentorship, clinical services, and trips. For young children from single parent homes.

201-907-0686 | RabbiSimon@myef.org

OTHER

ACHI
American Communities Helping Israel (ACHI) is a nonprofit advocacy organization that raises money for the immediate benefit of those impacted by the war in Gaza. ACHI also acts as a counterpunch to the BDS movement by hosting an online market with close to 300 Israel-based vendors.

AREYVUT
Areyvut actively addresses the core Jewish values of chesed, tzedakah and tikkun olam.

201-244-6702 | info@areyvut.org

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RIVKI ROSENTHAL

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Federation works to build a vibrant Jewish community and a bright Jewish future.

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For chesed related needs, interests, initiatives or questions not addressed above, please call/text Ilana Adams at 201-370-5709

Special Wedding Gift For Chayal and Wife

By Seth Huttel

Just over a month ago, Nevut (an amazing organization that supports lone soldiers), posted in their WhatsApp chat (created for welcoming back chayalim at the airport) about a couple coming into JFK who had recently gotten married. They were originally set to be married on Oct. 18 but instead, Avi was fighting, defending klal Yisrael.



Avi and Rena receiving part of their gift.



Reaction to the check amount.

As a Nevut volunteer, I had only been going to Newark to welcome chayalim back, but I was inspired and wanted to be a part of their simcha, so I decided to make the trip and bring my kids to greet this couple at JFK. It was an incredibly special experience. Such sweet and kind people. I really wanted to do something extra special for them. I started collecting money to get them a gift from the klal. In total, 160 people/families who they don't know, from over 40 communities, contributed toward their wedding gifts.



Seth and Rivki Huttel and their kids Moshe, Leora and Shoshi with Avi and Rena.



Seth Huttel and his kids greeting the newlywed couple at JFK airport.

My family and I delivered the wedding gifts to them in the Five Towns on Chol Hamoed. There are really no words that can properly express what my family and I experienced. There was so much love and achdut in the air, something which everyone there will always remember.

The gifts consisted of two matching personalized pillow cases (for leaning at the Seder) that read "Avi and Rena — remember that you always have your brothers and sisters to lean on and that we always have your back!" The second part was a check for $5,785, representing our yearning that the next Jewish year be a better one — a year where we see the ultimate redemption. We wanted this gift to be as personal and meaningful to them as possible and felt that seeing the actual faces and smiles of those behind the gift would be a really sweet and nice added touch. So the last part of their gift was a photobook of pictures of all those who had contributed toward their gift.



Back cover of the photobook gift (from group photo at the airport).

Avi and Rena were so amazed and appreciative of the gifts. However, the real gift goes beyond these physical gifts. The real gift is the lifelong message that they will forever take away from this chesed, which is how much they are cared about, supported and loved by their extended Jewish family and how extraordinarily strong the achdut of the Jewish people is.

Over the last seven months Am Yisrael has been donating essential supplies for klal Yisrael, whether for the IDF or refugees, but this was different. They didn't necessarily "need" the gift. The purpose was to show our achdut, to show them how much we love, support and care about them, to show them how much we appreciate their sacrifice for klal Yisrael.

Seth Huttel lives in Springfield with his wife Rivki and kids Moshe, Leora and Shoshi. Seth has a strong passion and love for chesed and always enjoys finding opportunities to do chesed for others.

Northern NJ Gemachs Listings

This list was compiled in memory of - פרידא דאברא בת ירחמיאל, Phyllis Savetsky, a"h. May her neshama have an aliya.

Baby Gemach - new only sent to Israel
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Hersh
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Baby Gemach- Project Ezrah
Donate/Receive
wwww.ezrah.org/baby-gemach

Bridal Gowns (Bride only)- Passaic
Donate/Borrow
Gowns and accessories
973-777-1180

Bris Pillow & Outfits
Borrow
Rivki Rosenthal
201-923-7622

Centerpiece- Beth Aaron
Borrow
Michele Cooper
201-403-6409

Cleet Gmach
Donate/ Borrow
Merry Greenstein
merry927@gmail.com

Clothing -Project Ezrah
Baby, Kids and Adult
Donate/Receive
Babyclothinggemach@ezrah.org

Clothing- Yad Leah
Donate
Yael Bleicher
973-955-0861
info@yadleah.org

Costume- Purim Time
Donate/Borrow
Rivki Rosenthal & Sarah Savetsky
201-923-7622

Earphone for Simcha
Borrow
http://musicalears.org

Furniture
furnituregemach@flchabad.com

Gluten Free- Pesach time
Donate/Borrow
Miriam Rosenfeld
646-241-9439

Loan Gmach
Borrow
Jackie Feigenbaum
info@tbgemach.com

Medical Equipment- Bikur Cholim
Donate/Borrow
Chaya Adler
201-579-3066

Medical Equipment
Donate/Borrow
Ronnie Schwartz
917-532-6922

Wheelchair Ramp Gemach
In memory of Julian Smith, Yehuda Ben Yisroel
Donate/Borrow
Sonya Solomon
917-748-5795

Propane Heaters- outdoor
Borrow
Ari Wartelsky
917-841-4115

Sheitel
Donate
Devorah Kirschner
201-290-8081

Sheitel
Donate
Sari Willig
917-562-3534

Snow Pants and Snow Boots - Kids and Teens
Donate/Borrow
Ilana Barry
ilana.barry@gmail.com

Something Borrowed - Teaneck Gown Gemach
Bride/Mother, sibling of the bride, bat mitzvah, long and short
Donate/Borrow
Aviva
201-522-7719
somethingborrowedTGG@gmail.com

Sophie's Costume Corner - The Fair Lawn Costume Gemach
In memory of Sophie Spangenthal
Donate/Borrow
simifleischer@gmail.com
845-548-1319

Still Got Tags Clothes- kid's clothing, new up to size 8
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Miriam Shteingart
201-835-7092

Tablecloth Project Yechi
Borrow
www.projectyechi.org

Tables, Chairs, Coatracks
Borrow
www.teanecksimchagemach.com

Tehillim Cards for Chupah
Raizel Littwin
201-362-1902

Wedding Gifts NEW- Down the Aisle
Donate
Meredith Yager- Bergenfield
201-321-4301
Carrie Cooper- Teaneck
917-836-5469
candscooper@gmail.com

Wedding/Bridal Gowns- Fairlawn
Donate/Borrow
201-797-1770

Wedding Shtick
Donate/Borrow
Wendy Shindler
845-538-3249

Wedding Shtick
Borrow
Rachel Carus
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Wedding Shtick
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201-328-4348

To correct a listing or add a new one, please text or call Rivki Rosenthal at 201-923-7622.

Bergenfield's Gluten Free Gemach Repurposes 5,000 Items in 11th Season

By Elizabeth Kratz


(l-r): Miriam, Eli, Moshe, Avi, Jeffrey and Yitzchak Rosenfeld.

Bergenfield's Gluten Free Gemach, a limited-time gemach that only operates the week immediately following Pesach, recently completed its largest and most busy season. Because traditional wheat leavening products are not used for Pesach food production, many Pesach items happen to also be gluten free, including many items made with almond flour or potato starch as primary ingredients.

During Chol Hamoed, Miriam Rosenfeld announced that her family would once again be hosting the gemach in their home, inviting those with unused, sealed gluten free items to drop them off following the chag. While no one in the Rosenfeld household needs to adhere to a gluten free diet, the family has managed several food allergies over the years and understands the challenges that a gluten free diet can present.

What she was particularly moved by this year was receiving a large donation of beautiful boxed cakes and cookies from Cedar Market, which filled three shopping carts and several large boxes. Many individuals from the community also donated their sealed products, including almond flour, snacks, cereal and grocery items like ketchup and oils. In all, more than 5,000 items were donated.

Rosenfeld, who hosts the gemach along with her husband Jeffrey and their sons Yitzchak, Moshe, Eli and Avi, said she was particularly grateful for Cedar Market's donation and also for the community members who lent dozens of shelves with which to display the products, noting that tables



alone this year were not sufficient to display the sheer number of items received.

She also added that she was buoyed to hear that ten or more other communities now also do gluten free gemachs following Pesach, and was happy to continue the gemach this year as well.

The Bergenfield Gluten Free Gemach is a completely free project, though the Rosenfelds make a few pushkas available in case anyone wants to make a donation, and they said that any monies received would be sent to Tomchei Shabbos of Bergen County. She shared that this year any leftover sealed food items would be sent to local food pantries.

TRANSFORMATIVE DAF

God Has No Interest

CONTINUED FROM P. 78

could create an extensive and intricate legal code that he subsequently wouldn't be able to organize and oversee in an efficient judicial process! The story of Yisro proves that God wrote the Torah.

Why then did God include such a challenging prohibition that appears so "unwise" for societal economic prosperity? The answer lies in Rabbi Shimon's introduction: Lending with interest we lose more than we gain. How do we lose more than we gain by charging interest?

When you take out a mortgage to buy a house, it may feel gratifying to finally own your own piece of property. However, with every interest payment you make, someone is getting richer off the back of your hard work. If you could pay just the principal, you could use that money to buy other material goods. Instead, the financier gets to use your money to purchase his heart's desires. That interest-bearing mortgage has created greater wealth inequality in society, which ultimately leads to social unrest, and sometimes even societal collapse.

How about if you take a business loan and purchase a rental property? You're not losing anything because your renter is paying your mortgage, covering the principal and interest. That sounds like a sweet deal, and you have no issue whatsoever with paying the interest premium. You're happy to because it's making you money! But here's the thing: while you might not be paying to enrich the financier and pay for his extravagances, your tenant is paying. Once again, the interest-bearing loan has led to a widening of overall societal inequality.

Money doesn't grow on trees. If a lender is making money from interest charges, someone is paying for it. In the latter case, you have a tenant who is working hard to have money to pay the landlord who then passes it on to the wealthy individual who provided the loan and now has even more money in the bank. Put differently, the construction magnate pays wages to the construction worker who ultimately gives him the money back. Meanwhile the magnate has crafted a building for free! Obviously, that's an oversimplification, but it's essentially how interest payments work. The increased wealth is extracted by the upper strata from the lower strata of society.

Now, to achieve the capitalist ideal of the tide rising for all, we need a resource outside our society from which to extract wealth. A typical reserve may be foreign labor markets or migrant workers. When we invite non-citizens into our country to perform menial labor, it tends to be a win-win for all parties. We extract the wealth, allowing our general tide to rise. They enjoy better wages than they did in their home country. And oftentimes, not only do they generate a surplus above their subsistence needs to increase the wealth of their hosts, but they also have surplus funds to send back home, called remittances.

The Torah's system of interest-free lending should now make more sense. Lending with interest we lose more than we gain is true if we are lending to one another with interest because it leads to societal inequality. However, if we lend interest-free to our fellow citizens, we offer them opportunities to increase their wealth and reduce societal inequality. They may use the money to extract wealth from non-citizen workers, hence the Torah's exception for gentile residents of Israel, who were generally happy to pay the interest charges because they still prospered overall relative to their lives elsewhere.

Every political leader who has ever governed any country at any point in history has engaged in extractive economic activity, getting richer off the backs of their citizenry. That's why no mortal leader would ever have included a prohibition against charging interest to one's fellow citizens. Only God can command a law that is truly beneficial for society. Because He has no personal interest. May you forever grow in your appreciation of the true wisdom of the Torah!

Daniel Friedman is the author of The Transformative Daf book series. He teaches at Touro University's Lander Colleges and his Center for Torah Values combats Christian anti-Zionism.

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New York State Budget Passes, Finally

By Marc Gronich

The New York state budget is a document totaling tens of thousands of pages. amassing 10 pieces of legislation, each with its unique topic about New York's finances and spending.

When Governor Kathy Hochul proposed her version of the budget in mid-January, it totaled $233 billion, a 2.4% increase over the previous year. This year's budget was not affordable for state lawmakers to bring back dollars to their districts. New York's budget is larger than the spending of most countries. Yet, state lawmakers still increased Hochul's spending plan by $4 billion, bringing the total to $237 billion, more than a whopping 4.5% increase over last year's budget.

Hochul touted the state budget this year for having no income tax increase and being balanced, meaning there is no deficit, although there is a significant unknown debt the state is financing and paying interest for. This year's budget also squirrels away a mere $24 billion if needed for a rainy day. The budget was nearly three weeks late. Some advocates for a late budget maintain it is better to have a balanced budget than an on-time budget.



New York Governor Kathy Hochul

"In my State of the State, I promised New Yorkers we'd fight to build more housing, improve education and protect public safety—and that's exactly what our budget is going to do," Hochul said in a prepared statement moments after the budget was passed. "This budget agreement represents the most significant improvement in housing policy in three generations. It includes transformative investments in health care and education that will put our state on the path to fiscal stability. It will end co-pays for insulin, establish first-in-the-nation paid prenatal leave and launch the EmpireAI [artificial intelligence] consortium. This budget cracks down on retail theft and gives us new tools to shut down illicit cannabis storefronts. It helps the children of New York City by extending mayoral accountability for public schools [for four years]. And we got it all done without raising income taxes by a single cent."



Senator Shelley Mayer (D-Yonkers, Westchester County), chairwoman of the Senate Education Committee

Many critics of the budget charge the Legislature passed a budget filled with extreme policies that will make our state more expensive and less safe. After much haggling over a housing plan and other ancillary issues, the budget passed on Saturday, April 20, which meant at least five members who strictly observe the Sabbath were not entitled to cast their vote for the last of these important measures.

Reaction to the budget from Republicans was fierce.

"In a clear sign that the socialists have taken charge of the Democratic Conferences, this budget includes a radical housing policy that will eliminate the rights of small business landlords to control their private property," said Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt (R-North Tonawanda, Niagara County). "The housing agreement, which includes the radical 'Good Cause' eviction, is a giveaway to the socialist tenant advocates who believe in making it illegal to make money in New York. Even worse, communities outside of New York City will get absolutely nothing out of this deal while absorbing all the negatives that will drive up housing costs and devastate small property owners."

Ortt went on in his prepared statement to chastise the Democrats for not assisting law enforcement to make streets safer and improve the quality of life for New Yorkers.

The budget "fails to do anything to protect the safety of New Yorkers," Ortt said. "Governor Hochul's strategy to tackle retail theft is to establish a task force and throw money at the problem. The real solution is to empower police officers to throw these criminals in jail and give our judicial system the discretion to keep them there. The Democrats' obsession with catering to the needs of criminals is the driving force behind the rise in violence against police, including the tragic deaths of three law enforcement officers in the past month. This chaos will continue until Albany makes it clear that they stand shoulder to shoulder with law enforcement to keep the people of this state safe. New Yorkers have made it clear they believe our state is heading in the wrong direction, and this budget will only turbocharge our decline."

Ortt's counterpart in the Senate had a positive take on the budget.

"We cannot let our state slip back to the days of underfunded schools, business opportunities only for the wealthy few, families kicked to the streets during hard times out of their control, people being forced into the shadows for healthcare and our natural resources being treated as landfill," said Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins (D-Yonkers, Westchester County). "Budgets are not just fiscal documents, it's a reflection of our values."



Assemblyman Michael Tannousis (R-Great Kills, Staten Island) slammed the governor and state lawmakers for certain aspects of the budget.

Hochul suffered some defeats from the budget she proposed for education.



Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins (D-Yonkers, Westchester County)

"[We] successfully fought against the devastating cuts the governor proposed to more than half of the school districts in the state," said Senate Education Committee Chairwoman Shelley Mayer (D-Yonkers). "Under the FY 2024-2025 budget, every district will receive at least as much money as they did last year. We also fought for—and won—a higher inflation factor than the governor proposed, which will result in more school aid flowing to many districts.

"The enacted budget increases school aid by more than half a billion dollars over the governor's proposal. This win is a testament to the parents, teachers, school board members, superintendents and advocates across the state who made their voices heard over the last four months. This budget reflects a necessary investment in the work our schools are doing to support students post-COVID, both for learning loss and mental health needs."

Robbers won't find it so easy now when stealing items from small and large businesses such as grocery stores and bodegas. "It has been clear that New York must take actionable measures to address the ongoing threat of retail theft," Mayer continued. "This budget includes practical measures that give police and prosecutors additional tools to keep New Yorkers safe, including my proposal to allow prosecutors to aggregate individual instances of retail theft where those crimes are part of a single criminal intent. The budget also includes language to protect our retail workers by creating a new crime of assault against a retail worker. Together, these measures represent a thoughtful and responsible approach to deterring retail theft and protecting retail workers."

Mayer, who is Jewish, was pleased with the upgraded charges for hate crimes that was part of the budget. "We also took action against the deeply concerning rise in hate crimes throughout New York state, by expanding the list of offenses categorized as hate crimes, including gang assault, sexual abuse, sex trafficking, falsely reporting an incident, to name a few," she said.

Over in the Assembly, Republicans did not have kind words about the spending plan.

"The state budget has seen numerous failures, including not holding MTA fare evaders accountable for their actions by forgiving their offenses and enrolling them in programs that will allow them not to pay their fares," said Assemblyman Michael Tannousis (R-Great Kills, Staten Island). "Fare evasion costs the MTA approximately $700 million a year. But they [the MTA] are pushing congestion pricing by arguing that it will bring in $1 billion a year, aiming to offset fare evasion costs. Instead of addressing the issue of reclaiming this revenue, the state Legislature's solution is to impose congestion pricing on residents of Staten Island, Brooklyn, the Bronx and Queens, expecting them to bear the burden while others are free to utilize the subway and bus without paying the fare. All this, while the MTA's own environmental impact study clearly shows congestion pricing will lead to an increase in congestion and pollution on Staten Island and the Bronx. The Legislature is not interested in holding individuals accountable for their actions but would rather pass along the cost to the hardworking taxpayers who continue to flee in droves.



Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt (R-North Tonawanda, Niagara County) vehemently opposed the 10-package set of bills that comprises the state budget.

"Moreover, the implementation of Good Cause Eviction laws will make it exceedingly difficult for landlords to remove tenants from their properties and does nothing to protect landlords and their rights," Tannousis continued. "It will cause a mass exodus of property owners away from New York to more property-friendly states. It will lead to a dilapidation of properties around our state as well as a significant decrease in tax revenue. While hurting New York taxpayers, the Legislature has given $2.4 billion to fund the migrants who continue to enter New York, with no end in sight. When it comes to New York State, the working man is a sucker."

Hochul signed the budget bills and is expected to go on tour around the state in the coming weeks touting how various parts of the budget impact the area she is speaking in.

EYE ON TEANECK



The TDMC Needs a Refresh



By Yigal M. Gross

In a recent post on Blue Teaneck, a progressive Facebook Group, commentator Bill Orr posted that a large number of challengers filed petitions to run for seats on the Teaneck Democratic Municipal Committee (TDMC) in this year's June 4 New Jersey Democratic primary, and that "these... TDMC challengers could bring about significant change" and would "threaten" theTDMC.

Mr. Orr is correct that an unprecedented number of challengers are running for the TDMC in this year's primary. But he is entirely wrong to assume that these challengers represent some kind of monolithic block or that their election would "threaten" the TDMC. Quite the contrary.

With a little research beyond who notarized challengers' petitions (guilty!), Mr. Orr would discover a highly qualified and diverse group of candidates who seek to make the TDMC a more inclusive, representative and effective body. I proudly support these challengers. Here is why you should too.

1. The TDMC needs a refresh. Low voter participation (uncontested elections where 5% of eligible voters participate) shows that the TDMC is not engaging with voters and has become irrelevant. Most Teaneck residents have no idea what the TDMC is or does. That needs to change.

2. TDMC incumbents do not represent Teaneck. Many TDMC incumbents have held their seats for years without any real challenge and despite changing community demographics. TDMC representatives should better align with their constituents.

3. Communal healing. The unfortunate divisions that have arisen between Teaneck's subcommunities, and which arose under the TDMC incumbents' watch—indeed, which some (like Mr. Orr) actively contribute to—should trouble everyone. The time has come to replace divisive incumbents with candidates who will work with all residents to heal those divisions.

4. The TDMC should represent voters, not political insiders. The TDMC has become an insider's club that cares more about self-preservation than representing Teaneck. At a recent TDMC meeting which was open to the public, the TDMC's leadership addressed challengers who had joined the meeting as public participants, sought to dissuade them from running for office, and pledged to work hard to reelect the incumbents. The TDMC even went so far as to vote to close their next meeting to the public. Their view—and Mr. Orr's—seems to be that *any* challenge to any TDMC incumbent is wrong. That perspective is outrageous and demonstrates exactly why refreshing the TDMC is so necessary.

a. **Elected office is a privilege, not an entitlement**. Just because someone was elected once does not mean they should be elected again. Elected office belongs to the voters, not the incumbents. Representatives should earn the privilege of representing voters in each election.

b. **Positions are not lifetime appointments**. There is no auto-renewal to elected office. Elections are held every two years for a reason, and voters have a right to seek the best option in each election.

c. **Voters deserve a choice**. A contested election is the hallmark of a healthy democracy, and the only way to ensure elected representatives best represent voters. It is shocking that the TDMC's incumbents would seek to deny Teaneck voters a choice. All of us should trust Teaneck's voters to make the right decisions.

d. **Voters deserve representatives who will put their town first**. Time and again, TDMC incumbents have paid lip service to values only to readily abandon them in the face of self-interest. TDMC incumbents called to open Teaneck advisory board meetings to the public, only to vote to close their own meetings to the public to bar challengers from attending. TDMC incumbents extoll diversity and inclusion, yet reveal their own ugly prejudices when they zero-in on challengers' skin color and religious affiliation. TDMC incumbents decry voter suppression, yet shamelessly bully challengers and attempt to dissuade them from running for office. Teaneck deserves representatives who care more about our town than themselves.

In the coming days, we have an unprecedented opportunity to elect an outstanding group of candidates who will serve all of Teaneck's residents and take the TDMC and our town in a better direction. All of us should thank them for stepping up for Teaneck and support them in this important effort.

Yigal Gross is an attorney living in Teaneck.

Spotlight on Teaneck's Finances

By Michael Cohen

This article represents the first in a series of articles shining a spotlight on Teaneck's finances.

By now, we all know that the Teaneck Township has revalued the town's properties for the 2024 tax year to reflect their market value. Upon first blush, one may understandably assume that their proposed taxes had increased because Teaneck property values have undoubtedly increased. But this assumption was not necessarily correct because the current tax rate has declined to $2.047 (at least for the time being) from $3.302, so that one's property taxes too may have declined.

The tax rate has fallen (again, at least for the time being) because the totality of the taxes on Teaneck's reassessed properties are to remain constant for the duration of the current fiscal year at approximately $142 million. Indeed, 60% of Teaneck residential property owners have seen a decline in their estimated 2024 property taxes. (Full disclosure: This author's proposed property taxes have increased by approximately $100.) To Teaneck's credit, its assessments and reassessments are transparent and can be found on Appraisal System's website in the form of an 11,000-line spreadsheet. By modifying this spreadsheet with a few additional basic formulas and some data sorting, we can glean some interesting observations.

As stated previously, 60% of residential property owners have actually seen a *decline* in their property taxes. At its extreme, one fortunate Teaneck property owner saw a decline of his property taxes exceeding $17,000! Before one begrudges this property owner for his substantial tax windfall, please be mindful that this property owner will still be paying over $100,000 a year in taxes. Interestingly, this property owner is one of four property owners in Teaneck who merit the dubious distinction of paying in excess of $100,000 a year in property taxes. And fortunately for these heavy hitters, all four have seen a decline in their property taxes with their new assessed values. Parenthetically, one may recall that under the Tax Cut and Jobs Act of 2017, taxpayers are limited to a $10,000 SALT (state and local tax) deduction on their personal tax returns, so that under the current tax system, at least $90,000 of their Teaneck real estate taxes are *not* deductible.

On the other side of the spectrum, one Teaneck property owner has the dubious distinction of seeing a surge in his property taxes of over $30,000! And what is the presumptive reason for this surge? It is apparently attributable to the property's status of being newly constructed. On a side note, this property is one of 17 properties in Teaneck that is recognized as being newly constructed in 2023.

Another interesting observation: One Teaneck property in particular has a lot size exceeding 100,000 square feet. To put this property size in perspective, an NFL regulation-size field is "merely" 57,600 square feet, whereas the median lot size of a residential property in Teaneck is a more modest 6,000 square feet. It should come as no surprise that this Teaneck neighbor titan is paying in excess of $100,000 a year in property taxes.

One final point: The Appraisal System's spreadsheet omits from its listing multiple-dwelling properties (think apartment building) and commercial properties (think auto mechanic shop and barber shop). I hope to address these properties in a future article.

In closing, you may have noticed that neither the property owners nor their addresses have been identified in this article. This omission was by design, so as to (hopefully) discourage one from engaging in lashon hara. I urge you to please stay with this refrain.

Michael Cohen, CFE and CPA practices as a consultant in forensic accounting and includes the U.S. Department of Justice as one of his clients. If you have any thoughts on this article or on suggested future articles to shine a spotlight on Teaneck's finances, you may email me at professormichaelcohen@gmail.com.

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Welcome to Our Teacher's Appreciation Link

As parents, it's difficult to say who has the harder job. Is it us, occasional homework buddies who then serve faithfully as members of the audience cheering on our children as they mark precious milestones at the end of the year? Or is it the teachers who go over the same material day after day until the student "gets it," and then go on to do the very same work the next year, each school year toiling to turn a ragtag band of students (most often the same age as the ones before) into self-assured superstars?

We tend to think of ourselves as parenting our children as a team (most often with two parents and maybe a grandparent or two to share the burden as well), but in this community of yeshiva day and high schools, we are reminded very often that our teachers are partnered with us every single step of the way. And that we couldn't do without them.

This week we take a moment to thank these wonderful women and men who step up for our children every day; whose eyes light up when they see their student finally incorporate a concept they've been struggling with for months into a conversation or essay, or solve that equation that has eluded them for what has seemed like forever. We know that, just like in every career, there are sleepless nights and late hours and projects that don't go as planned. But with teachers, there is also an element of urgency because this is the only year they get to reach this cadre of children.

Teachers, whether this is your first, your 17th or your 37th year in the classroom or anywhere in between, we want you to know that you are appreciated and loved. Your tireless work doesn't go unnoticed, and while a Dunkin' Donuts gift card may be nice, it doesn't convey the depths of our thanks. It's not just the students who appreciate you. It's often generations of families who benefit from your hard work. Thank you!

Building the Teacher Pipeline: From Solving a Problem to Incubating Talent



By Yehuda Chanales

(This piece was originally published in HaYedion, the thought leadership magazine of Prizmah: Center for Jewish Day Schools.)

As the incredible work and impact of teachers in our communities took center stage in many schools this week, we are reminded of the critical role these special individuals play in shaping the lives of our children. At the same time, we should be reminded of the growing challenge our community is facing in recruiting young men and women to teach.

Almost three years ago, I was tasked by Yeshiva University to research and develop proposals for how to encourage more students to pursue careers in Jewish education in North American Jewish day schools. When speaking to leaders in the field, I often heard a similar hypothesis about why fewer young men and women were choosing to become teachers. There were two key factors: the rising cost of living in Jewish communities, combined with teacher salaries that have not kept pace; and the generally negative communal attitude towards teachers and the teaching profession.

If indeed these were the two primary factors, I wondered if much could be done to tackle them by simply working with college and graduate students. How could we possibly make a difference without large-scale community-facing initiatives to tackle day school affordability, teachers' salaries, and the way parents, boards and teachers interacted?

Focus groups and individual conversations with young men and women during that research phase pointed in a different direction. Students often wondered how they could "make it work" as Jewish educators, but they also expressed a passion and desire to make a difference. Inspired by their own teachers or personal experiences in informal settings, these students expressed a desire to share their passion for Torah learning with others and pursue careers where they can feel they are living and passing on their values on a regular basis.

Yes, work needs to be done to tackle broader communal issues, the inhibitors that may hold people back from (to borrow language from the 2019 CASJE study), but that did not mean that parallel work could not

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE





Teacher Appreciation

He'Atid







(Courtesy of Yeshivat He'Atid) At Yeshivat He'Atid, our Teacher Appreciation Week initiative is a collaborative effort to honor our exceptional teachers from both the YHPA and administration. Every day, our teachers receive thoughtfully curated surprises tailored just for them. The enthusiasm and support from the school administration and parent community to express gratitude towards our teachers are truly remarkable and cannot be overstated. Thank you, Yeshivat He'Atid teachers!

It's really hard to believe that my time at Yeshivat He'Atid is almost over. My teachers have been so awesome and helpful during my school years. They've always been there for me, guiding me through my learning adventure. I'm definitely going to miss them a lot next year, but I feel super ready for high school thanks to them.

I'll never forget Morah Leiku teaching me in second grade about food allergies and having us create a special allergy-sensitive cookbook. I felt that she really understood how best to teach me as an individual student. Her caring and nurturing presence helped me feel confident in my learning.

Gal Mermelstein
Eighth Grade

My teacher, Moreh Oz, is the funniest teacher ever! He teaches really well, but is so nice and funny. He always helps me when I need help, and sometimes in the middle of class he'll start dancing. He starts singing random songs and it makes everyone in the room crack up! Overall he is the best teacher ever!

Ella Gross
Fifth Grade

I love Morah Meredith and Morah Shira because they take us outside to play. Our classroom has so many fun toys, and they always give us time to play with them.

I love that Morah Meredith brought a globe to our classroom and is teaching us all about Planet Earth. I love that Morah Shira lets the chazan and chazanit daven on the comfy blue chair. Morah Shira and Morah Meredith have so many fun jobs for us to do and we have so many chances to do each one. My favorite job is as an Israeli flag holder. Morah Meredith and Morah Shira are the best teachers! They are smart, funny and they love all the children in the classroom.

Max Wolf
Kindergarten

Building the Teacher Pipeline

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

also be done to increase the stimuli and self-awareness that bring them into the field.

Over the past two years, the work of the Chinuch Incubator at Yeshiva University has reinforced this theory. Established by RIETS (YU's rabbinical school) and the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education, the Chinuch Incubator seeks to identify, inspire, prepare and support young men and women as they consider careers in Jewish education. How do we do this?

Identify and Inspire

In individual conversations with undergraduates, many have pointed to either specific shiurim they attended or personal conversations they had that inspired them to consider a career in teaching. Someone either noticed their talent and encouraged them to explore further, or ideas they heard pushed them to consider the possibility of teaching more seriously. Educators must proactively look for opportunities to unabashedly share with older students what they love about their work and encourage those that demonstrate potential to consider whether it is for them.

Inspire and Prepare

Instead of allowing young men and women to make career decisions based on their personal experience in school or theoretical conversations about teaching, we need to facilitate opportunities for them to teach, observe and experience the energy of schools. Over the past two years, the Chinuch Incubator has done this through the MafTeach program. The program sends college and graduate students to school communities around North America for a series of weekends (with some variations on length) throughout the year. The core component of all programs includes significant time in schools — observing classes, teaching regular or informal classes and meeting with teachers and school leaders. For programs that extended over Shabbat, fellows either join students on a Shabbaton or are hosted in the local community where they run programs or continue interacting with students, teachers or other members of the broader school community.

Fellows walk away from their experiences with a greater appreciation for the profound impact teachers make. They learn of the incredible professionalism, thought and care teachers invest in their lessons and relationships with students. They experience ways in which schools and communities influence each other, and the important challenges and joys that come with working in a field where the boundaries between professional and personal life are often blurred.

Fellows also deepen their own sense of self-awareness, exploring through experience the unique strengths and weaknesses they might bring to a career in teaching. By interacting with teachers of varying personalities and styles, students of different ages, and in different types of schools and communities than they may have grown up in, fellows broadened their sense of how, with whom and where they might succeed.

Support

One of the most gratifying parts of my work with the Chinuch Incubator over the past two years has been my personal or small group conversations with students. Providing those even remotely considering a career in Jewish education with an address to turn to for questions and guidance helps translate theoretical possibilities in their head to something they can take action on.

Countless conversations have begun with, "I think I may want to be a teacher. What do I do now?" By connecting mentorship with a broader view of the pipeline years, I have been able to put a student in touch with particular teachers, recommend MafTeach and other experiences, or simply reflect back what I was hearing from them and give them some questions to consider. We simply can't afford to lose potential teachers with passion, talent and interest because they are receiving clearer guidance in how to pursue internships in finance, computers or medicine and don't know what comes next in education.

Clearing the Path

Till this point, as mentioned earlier, the Chinuch Incubator has focused on helping students develop their understanding of themselves and the field, increasing the "stimuli" that may draw capable students down the path of exploring Jewish education as a career. Tackling day school affordability, teacher salaries and communal perception may feel too large to tackle. At the same time, our work with those considering teaching has uncovered smaller scale inhibitors that get in the way of the inspired, passionate high school senior making it through undergraduate, graduate and/or semicha studies with sustained excitement that has translated to commitment.

When students (and their parents, potential spouses or potential in-laws) know that the field they are considering will present financial challenges, the costs related to professional preparation feel even more daunting. Investing in those most likely to enter the field through finding undergraduate and graduate scholarships or providing living stipends can go a long way to helping talented students feel that if they are willing to make a sacrifice for the community, the community is willing to invest in making it as easy as possible for them to become the best teachers they can be.

We have found that, at least in the YU-affiliated Modern Orthodox community, a significant number of graduates of yeshiva high schools and yeshivot and seminaries in Israel enter their undergraduate years considering careers in Jewish education. We do not need to create interest "yeish m'ayin," where it does not exist. Instead, we need to nurture and support those who demonstrate curiosity and talent.

Investing in increasing these students' connection to, appreciation of and skills in teaching — together with clearing barriers during decision making years — can double or even triple the number of candidates entering the field over the coming years. We should be proud of the idealism, values and sense of mission that our communities are instilling in the next generation and do all that we can to ensure that those willing to translate that passion into a career can succeed in doing the same for the next generation.

Yehuda Chanales is the director of the Chinuch Incubator at Yeshiva University.

Shalshelet Celebrates Teacher Appreciation Week

(Courtesy of Yeshivat Shalshelet) Yeshivat Shalshelet is proud to be the first yeshiva day school for students who have language-based learning differences. At Shalshelet, our teachers, faculty and staff utilize research- and evidence-based practices to tailor-make lessons for teaching reading and writing to our students. They provide them with the confidence and tools to soar academically, social-emotionally and spiritually. At Shalshelet, learning differently makes all the difference.

In honor of Teacher Appreciation Week, we are pleased to share reflections from some of our students and parents about our incredible team:

"I used to get very frustrated, and my teachers helped me realize that if I mess up I can always try again. Shalshelet really changed my life because I'm actually able to put myself farther to becoming my best me."

Shalshelet Fifth Grade Student

"I'm learning in a way so I don't forget it and that is because the teachers know how to teach me. Every single day they have meetings about how to teach us. We all learn in a fun way. There's no 'I'm bored.' It's fun. I want to do more. It's just an amazing feeling."

Shalshelet Fourth Grade Student



"My teachers wait for me. Like let's say we're learning a new rule like a blend and I'm still working—she won't move on and will do it again so I can keep up."

Shalshelet Third Grade Student

"The level of attention and dedication of the faculty is exceptional. They celebrate our child's successes right along with her."

Shalshelet Parent

"Shalshelet truly fosters the emotional and educational well-being of the 'whole child.' It's not just about servicing the child's individual learning disabilities, it's about teaching the child to accept them, embrace them, and conquer them with the love and support of an exceptionally devoted and caring team."

Shalshelet Parent



"We are so beyond grateful for everything that Yeshivat Shalshelet has done for our son and for us. We have seen our already amazing child thriving because of the care and dedication and individualization that his teachers have given him."

Shalshelet Parent

"My daughter is immersed constantly in a way of learning and a way of living that is helping her live and grow not just academically, but as a person."

Shalshelet Parent

"My daughter has blossomed in a way that I didn't expect to happen so quickly. She understands that she just needs to learn differently, and once she realized that the people who are teaching her are teaching her differently, she has been drinking it up."

Shalshelet Parent

Thank you, Shalshelet teachers, faculty and staff, for all you do every day to ensure our students reach their potential!



RPRY

To our wonderful teachers:

Thank you for Inspiring the next generation of Am Yisrael!

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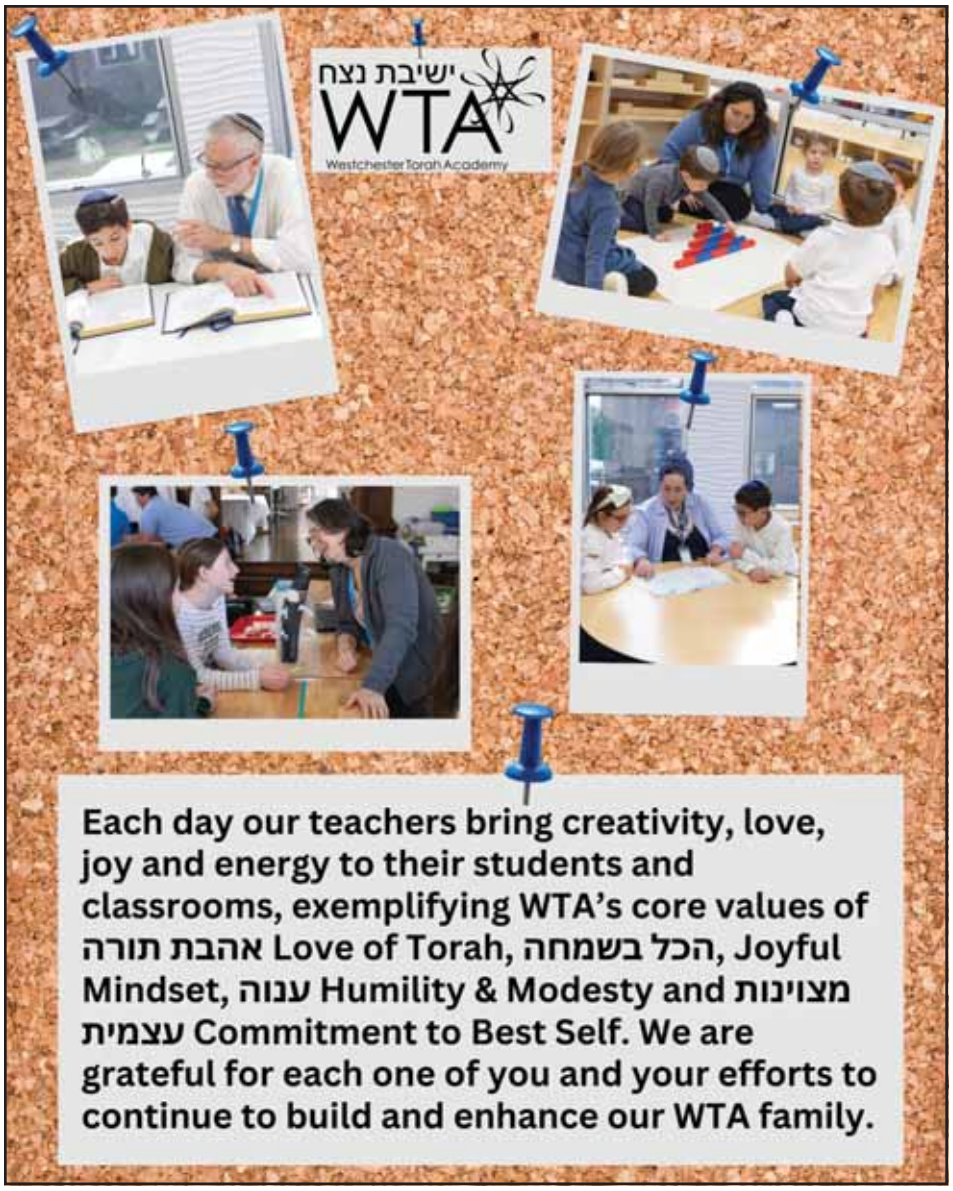
We ♥ our teachers, faculty, and staff!





Thank you for your endless dedication to our students and families every day.

Join our growing team! shalsheletnj.org/careers



Teacher Appreciation

RYNJ



At RYNJ, we showed our hakaras hatov to our amazing rebbeim, morot, teachers and staff this week with RYNJ hats, heartfelt letters of appreciation from the students, a coffee bar for Rosh Chodesh, and a special gift for Shabbos. Their passion, devotion, patience and love for teaching Torah as well as secular studies is evident in all they do. You are the heart and soul of RYNJ, and we are forever grateful for your presence in our lives.

Westchester Day School

It takes a village to raise a child. As Teacher Appreciation Week unfolded at Westchester Day School, the school community came together to express הכרת הטוב for our dedicated WDS village of educators. Our teachers understand the importance of empowering our students to develop a strong sense of self. Beyond academic achievements, and with the guidance of the Torah and Jewish learning, WDS educators focus on character development and personal growth. The balance of Judaic learning and General Studies ensures that our students leave WDS not only academically prepared but also with a deep understanding of their own Jewish values and beliefs. From Monday's observance of Yom Hashoah, with donations collected and made in teachers' names to Thursday's special faculty lunch, each day of this special week was marked by gestures of appreciation. The PTA provided treats and even a Coffee Cart to kick-start teachers' days! To end the week and move into Shabbat on a high, our Ganon through 8th grade students delivered personalized letters of gratitude to our teachers. We appreciate the unwavering commitment of our WDS educators who provide the light in all that we do. Kol Hakavod to all those involved!





thank you

> I appreciate Mr. Sragow because he makes history fun and relevant. I feel prepared for the AP and enjoyed the class. I also enjoyed Model UN, which he is the Faculty Advisor for. - Dovi Rosman '25

> I would love to share a brief thanks to my 11th grade Rebbi, Rabbi Mendelson. Through his love and learning of Torah, Rabbi Mendelson lights up a room. He is someone I greatly admire and look up to and I thank him for not only an amazing year last year but also the lasting connection we have and hope to have for many more years. Thank you so much!
> - Elie Husarsky '24



> I appreciate Mrs. Friedman for being a phenomenal teacher and for supporting the Legal Pathways Club. Mrs. Friedman always makes time to stop by whenever the club meets to take pictures and post them on MTA's Instagram and A Lion's Life.
> - Joel Fridman '26

to our Rebbeim and Teachers

> The connection Rabbi Pearl makes with me and other Talmidim, makes me feel like he's more than just my rebbe, he is a true role model. Someone I can really look up to. I'm highly appreciative of what an honor it is to be his Talmid. - Yishai Neiss '26





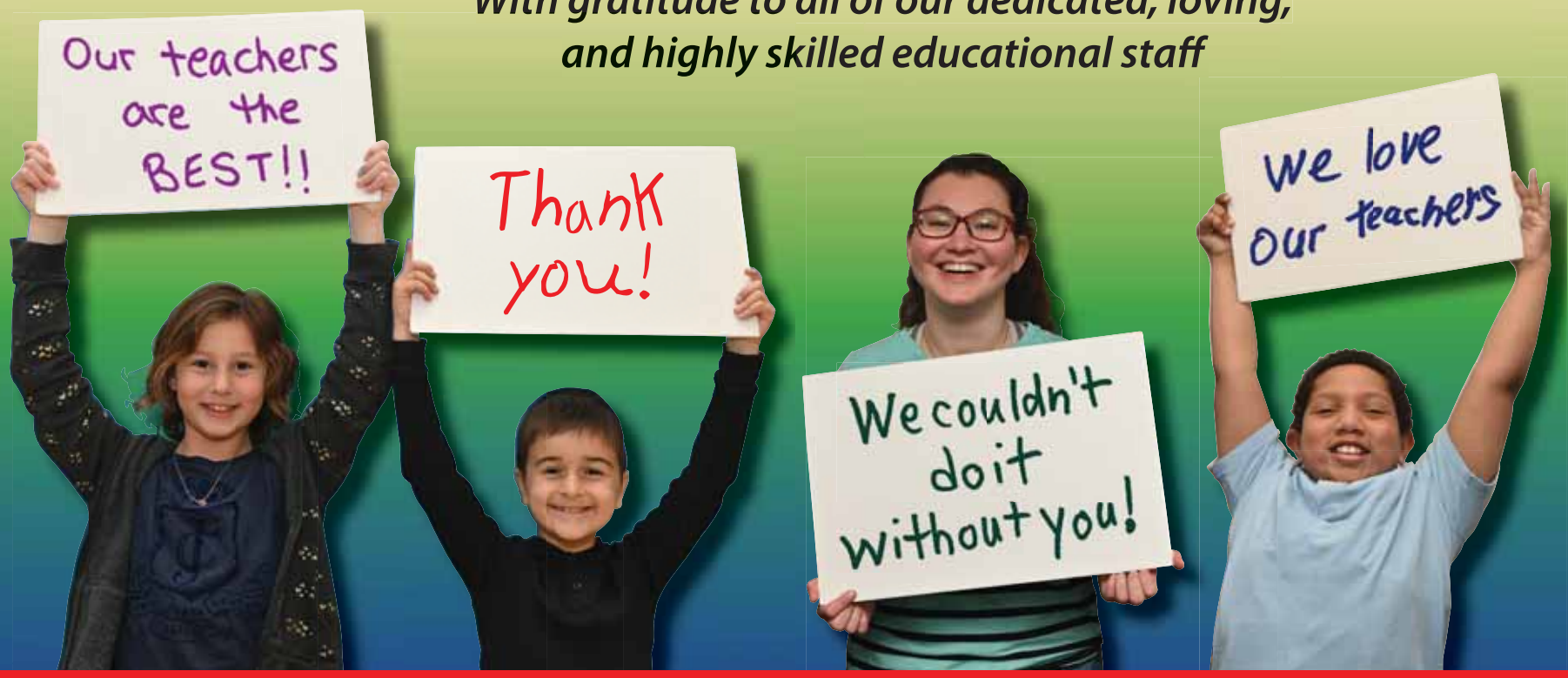
> Rabbi Wiener, I appreciate his values and teaching style. I truly gain from his ability to answer whatever questions come his way and how much he cares for each of his talmidim.
> - Dovi Sussman '27

> I appreciate Ms. Newborn because she makes learning math engaging and interesting which pushes me to learn more, she is also very entertaining and a great teacher. Our class is very lucky to have her. - Yitzy Leonorowitz '25

> Rabbi Brownstein, our English teacher, is more than just a guide through literature; he is a catalyst for profound introspection and growth. With each book we explore, Rabbi Brownstein skillfully leads us into the depths of its themes and characters, challenging our perspectives and expanding our understanding of the world. His impact extends far beyond the classroom, to all who are fortunate enough to be his students.
> - Aryeh Greenbaum '25

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Our faculty carry out ongoing, in-depth assessments to cultivate a deep understanding of each student, helping them to become confident, independent learners.

“

The supremely skilled faculty at Winston Prep were able to help our son through those rough spots. For that, we are eternally grateful.

— Winston Prep Parent

Scan the QR code to Register for an Open House

Winston Preparatory School

New Jersey Campus

Teacher Appreciation

Winston Preparatory School: Where Expert Teachers Transform Student Lives

(Courtesy of Winston Preparatory School) Are you struggling to find a supportive environment that meets your child’s learning needs? Winston Preparatory School New Jersey, located in Morris County, offers an individualized learning environment for students ages 8-21 with learning differences such as dyslexia, ADHD and nonverbal learning disorder (NVLD).

We believe what matters most is developing a deep understanding of how your child learns and then creating the right environment to help your child reach their full potential. Before they spend their first day at Winston Prep, our faculty has spent weeks designing an academic program for your child’s specific needs. Unlike any other school, Winston Prep groups students based on their learning difficulty, skill level, and educational and social-emotional needs.

Our students experience extraordinary transformations in their lives and learning. Winston Prep’s high school graduation rate is 99.7%. Approximately 80% of Winston Prep graduates attend college, while 20% move on to transitional, vocational post-secondary programs.

Having a faculty of expert learning specialists who deeply understand our students is an integral component of how we successfully fulfill our mission. Winston Preparatory School prizes faculty development and offers teachers unparalleled, rich, multi-level programs aimed at providing them with the foundational knowledge, tools and strategies to support our students. As a result, students see Winston Prep as the right place for them, where their individual strengths are nurtured and where they will learn how to understand and address their challenges.

“I rarely leave the parent-teacher conference at Winston Prep without tears in my eyes. I am amazed how well these people know my child, how concerned they are about my child, and how much thought and effort these people have given.” — Peter B., Winston Prep parent

Another dynamic part of Winston Prep’s model of research-based teaching methods is the innovative Focus Program. Highly skilled teachers work one-to-one with students every day to address areas of greatest need, to help them develop their own understanding of how they learn, and to nurture their unique strengths and help students fully take advantage of them. Focus teachers are the first line of communication between the families and the school; they provide weekly updates to families, including important observations and current activities and progress within Focus sessions, and in content classes.

Student life on campus is a vibrant blend of academics, social connections, extracurricular activities, service learning, athletics, and visual and performing arts programs. These opportunities not only foster essential skill development but also contribute to the overall dynamic and robust community at Winston Prep. To facilitate learning and social opportunities year-round, Winston Prep NJ also offers summer programming for current Winston Prep and non-Winston Prep students. The program is an extension of the Winston Prep philosophy and aims to enhance academic skills while fostering independence and social connections. Offered in person or online, the program is open for students in grades 3-12.

At Winston Prep NJ, your child will discover a place where teachers understand.

A place where teachers make sense.

A place where everyone listens.

A place where everyone learns.

The best way to learn more about all Winston Prep NJ has to offer is by attending an Open House. Register today at www.winstonprep.edu/open-houses, or contact Meredith Fisher, Director of Admissions, at mfisher@winstonprep.edu for more information.

Moriah

My Hebrew teacher Morah Adina is an extraordinary fourth-grade teacher and the best teacher that I could ever have. Morah Adina doesn’t just help me learn new things, but she makes learning fun. Whenever I have a test she makes sure that I am super prepared so that I can get a great score. In my classroom everyone is on a different level of learning, but somehow she is able to teach everyone on their level. Sadly, Morah Adina is only in school four days a week, but she does what some people can’t even do in five days. When I was in third grade all I would hear from the fourth graders is “Morah Adina is the best teacher, she gives you so many extra points on your chumash tests!” When I walked into Morah Adina’s classroom I knew that she was the perfect teacher for me. At our onegs Morah Adina is always up on her feet and having a great time with us. I wish that Morah Adina could be my teacher next year. I will miss her so much. Thank you Morah Adina, it is so fun to be your student!

Georgette Frommer
Fourth Grade

Thank You to the SpectAculaR Faculty & Staff of SAR Academy & High School

Shani Abittan - Alexandra Abreu - Richard Acosta - Jacqueline Acosta Marte - Tammy Adler - Shoshana Ainsberg - Gabrielle Ainsberg - Davida Amkraut - Rachel Anisa Arroyo - Debra Apfelbaum - Irit Aran - Lexi Arborn - Hadar Ashkenazi - Barthelemy Atsin - Leah Bader - Yael Baker - Judith Ballan - Lisa Bambino - Yael Baratz - Racheli Barris - Ilana Barry - Zoe Baskin - Lesley Belkin - Dikla Ben Lulu - Sam Berkovitz - Batsheva Berkowitz - Rachel Berkowitz - Samara Berman - Malki Bernstein - Michelle Biller-Levy - Dorit Birenbaum - Kenny Birnbaum - Lisa Birnbaum - Sharon Black - Akiva Block - Judith Block - Ali Bloom - Ami Bloom - Avi Bloom - Chavy Bluman - Griselda Bobbitt - Russi Bohm - Benjamin Book - Linda Botwinick - Tobie Brandriss - Sarah Braum - Elisabeth Brito de Valentin - Shari Brody - Karen Brooks - Hilary Buff - Aviva Bukiet - Kochava Callan - Felix Caso - Maria Castro - Robert Ciolfi - Arielle Cohen - El-Ad Cohen - Nava Cohen - Rachel Cohen - Renata Cohen - Tova Cohen - Adina Cohen Bochner - Ronit Cole - Jasmine Coppin - Yomari Cordero Mercedes - Joseph Coughlan - Michael Courtney - Collin Couvillion - Ayelet Cutler - Shoshana Dachs - Hadas Dadon - Shilo Dadon - Emily Daniel - Daniel Dauber - Yakaira De Jesus De Llanos - Avivit Deblinger - Asaf Diamant - Paz Diamant - Atara Douglas - Moshe Drelich - Tamar Druck - Amanda Dryer - Irrit Dweck - Koda Eckstein - Erica Edelman - Nancy Edelman - Yael Edelstein - Dameon Edwards - Debra Eis - Ryan Enis - Ariella Epel Tabick - Alyssa Essebag - Randy Esulto - Nick Fadda - Chloe Feder - Talia Feilbogen - Samantha Felder - Ariella Feman - Qiao Feng - Chani Fertig - Ben Zion Ferziger - Miriam Filer - Chaya Fine - Tova Fink - Simona Fisch - Paula Fisch - Nadine Fischler - Miryam Fiskus - Simon Fleischer - Rachel Fremmer - Orah Frenkel - Daniella Friedman - David Friedman - Talia Fromer - Alexa Futter - Rebecca Gabay - Ilana Gadish - Clara Garcia De Penn - Lea Geller - Alana Rifkin Gelnick - Melvin Gil Maria - Keren Ginzberg - Ariella Gissinger - Becca Glassberg - Michelle Glazer - Kenneth Gleason - Alyssa Gold - Shani Gold - Michael Goldman - Dan Goldsher - Aliza Goldstein - Rivka Goldstein - Orna Goldszmidt - Alex Golub - Bob Goodman - Marilyn Gordon - Keren Gordon Hack - Jeffrey Gotel - Daniel Gottesman - Mendel Gottesman - Emily Gray - Heidi Greenbaum - Nyla Greenbaum - Elana Greenberg - Soo Greenfield - Debbie Greenwald - McPherson Gregoire - Soloman Gregoire - Kayla Gross - Hillel Gruenberg - Valerie Gryzlo - Fraide Guerrero Reyes - Michael Gurock - Uri Gurvich - Noel Gussen - Shiran Guthartz - Sharona Haber - Shmuel Hain - Zev Hait - Abigail Haka - Michelle Halpert - Hila Harari - Gila Harary - Eli Harcsztark - Tully Harcsztark - Dan Harelick - Ilana Harris - Sara Hasson - Emily Hausman - Rivka Heisler - Nati Helfgot - Ayala Helft - Amy Heller - Sarah Heller - Sima Herszaft - Sari Hibsher - Jordan Hirsch - Russell Hoffman - Jenny Horowitz - Marielle Horowitz - Shoshi Horowitz - Michelle Humi - Amy Hyman - Irfan Iqbal - David Israel - Tammy Jacobowitz - Rebecca Jaffe - Lee Joffe - Batya Kalish - Jocelyn Kalkman - Shari Kanovsky - Jackie Kaplan - Hanna Karben - Marni Karpel - Steven Katchen - Anat Katz - Dorit Katzenelenbogen - Ty Kay - Batya Keller - Caryn Keller - Hadassah Kestenbaum - Rivka Kisling - Hila Kitay - Amanda Klatt - Penny Klein-Levy - Freda Kleinburd - Sharmilla Klestzick - Amanda Klestzick - Elayna Koevary - Cynthia Kollander - Adela Korn - Liba Kornfeld - Avi Kramer - Gail Krasner - Chana Krasnjanski - Barrie Krause - Binyamin Krauss - Davida Krauss - Alon Krausz - Danny Kroll - Jonathan Kroll - Shira Kroll - Asaf Kugler - Shifra Landowne - Josh Lannik - Ann Lapin - Talya Laufer - Daniela Lehmann - Orit Lehrfield -



Elana Lerner - Eliana Levey - Sonia Levin - Lauren Levner - Daniel Levy - Nehama Libman - Yehoshua Lindenbaum - Ariella Linhart - Danielle Lipshitz - Elvira Llano - Janet Llano - Yira Lora - Kristine Lowenwirth - Aura Lurie - Pearl Magence - Lisi Mandel - Lana Mandel - Rachel Mandelbaum - Yoni Mandelbaum - Marianne Mani - Ilan Marans - Liz Marcus - Shoshana Marcus - Jonathan Martin - Aaron Martinez - Maria Martinez Guerro - Carla Martinez Rodriguez - Elayne Matityahu - Debra May - Sarah Medved - Danielle Mendelsohn - Clara Mens - Allison Miller - Leah Miller - Leora Miller - Shoshi Miller - Yael Miller - Elianna Mitnick - Kayla Moerdler - Marisol Molina - Gerson Montes - Steve Moskowitz - Ora Muschel - Ellen Muss - Bonnie Myers - Dovi Nadel - Dina Najman - Pete Nilaj - Aharon Nissel - Sean O'Hara - Shany Ohayon - Eli Ollech - Daniel Ori - Liam Orth - Florangel Ortiz - Rosa Elba Ortiz - David Oshins - Sally Oshins - Rebecca Ostro Nagata - Molly Palefski - Arelis Paulino - Zuleuka Paulino - Samuel Pearlson - Shani Peleg - Anabell Peña - Beth Pepper - Jennifer Pepper - Zuzanna Perzan - Hillory Peters - Bruno Philibert - Margaret Pietrzak - Noa Pitkowsky - Maria Polanco - Arthur Poleyeff - Danielle Pollack - Meira Prager - Yajaira Quero De Cruz - Elana Rabinovich - Shoshana Radinsky - Ayala Raice - Rachel Raskas - Robyn Raskas - Adin Rayman - Chaya Rayman - Noa Rebhun - Angela Renaldo La Scala - Williams Reyes - Sharon Richter - Isabelle Rieken - Max Rifkin - Ariel Rodriguez - Brenda Rodriquez - Pedro Rosario Martinez - Esti Rosekind - Rivka Rosenbaum - Dina Rosenberg - Alisa Rosenbloom - Teri Rosengarten - Chaya Ross - Rivky Rossler - Rena Rossman - Adina Roth - Melissa Rothwax - Lou Rubin - Sara Rubinfeld - Leia Rubinstein - Devorah Rudin - Rakel Sabala - Josh Sadres - Talia Sadres - Elana Saenger - Michele Saks - Hamilton Salazar - Marci Salzbank - Amanda Samet - Denise Samstein - Sophia Samuels - Mary Ellen Sanchez - Trisha Santiago - Dalia Sarfati - Michelle Sarna - Chad Sarni - Chavi Satz - Batya Schafer - Alisa Schenker - Shira Schiowitz - Lisa Schlaff - Debby Schloss - Greg Schmitt - Seth Schmulowitz - Gloria Schneider - Yvette Schneider - Jamie Schneider Schwartz - Elie Schwartz - Rivka Schwartz - Aviva Segal - Orli Segall - Zehava Seidman-Wernick - Naomi Semer - Randi Shane - Dina Shav-Tal - Chana Shefa - Matthew Sheinberg - Robin Sheldon - Sarah Shelling - Adiella Shem Tov - Ilana Sherizen - Jessica Sherman - Maya Shifrin - Maya Shoshani - Adina Shoulson - Adina Shrage - Kaylie Shulman - Nina Siegel - Tzippy Silberman - Ariella Simpson - Tami Sklarin - Reva Slasky - Orit Smith - Carol Sober - Jennifer Sokol - Noah Solomon - Chana Sommer - Debby Sondheim - Adina Soniker - Helen Sprinkle - Howard Stahl - David Steere - Dorit Stein - Adina Steinberg - Gillian Steinberg - Abby Stiefel - Ayala Stone - Aliza Strauss - Sharon Sturm - Rebecca Sykes - Miriam Szafranski - Yali Szulanski - Pearl Taback - Ilana Tachauer - Shuli Taubes - Janet Taveras - Gabby Thakur - Yael Torczyner - Nurys Torres - Sapir Turgeman - Michael Turjeman - Sari Turjeman - Zissy Turner - Abbegail Unger - Esther Unger - Chagit Vaaknin - Devon Valentin-Dixon - Yran Vasquez - Luis Veloz Batista - Jamie Vichinsky - Shlomo Wadler - Leora Waks - David Wander - Kayla Weil - Lauryn Weiser - Dganit Weiss - Mali Weitz - Alexa Wilner - Chavie Wilner - Aviva Wilner - Alisa Winchel - Aviva Wolf - Rebecca Wolf - Leah Wollman - Ayse Wright - Lerone Yeroushalmi - Lynn Zadoff - Ron Zamir - Avishag Zcharia - Racheli Zelkowitz - Jacqueline Zenou - Gaby Zevi - Moriya Zino - Yoni Zolty - Reena Zuckerman - Merav Zuriel

WITH GRATITUDE,

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PRINCIPAL, SAR ACADEMY

RABBI TULLY HARCSZTARK
FOUNDING PRINCIPAL, SAR HIGH SCHOOL
DEAN, MACHON SIACH

RABBI JONATHAN KROLL
PRINCIPAL, SAR HIGH SCHOOL

Teacher Appreciation

Gan Yaldenu Tots

Happy Teacher Appreciation Week! Gan Yaldenu is celebrating their incredible team of teachers who arrive each day with positive, warm smiles on their faces. The school wants to express their gratitude for all their dedication and hard work in creating a nurturing environment for all of the students to learn and grow. The teachers' passion and love for shaping young minds, providing stability and guidance as well as social and emotional skills, demonstrate the profound impact they have on each child's life. Gan Yaldenu thanks every teacher for their unwavering commitment, dedication and profound influence.



Pre-K morah. (CREDIT: GAN YALDENU TOTS)



Infant room morahs. (CREDIT: GAN YALDENU TOTS)



GYT morahs. (CREDIT: GAN YALDENU TOTS)



Morah for children ages 18-24 months. (CREDIT: GAN YALDENU TOTS)

Lubavitch on the Palisades Preschool And Tenafly Chabad Academy

The mission of Lubavitch on the Palisades Preschool and Tenafly Chabad Academy lower school and middle school is to provide exceptional education and to champion every child to succeed and flourish. Grounded in the values of inclusivity, warmth and an unshakable belief in the infinite potential of each student, the schools have elevated the level of Jewish and secular education in all areas. The schools are dedicated to raising every child to the next level and building a lifelong passion for Torah. The robust curriculum, specialties, clubs and student programming prepare students to succeed academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. Its graduates have served as the schools' ambassadors in some of the most competitive Jewish high schools in Bergen County and beyond.

Today, the schools serve over 300 students from infant through eighth grade, each of whom is celebrated, supported and empowered to reach his/her incredible potential. Their goal is to empower and enrich the life of every student with a transformational and inspiring education that recognizes and embraces their unique personalities and abilities.

B'H

Lubavitch on the Palisades Preschool

LPS PRESCHOOL TENAFLY CHABAD ACADEMY

Tenafly Chabad Academy Grades 1-8

LPS and TCA Teachers - You are the cornerstone of our school!

To our dedicated teachers who nurture each soul and inspire curious minds with their love and warmth, we say Todah, Thank you.



lpsnj.org

Teacher Appreciation

Westchester Day School

As Teacher Appreciation Week unfolded at Westchester Day School, the school community came together to express הכרת הטוב for our dedicated WDS educators. From Monday's observance of Yom HaShoah, with donations collected and made in teachers' names to Thursday's special faculty lunch, each day of the week was marked by thoughtful gestures of appreciation. The WDS PTA provided treats and even a coffee cart to kick-start teachers' days! To end the week and move into Shabbat on a high, ganon through eighth grade students delivered personalized letters of gratitude with accompanying pictures to our teachers. It really does take a village to raise a child. Our teachers understand the importance of empowering our students to develop a strong sense of self. Beyond academic achievements, and with the guidance of the Torah and Jewish learning, our teachers focus on character development and personal growth. The balance of Judaic learning and general studies ensures that our students leave WDS not only academically prepared but also with a deep understanding of their own Jewish values and beliefs. We appreciate the unwavering commitment of all of our WDS educators who provide the light in all that we do. Kol hakavod to all those involved!

Shalom Yeladim

This week we take the time to say thank you to our teachers. Without your artistic eyes, hard working hands and loving hearts there would be no school. You come in early to prepare festive meals, like the Tu B'Shvat Seder and model Pesach Seder. You are always learning more and researching to keep up with the latest research on child development. You incorporate new ideas for projects and imaginative play. You adjust the curriculum to fit the needs of each year's class to challenge the students who need it and to help those who need it. You are always watching each child and evaluating their needs and strengths. You are the ones who make this school a family.







To All the Preschool Morot at Gan Rina







Everything we need to know we learn in preschool; this is an old idea but as relevant today as ever. Preschool classrooms are structured to provide what children need to learn their letters as well as how to wash their hands properly; how to count with one-to-one correspondence as well as how to share and take turns; how to run and climb as well as how to sit and wait patiently.

Our students at Gan Rina experience love, friendship and community and our programming is designed to teach and get the most out of each individual student. All this is done under the careful watch of the amazing morot who choose this physically, mentally and emotionally challenging profession.

Research shows that the early childhood years are a critical time when a child's brain is highly impacted by the people, places, languages and emotional context of their surroundings. Decades of research has demonstrated that children who attend high quality and effective preschool programs see a boost in skills, behaviors and socialization that have long-term impacts and set them up for success throughout their elementary school years. A long-term study that began in the 1960s showed that the impacts went even further, showing the long benefits including better disciplinary records, higher college admissions, superior health outcomes, lower instances of incarceration, and fewer cases of divorce. Those that saw the best outcomes happened when the early childhood, preschool and elementary school teachers were able to have continued and regular communication.

As the teacher shortage continues with a staggeringly high number of teachers needed (over 2,000 in New Jersey public school early childhood classes alone), the talent, passion and gift of those who enter this field is brought into the spotlight. These dedicated professionals lay the groundwork for all that our children achieve, and as the old adage goes, "Engineers make bridges, artists make paintings, scientists make rockets, but teachers make them all."

Here at Gan Rina Nursery we are lucky enough to have a team of morot who show their love and dedication to the students in their care each and every day. They constantly look at their work and curriculum and think "How can I make it better?" In a way, they become professional hoarders with the thought that every toilet paper roll, every empty jar, could be an opportunity to teach and explore something new in their classroom. They take on the little bumps and bruises of each child and help them develop the coping skills and self-regulation required to grow from the experience.

The children who enter become a part of each morah and live in their hearts as one of their "babies" even when they see that "baby" bar mitzvahed or married. The hakarat hatov needed could never be shown but in an attempt to at least show what we can, thank you to the staff at Gan Rina and all the preschool morot out there who have given themselves to this unbelievably important task.





ב"ה

To the nurturing, dedicated, creative, and inspiring group of women we are so proud to call

Thank you

OUR MORAHS

יישַׁר כֹּחֲכֶן!

WE LOVE APPRECIATE ADORE YOU!

YOU ARE OUR HEROES!

Thank you

THANK YOU!

From all the children at Anshei Lubavitch and Rabbi & Leah Neubort

ANSHEI LUBAVITCH אנשי לובאוויטש

JUDAISM ALIVE

Anshei Lubavitch Preschool
10-10 Plaza Road, Fair Lawn
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Holocaust Memorial Ceremony Held Outside of Columbia University

By Judith Falk

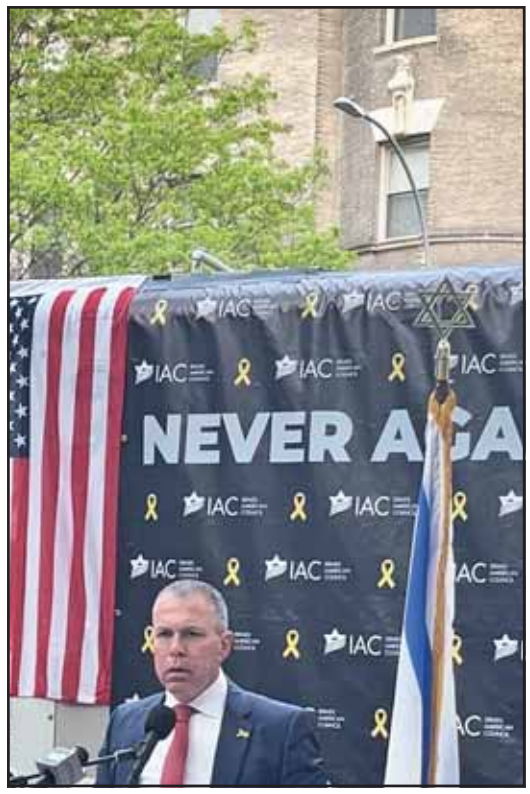
On May 6, the Israeli American Council (IAC), in partnership with several other organizations, marked Yom HaShoah by holding a Holocaust Memorial Ceremony outside of Columbia University. Described by the organizers as "Honoring the Past, Defending the Future," the event focused on remembering the Holocaust, fighting today's rising tide of antisemitism which we also saw before the Holocaust, and supporting students in the face of vile Jew hatred prevalent on college campuses.

Elan S. Carr, CEO of IAC and Former U.S. Special Envoy for Combating Antisemitism, stated: "We are here primarily to exhibit memory and to hold on to what was done to our brothers and our sisters and our children eighty years ago. But this isn't only about looking backwards. This is about remembering the victims and honoring the victims of the Shoah by fighting against the evil that led to the Shoah."

Continued Carr, "We will never stop every effort to bring home our captives. We will never forget what was done to us and we will never forgive. And we will work together, all of us, not only Jews but all decent people in America and around the world... to put an end to this despicable, disgusting display of Jew hatred that we are seeing festering throughout our country and throughout the world."



Ofir Akunis, consul general of Israel in New York



Gilad Erdan, Israel's ambassador to the U.N.



Holocaust survivor Tova Friedman

Several Jewish students spoke about their experiences on campus. Elisha Baker, a sophomore at Columbia University studying Middle East History and Arabic, stated: "I am here today because I am watching antisemitism become normal in my own backyard. For the first time in my life, it truly feels that never again is right now."

Sonya Poznansky, a senior studying biology at Columbia's dual degree program with Tel Aviv University, remarked that after October 7 she has learned the true meaning of the term, Righteous Among the Nations: "I've had countless friendships broken by those who no longer see me as human because of my Israeli ancestry and Zionist identity. A few of my non-Jewish friends, however, have stood by me with strength superior even to my own in the face of a huge wave of pressure to abandon all ties to Zionism and Israel."

Ambassador Gilad Erdan, Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations, painted a vivid picture of the double standard regarding Jews stating: "Did we see encampments to protest Russia's war crimes in Ukraine? Did rioters barricade buildings to protest Assad's brutality in Syria? Did we see Chinese students attacked because China is torturing Uighurs? Were quads vandalized while Iran murdered women and protestors? Of course not."

Observed Erdan, "What we are seeing is not liberal activism, it is not Palestinian solidarity, this is pure Jew hatred and it must be stopped."

Erdan then beseeched Jews to "divest from universities that allow antisemitism to spread. Don't continue to give them your money. Ensure that pro-Hamas faculty and presidents are fired. Demand that students who use violence are expelled. Every academic institution that shows any tolerance for terror must be blacklisted."

Displaying a large Star of David found in Kibbutz Kfar Aza in the ruins of the October 7 massacre, Ofir Akunis, Consul General of Israel in New York, exclaimed that "no one will succeed in defeating us. No one will lower the power of the Star of David. Not from Kfar Aza, not from Sderot, not from Okakim, not from Tel Aviv, not from Metula, and Kiryat Shmona and the Upper Galilee, and not from New York, and not from Columbia, and not from Los Angeles, from nowhere!"

Lizzy Savetsky, a digital influencer and Jewish activist, noted the similarities between 1933 Germany and college campuses today, observing that "In 1933 in Germany, Jews were barred from universities. Today in 2024, Columbia Professor Shai Davidai's ID card is deactivated. Jews are told they can't walk on campus as their quad is overrun by calls for their annihilation."

"In 1933 in Germany, the Nazis launched boycotts against Jewish businesses. Today on campuses across our nation, calls for boycotts against businesses from the only Jewish state in the world are raging once again. In 1933 in Germany, Hitler established a ministry of propaganda to spread his conspiracy and blood libels against the Jews. Today on our campuses, we see Jews labeled as genocidal baby killers, white supremacists, and ironically, yes, even Nazis."

Concluded Savetsky, "It is up to all of us, every single one, to carry the Jewish torch that has exchanged hands from generation to generation for thousands of years. Don't let it end with you. When we say Am Yisrael Chai, it is a call to action. It is a call to remember yesterday, to stand our ground today, and to forge our path towards tomorrow. Past, present and future."

In speaking to The Jewish Link, Ariella Noveck, who attended the rally and also helped coordinate it, stated "As a granddaughter of a Holocaust survivor, 'never again' holds profound significance for me. It is a constant reminder of the duty I feel to ensure that the atrocities of the past are never repeated. I learned firsthand the importance of vigilance against hatred and injustice, particularly in combating antisemitism. And I came here today to not only remember the Holocaust, but to show support to university students who are being subjected to horrific antisemitism."

The common thread among the speakers' remarks was the horrific rise in antisemitism we are witnessing. As Holocaust survivor Tova Friedman poignantly told the crowd: "My Holocaust memories have been reawakened."



Columbia student Sonya Poznansky



Elan S. Carr, CEO of IAC



Lizzy Savetsky with her daughter Stella, who spoke about her great-grandmother who survived Auschwitz.

Judith Falk is the creator of the Upper West Side Shtetl Facebook Group. You can follow her on instagram @upperwestsideshtetl. She is a lawyer by day and a former legal reporter.

The Shoah: An Event of Overbearing Magnitude



By Alex Grobman

"There are events of such overbearing magnitude that one ought not to remember them all the time, but one must not forget either. Such an event is the Holocaust," declared Rabbi Israel Spira, the Bluzhover Rebbe.

Although the rebbe survived the Shoah, his wife and children were not so fortunate—all of them were murdered by the Nazis.

Remembering is a critical part of what it means to be a Jew, Rabbi Yitz Greenberg reminds us. Because we recall that we were once slaves in the land of Egypt, we view those living in desperate circumstances differently from people who never suffered. Our memory and experience of the Exodus commands us to treat people with love and compassion.

Memory guides our response, the rabbi notes. When memories fade, the climate for Holocaust deniers is created. Holocaust denial is not a Jewish issue alone. It is an attempt to distort the way in which we convey the past to the future. If we are concerned about the way history is communicated, we must be vigilant about transmitting facts without allowing those with their own agenda to obscure or falsify our understanding of the past.

Preserving the memory of the Holocaust enables us to understand how the Germans used the latest technology in their attempt to destroy the Jews of Europe.

The Fragility of Civilization

Studying the Holocaust is essential for understanding the role and responsibilities of individuals, organizations and nations when confronted with the policies of annihilation. German journalist Heinz Hoöhne described the need to recognize this obligation when he declared, "The sensational fact, the really horrifying feature, of the annihilation of the Jews, was that thousands of respectable fathers of families made murder their official business and yet, when off duty, still regarded themselves as ordinary law-abiding citizens who were incapable even of thinking of straying from the strict path of virtue."

Henrich Himmler, Reichsföhrer SS, expected the mass massacres had to be implemented "coolly and cleanly," Hoöhne said. "Even while obeying the official order to commit murder, the SS man must remain 'decent.'"

In his now famous speech to SS officers in Posen on October 4, 1943, Himmler assured those involved in the annihilation of the Jewish people they had remained decent. "Most of you know what it means to see one hundred corpses piled up, or five hundred, or one thousand," he said. "To have gone through this and—except for instances of human weakness—to have remained decent, that has made us tough. This is an unwritten, never-to-be written, glorious page of our history."

Social Media

The urgency to teach the Shoah becomes clearer as social media has had a significant effect on people's thinking, beliefs and opinions. Here are just two examples. Osama bin Laden's 2002 "Letter to America," in which he justifies the murder of 2,977 people on September 11, 2001, went viral on TikTok. AI-altered video clips of Adolf Hitler's 1939 Reichstag speech have also gone viral. In the speech, Hitler declared that the impending war would result in the "annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe." The number of positive responses to these two clips demonstrates the nature of the problems we face.

Gordon G. Chang, journalist and political analyst, has exposed the Chinese regime's use of its algorithm to spread pro-Hamas disinformation, Russian accounts about the Ukraine war, and other pro-Chinese Communist Party propaganda. The Party also exploits the app to attempt to destroy the youth of America by inundating them with messages encouraging the use of illegal drugs, and other self-destructive behavior—even suicide.

Approaching the Shoah as Social Pathologists

Franklin Littel, a Protestant theologian, has suggested that we approach the study of the Holocaust as social pathologists studying a sick society in order to discover how people from practically all segments of German society participated in the destruction process.

Indeed, what is so alarming about the Holocaust is the involvement of average people, many of whom participated not so much out of hatred of Jews, but because this was part of their job. Historian Christopher R. Browning notes that the "Jewish experts" in the German Foreign Office, for example, were not forced by "any external physical threat" to carry out policies against the Jews, and that antisemitism was only "a contributing factor but not the decisive one" in determining their actions.

The main reason they complied was because "they were dominated by a compulsion to keep their records unstained. This compulsion was so strong that it blotted out any sense of individual responsibility. They viewed their activity ... solely from the point of view of how it affected themselves, not what they were doing to others. "In short," Browning concludes, "they became dehumanized."

Ambitious careerists exist in every modern bureaucratic state, Browning adds, who are more than eager to assist "the leadership of the moment as the most obvious mode of personal advancement. But the careerists, with their excessive willingness to allow themselves to be used, become dangerous or criminal only when used by politicians of even greater ambition and less moral scruple than themselves."

A Final Note and Warning: "Once You Have the Intellectuals on Your Side"

Historian Yehuda Bauer posits that what occurred in Germany can be described as a sociological model. "A small pseudo-intellectual elite—and there's no doubt that the Nazis were intellectuals, or perhaps pseudo-intellectuals—gained power in a large, modern society, not because of their potentially genocidal ideas, but due to economic, social, and political crises. In addition to making promises, they [the Nazis] gained power with the help of this elite, who were attracted by these utopias. The pseudo-intellectual governing body put genocidal plans into action, not because it originally identified with these plans, but rather with the general ideas of Nazi society. Once you have the intellectuals on your side (or the vast majority of them), you can do anything you want, including mass murder, genocide, total annihilation of human beings, humiliation, and so on. The lower rungs of society will follow the intelligentsia."

Dr. Alex Grobman is the senior resident scholar at the John C. Danforth Society, a member of the Council of Scholars for Peace in the Middle East and on the advisory board of the National Christian Leadership Conference of Israel (NCLCI). He has an MA and PhD in contemporary Jewish history from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Survivors Take on Holocaust Denial in New Digital Campaign

(Courtesy of The Claims Conference) The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, (Claims Conference) last week launched a new digital campaign, "#CancelHate." The campaign features Holocaust survivors reading Holocaust denial posts from across social media platforms. Each post illustrates how Holocaust denial and distortion can not only rewrite history but perpetuate antisemitic tropes and spread hate.

Gideon Taylor, president of the Claims Conference, said, "The world is a volatile place right now. Social media offers individuals a place to hide while they spread words of hate. This campaign shows that these are not victimless posts; these mean and vile words deny the first-hand testimony of each and every Holocaust survivor, their suffering and the suffering and often the loss of their families."

The #CancelHate campaign features Holocaust survivors introducing themselves, reading social media posts about Holocaust denial and then addressing what they've read, debunking the lies and speaking to the truth with testimony of their experiences in the Holocaust. Every video ends with the tagline, "Words matter. Cancel hate."

This powerful campaign, which can be accessed at www.Claimscon.org/CancelHate, addresses head-on the ongoing issue of Holocaust denial and distortion on social media. The anonymity of the channels and the distance from actual human contact make social media platforms ideal for this level of antisemitic hate.

Greg Schneider, executive vice president of the Claims Conference, said, "I could never have imagined a day when Holocaust survivors would be confronting such a tremendous wave of Holocaust denial and distortion, but sadly, that day is here. We all saw what unchecked hatred led to — words of hate and antisemitism led to deportations, gas chambers and crematoria. Holocaust survivors from around the world are participating in this campaign to show that hate will not win. Those who read these depraved posts are putting aside their own discomfort and trauma to ensure that current and future generations understand that unchecked hatred has no place in society.

A recent study in the United States of Millennials and Gen Z over the age of 18 found that approximately half (49 %) have seen Holocaust denial or distortion posts on social media or elsewhere online.

Holocaust survivor and #CancelHate campaign participant in the United States, Abe Foxman said, "I survived the Holocaust, but 13 members of my immediate family were murdered because they were Jewish. Holocaust denial on social media isn't just another post. These things we say matter. Posts that deny the Holocaust are hateful and deny the suffering of millions of people. We must take our words seriously. Our words matter."

The #CancelHate campaign is a month-long campaign against Holocaust denial and distortion. Starting today, videos from Holocaust survivors around the world will be posted every day for 30 days featuring testimony from a Holocaust survivor disputing Holocaust denial social media posts.

All videos can be seen on the organization's website: www.Claimscon.org/CancelHate

Have you checked out our Facebook page?

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Connecting Through Shared Experiences









(Courtesy of Jewish Family & Children's Services of Northern NJ) After World War II, Survivors in Stockholm, Sweden, would meet to find family and friends who survived the war. These meetings would evolve over time into something more—a way for these Survivors to connect with others who shared the same traumatic life experiences. They would eat and drink, laugh and cry, and enjoy the fellowship of those who understood them best. This is the foundation for Café Europa, a program now known as a social gathering for Holocaust Survivors.

At JFCSNNJ and similar agencies worldwide, Café Europa has become a vital program for Survivor clients. Twice a month, we provide Survivors with an opportunity to gather for an afternoon of food, drinks, socialization and entertainment. Our clients enjoy speaking with fellow Survivors who share a history, and they look forward to the entertainment that always uplifts those in attendance. During holiday times throughout the year, we have unique Café Europa events where guest speakers and special entertainers bring the holiday spirit to our Survivor guests.

JFCS
JEWISH FAMILY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES OF NORTHERN NEW JERSEY

The true impact of Café Europa can be seen in how our clients describe what it means to them. Participants have often told us that spending time with fellow Survivors is a "favor from God." This sentiment has been especially true since October 7 when many of our Survivors experienced the horrors of that day differently than most people did. With terrifying memories about the Holocaust coming to the forefront of their minds, the ability to meet, speak and bond with others like themselves becomes an even more cherished opportunity.

Café Europa is more than just a place to meet. It provides our Survivors with a truly organic way to connect and find joy and meaning that improves their quality of life every day.

To learn more about JFCS visit jfcsnnj.org or contact us at info@jfcsnnj.org / 201-837-9090.

Wonders and Miracles



By Barbara Wind

On Purim, I had a call from Fred, a 95-year-old Holocaust survivor. "I'm on cloud nine," he said, his voice even more exuberant than usual. He explained that he had just gotten off the phone with his rabbi and would become a bar mitzvah on May 10. And, in what he took as God's seal of approval, his doorbell rang as soon as he got off the phone with the rabbi. It was the local Chabad rabbi, his wife and children. They introduced themselves, telling him they had come to wish him a Happy Purim and bring him mishloach manot.

In our conversation, Fred added, "I would be honored if you would attend my bar mitzvah." I assured him I would be honored to do so.

Nonetheless, I had to wonder why he, who always felt somewhat uncomfortable in synagogues, would want a bar mitzvah. This is a man who had attended 64 b'nai mitzvahs of students he "twinned" with through the "Twin-With-a Survivor" program I created for the Holocaust Council. (Students meet with a Holocaust survivor several times to learn about their experiences before, during and after the war, and then relate it to their parsha when they are called to the Torah. It's an all-around win that has enriched countless lives immeasurably, none more than Fred's.)

Born Manfred Heyman in Berlin on April 29, 1929, Fred had never become a bar mitzvah. In fact, his school days ended when he was 9, with the attack on the Fasanenstrasse Synagogue. When he arrived at the school the next morning, a policeman chased him away: "Go home, Schweinhundt! There will be no more school for you!" Fred, a doted-on only child, was happy to be excused from school, too immature to realize the implications of that moment.

The synagogue school was not where Fred's education began. He was originally expelled from the local public school simply because he was Jewish.The Nazis considered him a "Mischling," although his mother was a convert. Her German family shunned her and the Gestapo taunted her, warning her to divorce "the dirty Jew," yet she remained steadfast as the biblical Ruth. Fred and his parents became "U-Boats," the Nazi term for Jews who hid in plain sight, helped by a German couple, the Matheys. Fred remains close with their descendants, who still reside in Berlin.

Fred's formal education resumed only after the Heymans immigrated to the United States, settling in Milwaukee. After taking a course that would allow his entry to high school at 19, he was soon drafted. He continued his studies in tanks and foxholes in Korea and earned a GED. Having survived yet another war and aided by the GI Bill, he attended the University of Wisconsin, became an engineer and had a successful career with AT&T. His work prompted his relocation to New Jersey, where he, his wife Eloise (nee Lowe) and their two children lived in Morristown. She passed away in 2004 after a lengthy illness.

Being introduced to the Holocaust Council led to the beginning of his new life. The man who never considered himself a Shoah survivor found his calling and purpose as a speaker. He fell in love with his new life as well as with a widow who remains in his life today.

He overcame physical ailments, including cardiac surgery, and became one of the Council's most active volunteers. Ever eager to educate about the Holocaust, he continues to speak, locally, nationally and internationally.

Fred is now working with his 65th "twin" as well as preparing for his own bar mitzvah this Shabbat. It will be an evening bar mitzvah, and he is almost too excited to be nervous. Reciting prayers in Hebrew has always been a challenge for him, possibly because of the psychological trauma of growing up among people intent on destroying Jews and Judaism. That said, I'm sure he'll do well and glory in that special coming-of-age event.

As for Fred's first synagogue? It too has emerged from the ashes to keep the flame of Judaism alive. Completed in 1912 as a gorgeous Romanesque structure built by and for liberal Jews, it held more than 1,700 congregants and also contained a religious school. Kaiser Wilhelm II visited it and donated a special "marriage room." One of the Fasanenstrasse Synagogue's religious leaders was Leo Baeck. Like many rabbis throughout Europe, he declined the opportunity to flee the Nazis, choosing to remain with his congregants. He and many of them were eventually deported to Theresienstadt, a transit camp for Auschwitz. Unlike most of them, he survived. Liberated at the age of 71, he moved to London where he continued as a leader and scholar.

The Fasanenstrasse Synagogue was burned and vandalized on Kristallnacht. However, it was not completely destroyed. Firemen were stationed to contain the flames lest they spread to German properties. The synagogue then became the *Reichspost* (German Postal Service) until 1945 when it, like most of Berlin, was demolished by Allied bombers. It was rebuilt as a large Jewish community center. No longer the beautiful Romanesque structure, it is still one that brings together Jews from every nation and all sides of the ethnic, cultural, political and religious spectrum.

As Chabad teaches, "Labels are for shirts. Jews are just Jews." Let that be our motto as we navigate this most challenging period since the Holocaust. Those who have been infected with antisemitism are spreading it far and wide, including to Jews who are either ignorant or simply choose to ignore historical facts. As demoralizing as all this is, the Jewish people and Israel remain strong and determined.

As long as Jews continue to obey God's command to remember and tell their history, as well as to remain a light unto the nations, we will see and recognize the signs, wonders, blessings and miracles that abound each day. After all, who would have believed that Fred, growing up in a virulently antisemitic world, would come to fully appreciate and embrace his Judaism and teach and inspire so many others to do the same.

Barbara Wind is a writer, speaker and Holocaust-related independent scholar, curator and consultant.

My Senior Experience in Poland

By Lily Lebwohl


Leffell Student at Auschwitz.

"וְתַגִּיעֵנוּ לְמָחוֹז חָפַצְנוּ לְחַיִּים וּלְשִׂמְחָה וּלְשָׁלוֹם"

"And [God, may you] cause us to reach our destination in life, joy, and peace." –Tefilat HaDerech

We recited Tefilat Haderech a few weeks ago, right before my 12th grade class at The Leffell School left for Poland, but it didn't feel right. How could we ask for these things as we embarked on a trip to witness death, sorrow and war? This was quite literally the opposite of what this prayer asks for.

As much I've learned about the Shoah, being at a concentration camp in person is a uniquely different experience. Seeing the hair and kitchen equipment of Jews who were murdered at Auschwitz being displayed in cases added an especially personal layer to the experience. Imagining the people the displayed hair belonged to using the pots and pans for Shabbat dinners, and how everything was taken from them before they were killed, never to be used again, was extremely powerful.

Auschwitz II Birkenau felt different than Auschwitz I because it did not include a museum, and the empty fields where barracks once stood were ten times the size of Auschwitz I, making the magnitude of the place hard to understand despite being there in person. Halfway through our visit to Auschwitz II Birkenau, a downpour began, and as the day went on the rain grew heavier and heavier. We were all soaking wet but despite our discomfort, we were still bundled up in many layers of warm winter clothes. I couldn't help but imagine what it was like being exposed to those extreme conditions with nothing for protection, and I suddenly felt lucky to be only slightly cold while drippinging wet, knowing a comfortable bus seat and warm soup was awaiting me.

While Auschwitz I and II were crowded with other visitors, we were the only group at Majdanek at the time we toured. We were not alone in the camp however. Murders of crows flew overhead sporadically throughout the visit, adding such an eerie feel to it all. Witnessing the credibility of what occurred in the gas chambers at Majdanek with blue dye staining the walls from the Zyklon B gas was uncanny and made the whole experience feel more real. Two days later, seeing the trenches in the Łopuchowo Forest, where people witnessed others being shot and buried while knowing their own turn to be killed was moments away, was extremely difficult.

But I would be remiss if I said that the whole trip was experienced this way, through this lens of darkness. Scattered throughout the week were moments of highs that matched the intensity of the low points. We visited shuls that were once centers of Jewish life but no longer have a congregation, and we filled the buildings with our voices. We prayed in a synagogue in Łańcut whose walls were lined with the words of Tehillim and gorgeous art depicting verses from Pirkei Avot.

Another entrancing synagogue was the one we visited in Tykocin with all the verses of Lecha Dodi decorating the walls. While the beauty of the art in these synagogues was like nothing I had ever seen before, the davening was even more magnificent. The most meaningful tefillah experience I have ever had with my grade was at a shul in Oswiecim, the town right outside of Auschwitz. This was the loudest I ever heard my grade daven, and seeing everyone sing together as we prepared ourselves for the visit to Auschwitz that day was a moment of strength in our community that I will never forget.


Leffell Students in Poland.

The joy we experienced in Poland reached outside of tefillot and into our learning. We visited Yehsivat Khokhmei Lublin, the birthplace of Daf Yomi, and studied the page of Talmud for that day together as a grade. We conversed, debated and questioned each other and the text on the topic of who can derive value from the baby of a stolen cow or sheep. We filled this Yeshiva that was raided by the Nazis less than 100 years ago with our study and brought ancient text to life by relating the cases to our time.

While not a historical site, one of the most enjoyable activities of the trip was meeting with Polish high school students at their school. We split up into groups and talked about our favorite movies, foods, parts of our religion and hobbies. Not a single student I met at the Polish school had ever met a Jew before, but they expressed their gratitude for how friendly we were to them because their only previous conception of Jews was that they are usually mean. The students gave us tours of their school, walking us through what a day looks like to them, and we culminated the gathering by dancing to a mix of Polish, American, and Israeli music.



Despite the confusion I had at first about why we recited a prayer for peace, joy and life before a trip that was destined to be about the reverse, I learned from this experience that this tefillah is about hope. We ask to reach our destination in life, joy and peace because these ideals can be woven into our lives even at times when we don't expect them.

Lily Lebwohl is a 12th grade student at The Leffell School in Westchester.

‘Aftermath’ Film Exposes 1941 Massacre in Jedwabne

By Pearl Markovitz

Beit Knesset Hanassi at 24 Rechov Ussishkin in Rechavia, Jerusalem, is host to a series of movies every three weeks catering to its Anglo population. Shirley Marks, British olah, serves as the president of the Women’s League and works together with retired American lawyer Mark Pollock in providing suitable films along with meaningful commentary. Pollack has also established an ongoing film program that takes place three days a week at the OU Center in the heart of Yerushalayim.

In marking Yom HaShoah at the Beit Knesset Hanassi, Marks and Pollock arranged for a showing of the “intense and haunting” 2012 Polish film “Aftermath,” based upon the historical study “Neighbors,” which sparked an explosive international reaction and backlash from rightwing Polish nationalists who still deny their ancestors’ complicity in the annihilation of Polish Jewry during the Holocaust.

In 2001, Dr. Jan Gross, Polish-American sociologist, historian and professor at Princeton University, published “Neighbors,” which created a “tsunami” in Poland and shocked people worldwide. According to his in-depth research, Gross revealed that on July 10, 1941, in the small Polish town of Jedwabne, the Christian citizens, comprising half of the town’s population, brutally murdered 1.600 Jewish men, women and children—the other half of the town’s populace—leaving only seven survivors. The Christian villagers forced their Jewish neighbors at gun and knife-point into an enclosed barn. They then set fire to the barn, shooting or stabbing any Jews attempting to escape. As the barn was engulfed in flames, the Polish villagers began plundering and occupying the Jewish



homes and shops. After the fire, the villagers used axes to knock gold teeth from the bodies and in other ways violated the corpses. In his shocking account of the massacre, Gross reveals that Jedwabne’s Jews were murdered not by faceless Nazis but by people who had lived side by side as neighbors for generations.

After reading Gross’ revelatory historical account, filmmaker Wladyslaw Pasikowski wrote and directed the “Aftermath,” based upon the story of the Jedwabne pogrom, which left him “feeling angry and helpless.”

The film is a phenomenal and powerful drama. As its title suggests, it is about life in such a town after its Christians slaughtered its Jews and proceeded to appropriate their homes and businesses.

In “Aftermath,” the Kalina brothers, whose family had been residents of the town for many generations, discovered Jewish tombstones that were being used to pave roadways within the town. In an attempt to salvage the honor of these deceased Jewish residents, one brother digs up as many of the headstones that he can find and places them together in an open field where he washes them down to reveal their Hebrew inscriptions. In doing so, the brothers are threatening to reveal the secret that the “peaceful” villagers have been trying to conceal for over 70 years. Thus they become the target of verbal abuse and assault by the locals.

The film ends tragically with the revelation that the brothers’ own family had been active participants in the massacre of their neighbors.

The book and the film precipitated considerable antisemitism in the Polish media. The film was banned in some Polish towns. The rightwing and antisemites accused the film of being part of a Jewish conspiracy to tarnish Poland’s reputation. Marciej Stuhr, the actor who played the younger brother who saved the tombstones, received death threats while at the same time winning the Polish Film Academy Award for Best Actor. He was the butt of significant abuse and was even accused of being a “Yid.” In an article by a prominent Polish newspaper, he was accused of being a “walking symbol of simplifying and manipulating history for the sake of commercial success.”

Ironically, at the same time, large portions of the Polish population not only praised the film, but welcomed it. Poland’s cultural minister at the time lauded the film, which was eventually awarded the Best Picture of the Year by the Polish Film Academy. Yet, the powers that be still did not designate the movie as its national nomination for the Academy Awards Best Foreign Language Film Award, with the thinking that it is one thing to honor the film internally and something quite different to bring it international acclaim and attention!

As to the reactions in Poland to the revelations of the 2001 publication “Neighbors,” an entity created by the Polish Parliament began investigating the Jedwabne Massacre. After three years, the case was closed because no living perpetrators could be identified. However, after a review of the 1949 judicial proceedings and a new investigation by a special prosecutor, a conclusion was drawn. “While the crime was inspired by the Germans, it was the Polish population that executed the atrocity... The perpetrators of these crimes were the Polish inhabitants of Jedwabne and the surrounding area.”

Despite this conclusion, antisemitism in Poland has increased as a result of “Neighbors” and “Aftermath.” Many Poles still maintain that not a single Pole was involved in the Jedwabne butchery. However, there was another reaction. Not long after the government report confirming that Poles carried out the Jedwabne Massacre as well as many other similar ones, the plaque that claimed that the Nazis had killed the Jews was removed. A few months later, on the 60th anniversary of the pogrom, a ceremony was held at the site of the barn. The President of Poland participated in the nationally televised event and formally apologized for the Jedwabne Pogrom and others like it. A new inscription was placed upon the plaque which read, “In memory of the Jews of Jedwabne and surrounding areas, men, women and children, fellow dwellers of this land, murdered and burned alive at this site on 10 July 1941.”

Moriah Commemorates Yom HaShoah

By Rachel Schwartz

This has been a particularly challenging year for the Jewish people, as we watched the horrors of October 7 perpetrated against our brothers and sisters in Israel and experienced growing antisemitism in our own backyards.

As always, Jews around the world have shown their fortitude and resilience. Our response to terror, evil, hatred and attempts to destroy us, is to double down and continue to build with determination, with devotion and with a sense of unity.

In the midst of tragedy and challenge, our community has strengthened its resolve to support Israel, demonstrate pride in our heritage, and build a strong Religious Zionist community in Englewood centered around our community day school— The Moriah School.



In this current climate, the promise to *“never forget”* has never felt more urgent. But more so than never forget—we must continue to share stories and truths, to look beyond words and take action and, most importantly, to continue to educate this generation and every generation of Jewish and non- Jewish students alike.

This year, Moriah’s Yom Hashoah Program helped to fulfill this very promise.

In preparation for Yom Hashoah, the Moriah Middle School students completed the learning of six Mishnayot in memory of the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust. Upon entering the Beit Knesset for Tefillah, six yahrzeit candles were lit to honor the six million victims of the Holocaust.

Each grade held a dedicated learning of two additional Mishnayos with relevance and connection to Yom Hashoah. Following davening, a student representative from each class shared these important lessons to keep in mind as we commemorated Yom Hashoah and remembered all those who were lost in Holocaust.

Later in the morning, eighth grade students from Walter T. Bergen Middle School returned to Moriah to join their eighth



grade peers in a collaborative learning experience.

After participating in Moriah’s Kristallnacht program last November, these public school students once again sat side by side with their yeshiva peers to connect

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Westchester Holds County-Wide Yom HaShoah Commemoration

By Judy Berger

On May 6, the Westchester Jewish Council presented their annual Westchester County Yom HaShoah Holocaust commemoration.

County Executive George Latimer recapped the rise of the Nazis. "It began when Hitler got power to implement the very things he said in 'Mein Kampf.' Many of us are accustomed to hearing politicians talk, saying they'll never do what they're talking about. They don't mean it. Hitler meant it. He proved it to the world. It didn't take long. He came to power in January 1933. Within a month, the Reichstag was burned. The Reichstag Fire Decrees nullified Germans' civil rights. They were told the victims were the oppressors in society. Joseph Goebbels goes down in infamy as perhaps the best marketeer that ever existed. He was able to propagandize and convince people black was white, up was down. The actions of that government led to camps, and deaths in these camps was perfectly acceptable to raise Germany to greatness."



Westchester County Executive George Latimer addressing the 2024 Holocaust Commemoration.

Latimer continued: "Learn from history. Look at the world we live in, the country we live in right now. Are we being told black is white again? Turmoil is acceptable? There will be some greater good coming out of the turmoil? I'm sure many people not there at the time question people and leaders of Germany. How could you let this happen, and in so short a time? That question is not a 1933 question, but a 2024 question. What are we prepared to do to make sure this doesn't happen?"

Holocaust survivor Annie Kleinhaus said: "Today, we collectively honor the memories of 6 million Jews. To this day, I never understood how millions of otherwise sane and educated people could be convinced their problems were due to the presence of a particular group of peaceful citizens, that the solution was simply to exterminate them all. However, we must realize, for many not directly affected, this event is receding into history. As time moves on, denials, distortions of this tragedy may create doubt in some, especially among those ignorant of history. In spite of signs of rising antisemitism in Europe, at first, then to the US, American Jews are complacent that nothing could ever change their situation. October 7th was a wakeup call.

"I couldn't believe that professors and students of American universities were responding to this massacre with glowing admiration and support for the murderers," Kleinhaus continued. "One professor called the slaughter 'awesome and exhilarating.' A leader of the protest on the campus of Columbia claimed Zionists do not have a right to live. A Jewish professor was barred from the campus where he's a faculty member.

"The Holocaust and October 7th are linked by the same ideology. Jews were considered the cause of misery in Germany. Now, Zionists are supposed to be at the root of what's wrong with the world at large. Antisemitism has been described as a mutating virus. Education was supposed to act as a preventive vaccine. Sadly, it seems many more need to be vaccinated. Perhaps the vaccine needs to be adapted to the new variant."


WJC annual procession of rescued Torahs.

After October 7, Congressman Mike Lawler went to Israel, meeting with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Lawler viewed raw footage of the terrorist attack. "One of the parts that stood out to me most was a young Palestinian man calling home. He said, 'Mom, Dad, I just killed 10 Jews with my bare hands.' That level of hatred is taught in the schools in Gaza. Sadly, it is being taught in schools here in America. It must stop immediately."

Lawler continued: "I went to Columbia University two weeks ago. I stood on the steps, as a sea of students engaged in antisemitic hate speech, intolerance and threats against Jewish students, chanting. 'From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free.' We all know this calls for the eradication of the State of Israel and the elimination of the Jewish people. Demanding that Jews go back to Poland. Calling for death to Zionists. This isn't free speech. This is a level of hatred I never thought I would see in my life."


Westchester leaders in White Plains' Garden of Remembrance marking Yom HaShoah.

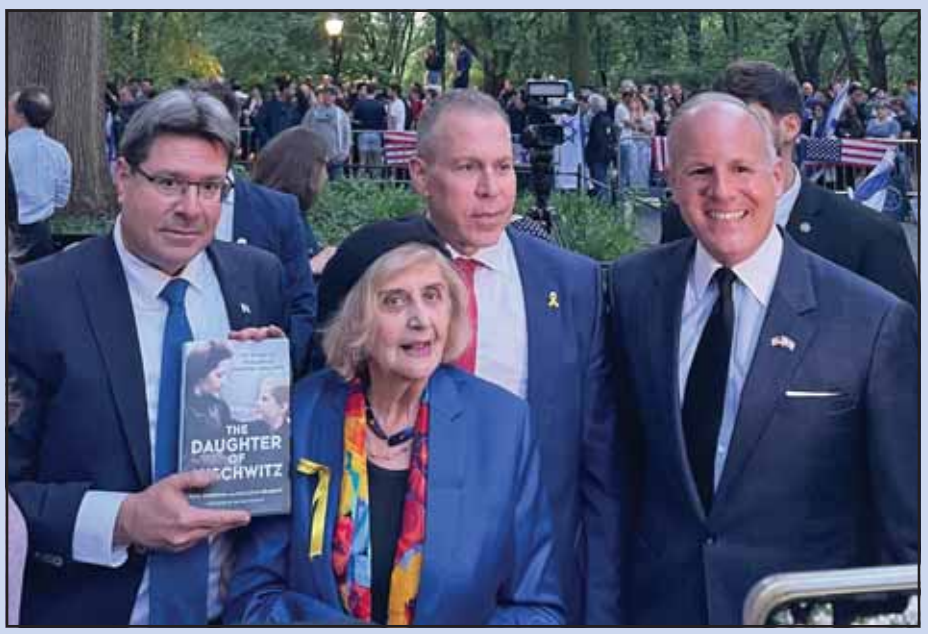
Lawler noted the passage of his bill, 'The Antisemitism Awareness Act.' "Chanting 'I am Hamas' when Hamas is endorsing your protest, when Iran, whose stated goal is to eradicate the State of Israel, is endorsing your protest, is an absolute abomination. We will not tolerate antisemitism now, not ever. We certainly won't tolerate it from our elected officials."

Lawler continued: "All of us have a responsibility, Republicans and Democrats, to stand united in support of our Jewish community, to oppose antisemitism, hatred or bigotry of any kind. I will continue to be a voice of sanity in a sea of chaos, and make sure we are doing everything we can to ensure that the Holocaust never happens again."

Holocaust Memorial Day Ceremony Held at Columbia University

By Lori Yoffe

Honoring the past, defending the future and standing in support of Jewish students, numerous organizations joined together for a Holocaust Memorial Day Ceremony near Columbia University. The ceremony served as a reflection on the past but also an affirmation of the message: Never Again is Now!



(l to r): Ofir Akunis, consul general of Israel in New York; Tova Friedman, Holocaust survivor; Amb. Gilad Erden, Israel's ambassador to the UN; Elan S. Carr, IAC CEO. (CREDIT: LORI YOFFE)

YU President Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman Leads First-Ever University Presidents and Chancellors Mission at the International March of The Living

(Courtesy of YU) Amid a sharp rise in antisemitism on US campuses, especially after the October 7 attacks in Israel, the International March of the Living launched the first ever University Presidents and Chancellors Mission from the United States and Canada which took place on the Yom HaShoah Holocaust Remembrance Day on May 6.

The March of the Living program brings participants to Poland to show a rich history of Jewish culture alongside sites of Jewish persecution. Delegates heard firsthand the experiences of Holocaust survivors and were guided by scholars-in-residence with expertise in the Holocaust, genocide and human rights. The trip culminated on Holocaust Remembrance Day (May 5-6), during which participants joined Holocaust survivors on a solemn march from Auschwitz to Birkenau to commemorate the Nazi horrors. By participating in this mission, the hope is that university leaders will bring home their insights to fight antisemitism, hatred and racism on campus.

The cohort of university presidents and chancellors from America and Canada that took part in the 2024 International March of the Living was led by Yeshiva University President Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman. The university presidents came from a diverse group of colleges and universities, including public, private, faith-based and historically Black colleges and universities.

In the aftermath of Hamas' attacks on Israel on October 7, Rabbi Berman founded the Universities United Against Terrorism—a coalition of more than 100 higher education leaders who unequivocally condemned Hamas as a terrorist organization.



YU President Berman (center) leads a delegation of university presidents to Auschwitz for the 2024 International March of the Living. Fifty five Holocaust survivors from around the world, including Holocaust survivors who were victims of the October 7 attack on Israel, led this year's International March of the Living which takes place on Yom HaShoah. Approximately 8,000 people marched the three kilometers between the prisoner of war camps, Auschwitz to Birkenau, in memory of the Holocaust victims of World War II. This year's march also included a delegation of released hostages, family of hostages, as well as relatives of people killed on and since the start of October 7. (PHOTO BY ALEXI ROSENFELD/GETTY IMAGES)

In a year when 73% of Jewish college students are reporting antisemitism on their college campuses, this group was the first of its kind among higher education leaders to proudly stand with Israel and denounce Hamas.

"Today, I stand in Auschwitz alongside a delegation of university presidents, united in bearing witness to the harrowing atrocities committed by the Nazis against the Jews during the Holocaust," said Rabbi Berman. "As antisemitism surges across the globe and college campuses, this trip reminds us that 'Never Again' is not a promise of the past, but a pressing demand of the present. Never Again is now."

"Europe's most educated and advanced country in terms of higher education, in both the arts and sciences, was none other than Germany and yet this was the very same nation that singled out for eradication an entire people—the Jewish People—in the most horrifying manner, said Dr. David Machlis, vice chairman of the International March of the Living. "As we traveled through Poland and saw the results of Nazi Germany's genocidal policies towards the Jews, we saw the direct link between antisemitism and the road to Auschwitz. We hope that through this mission, which is planned to be expanded in future years, university presidents will become allies in the fight against antisemitism—because we know all too well the potential devastating outcomes of ignoring the issue."

The March of the Living stands as a pinnacle event on Holocaust Remembrance Day. Each year, thousands of Jewish and non-Jewish students from around the globe march alongside Holocaust survivors, world leaders, ministers, religious figures and cultural icons. Since 1988, over 300,000 participants have marched from Auschwitz I to Auschwitz II-Birkenau, honoring the immense loss suffered by the Jewish people and all humanity. For the Jewish student participants of this educational program, the March of Commemoration in Poland is part of a longer journey culminating in the Independence Day March of celebration in Jerusalem.

In addition to the delegation of university presidents, this year, the March was led by 55 Holocaust survivors from countries around the world, including seven survivors who were personally impacted by the October 7 atrocities in Israel as part of a delegation of surviving victims from the deadly attacks.

Teaneck's Holocaust Commemoration Draws Over 800

The annual Teaneck Holocaust Commemoration, held at Bergenfield High School, was attended by over 800 people who came to hear Holocaust survivor, and author of "Daughter of Auschwitz," Tova Friedman tell her story of survival.

The program opened with committee co-chair Chani Jaskoll recounting the horrible situation in Israel and pledging that we will not rest until all of the hostages are free. Steve Fox, president of the Jewish Community Council of Greater Teaneck, told the crowd that he is part of a unique sandwich generation, having had a father who escaped the Warsaw Ghetto and became a partisan and a son who is an IDF veteran who served three months in the reserves after October 7. He also offered information about the new configuration of the proposed Northern New Jersey Holocaust Memorial & Education Center.



Steve Fox



Rabbi Elliot Schrier



Tova Friedman



Committee members.

Felicia Grossman, co-chair of the event, introduced Tova Friedman, who endured eight months as a child inmate in Auschwitz and narrowly escaped death on numerous occasions. She ultimately survived by hiding among the corpses to avoid the infamous death march at the end of the war. The 85 year old child survivor eloquently and in great detail described her horrifying experiences to the captivated audience.

The program also included music by the students of TABC's Studio 1600, as well as music of the Shoah by singer and musician Jonathan Rimberg and violinist Stephanie Kurzman. A special candle lighting ceremony by a five-generation legacy family, led by 97 year old patriarch Norbert Strauss, whose family escaped Germany after Kristallnacht, presented a poignant, meaningful segment in the program. Tehillim was recited by Rabbi Elliot Schrier, rabbi of Congregation Bnai Yeshurun, who recounted seeing piles of shoes of murder victims in Kibbutz Be'eri, which was reminiscent of those displayed in concentration camps. AJ Schreiber led the gathering in Kaddish and Kel Maaleh Rachamim, while a long list of names of victims of the Shoah related to local families scrolled on the screen.

This annual event is the largest Holocaust commemoration in New Jersey. For more information, visit teaneckyomhashoa.org.

The Shrinking Loop of Denial



By Arlene Rifky Atkin

"I am trying to write down anything that I remember from the Shoah."

With these words, my mother unknowingly authored her final Holocaust testimony, a shortened encapsulation of the destruction wrought by the genocidal Nazis upon her family, her town and our people. Her message is simple and understated, yet powerful and profound. I share here her handwritten note to perpetuate its preservation on Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day.

The words she wrote were recorded on an ordinary notepad, captured in her characteristic European hand to serve as talking points for the annual Yom HaShoah event she would be attending with us in 2018 at Congregation Ohr Torah in Edison.

On that night six years ago this week, and with me at her side, she was one of six Holocaust survivors who were each asked to light a memorial candle in remembrance of the 6 million Jews murdered during the Nazis' reign of terror and industrial genocide that were to become known as the Holocaust in the English-speaking world, and as the Shoah in Hebrew.

I found the note among her papers in December 2020, several weeks after she passed away on Oct. 23, 2020. I remembered how she had scribbled her thoughts quickly, trying to hold onto the memories that threatened to elude her and seemed to jump one step ahead of her being able to capture them. I sensed her mind racing against time and more likely, against the ravages of age that she knew were encroaching on her ability to record, recite and retell her story.

The account she captured portrays her story in its most truncated form, a version collapsed into one single paragraph and reduced from the original, unadulterated and fully detailed narrative that had been told to my sisters and me throughout our childhood, adolescence and adulthood.

Unlike my father's Holocaust testimony cut short with his untimely death at age 55 in 1981, my mother's voice and witness to history blossomed and grew in confidence, as if to compensate for the loss of his. Over the years, her testimony was immortalized on video in 1996 by Steven Spielberg's Shoah Foundation and with the Names Not Numbers program at the Rabbi Pesach Raymon Yeshiva (RPRY) in 2015. With time, she eventually grew eager to tell her experiences to her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, to our Shabbat guests and to our friends.

Looking back now, I sense that in the last years of her life she perhaps knew the day was approaching when her voice, and those of her fellow survivors, would be silenced by age, illness and mortality.

But what I suspect she never contemplated was the possibility that Holocaust denial could insidiously take hold and take over entire societies and history books so close to her own lifetime. The thought that there might come a day when testimonies like hers were in doubt, mocked and denied was unimaginable.

This very week marks exactly 80 years since my mother's and father's families were taken to respective ghettos from their homes, resulting in the murder of their families four weeks later in the gas chambers of Auschwitz. It is utterly inconceivable to me that with thousands of hours of survivor testimony recorded, and ultra-detailed record-keeping prized and preserved by the SS themselves, there are cultures today that view this tragedy as pure fantasy. Sadly, there are growing pockets of these deniers in our own society.

The Loop of Denial — the time it took for the Holocaust to be in doubt, for cultures to consider the 6 million to be an exaggerated figure or an outright lie — now seems quaintly generous and prolonged.

In 2024, the Loop of Denial has collapsed inward, imploding upon itself like the death of a star. The rapid retraction and shrinkage of this feedback loop mirrors the swiftness of rumors that race at internet speed around the globe, and lies that grow exponentially enabled by TikTok algorithms fueled by today's uneducated elite and clueless consumers of content.

On the day of the Oct. 7 massacre just seven months ago, I stood in a bomb shelter in Jerusalem reciting the Yizkor memorial service for my parents, not yet knowing the details of the horror unfolding, but understanding that the repeated sirens, overhead rumble of military aircraft, and snippets of news that reached us were worrying and increasingly ominous.

The full tragedy revealed to us hours later would be met initially with a whiff of compassion by other countries, a fleeting blip of sympathy that seemed grudgingly granted by much of the world. With the terrorists recording their own crimes, broadcasting the massacre on social media, and phoning their parents to boast of the murders they'd just committed, the thought of denying the atrocities seemed out of the question.

Yet, on Day 213 with the shrunken Loop of Denial that is our 2024 reality, we are already there. Holocaust denial took decades to take hold. The massacres of Oct. 7 are in our immediate rearview mirror, yet it's taken mere months or even weeks for the facts to be diminished, doubted and denied.

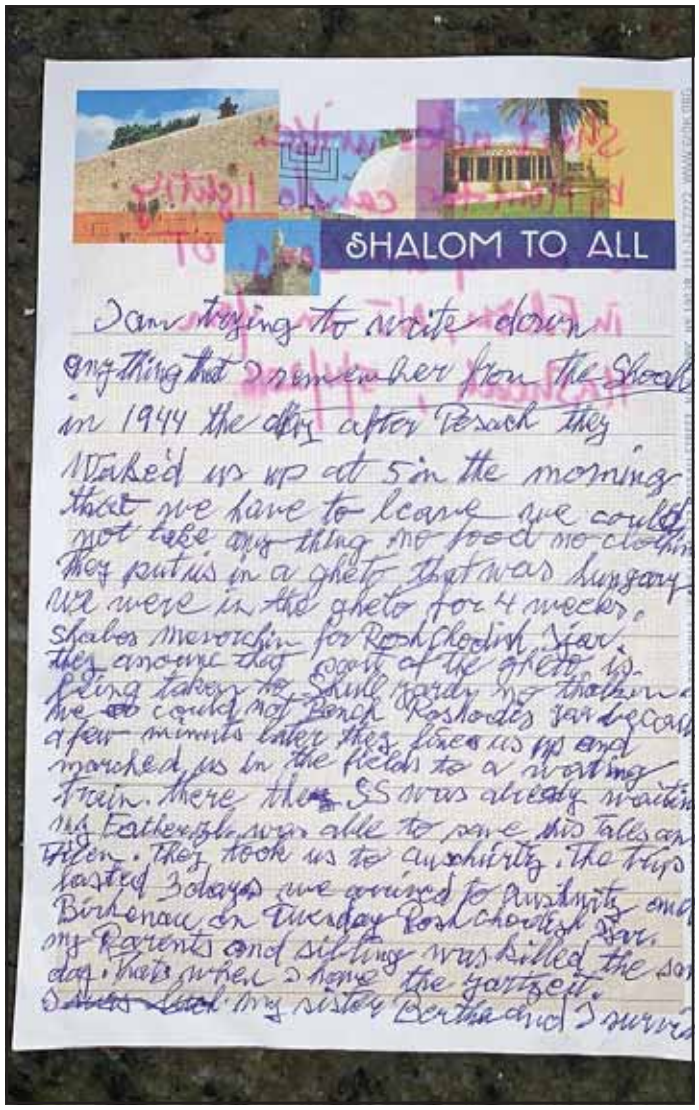
My mother's words now seem prescient and prophetic: "I am trying to write down anything that I remember from the Shoah." It's almost as if she were racing against time for the facts to not only be retrieved while crisp in her own memory, but to hasten their communication outward before the truths of the remaining Holocaust survivors could be denied and silenced.

Seven months after the atrocities of Oct. 7 and 80 years after the expanding tragedy of the Holocaust finally reached my mother's and father's families in their respective homes in Hungarian-occupied Slovakia and Romania, I feel more than ever the obligation to speak out on Yom HaShoah.

As a child of two Holocaust survivors, my sisters and I grew up with a list of characteristically irrational aversions that were common to other children of survivors, the 2nd Gen soul sisters and brothers of my generation: the belching smoke of chimneys, the fires emanating by the gas pilot lights on oil refineries alongside the New Jersey Turnpike, the claustrophobia of speeding trains with crowded human cargo, the stylish wooden clogs that triggered flashbacks in my parents' eyes, and even the guttural sounds of the German language itself. We were raised with reassurances of safety and distance from danger by our loving parents, yet were bred with generational trauma, just barely tamed under the surface to keep the sense of impending doom at bay.

"Never Again" was part of the lexicon, heightened by our innate knowledge of how serenity and safety could be swiftly upended. Only now we're not the only ones who understand this — it's become the universal truth of our time as waves of Jew-hatred lap at our feet and spread at 2024 warp speed. The message of today is undeniable: Never Again Is Now.

On Holocaust Remembrance Day, Yom HaShoah 2024, here you can see my mother's note in her own hand or read her poignant words in my transcription below.



****

I am trying to write down anything that I remember from the Shoah.

In 1944, the day after Pesach, they woke us up at 5 in the morning, that we have to leave. We could not take anything: no food, no clothing. They put us in a ghetto that was in Hungary. We were in the ghetto for 4 weeks. On Shabbos Mevorchim for Rosh Chodesh (translation: the blessing of the new month recited on the Sabbath before the new moon), they announced that part of the ghetto is being taken to the Shul yard. No Talking. We could not bentsch Rosh Chodesh because a few minutes later they lined us up and marched us in the fields to a waiting train. There, the SS was already waiting. My father was able to save his Tallis and Tefillin (translation: prayer shawl and phylacteries). They took us to Auschwitz. The trip lasted 3 days. We arrived to Auschwitz and Birkenau on Tuesday, Rosh Chodesh Sivan. My parents and siblings were killed that same day. That's when I have the yahrzeit.

My sister Bertha and I survived.

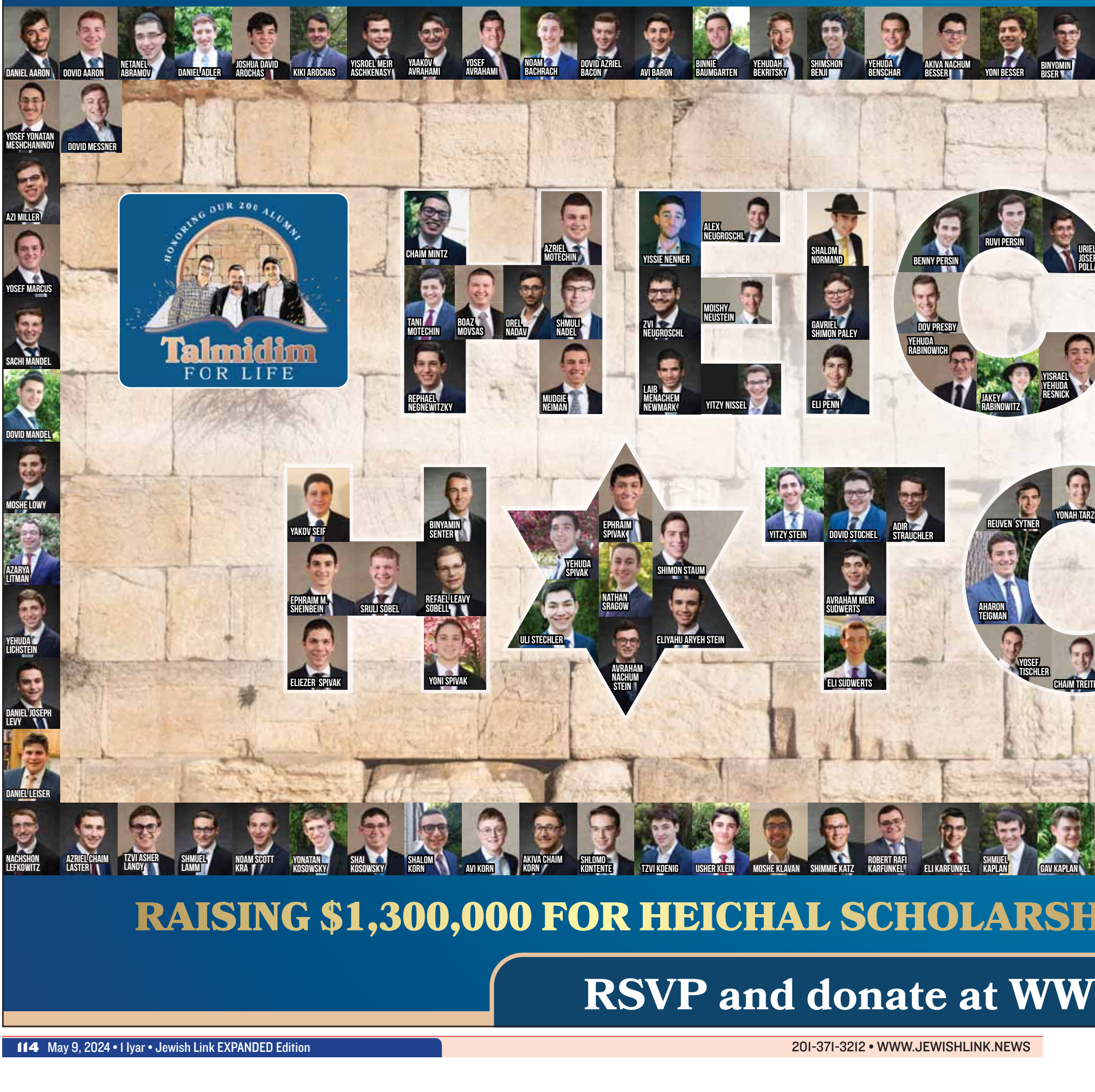
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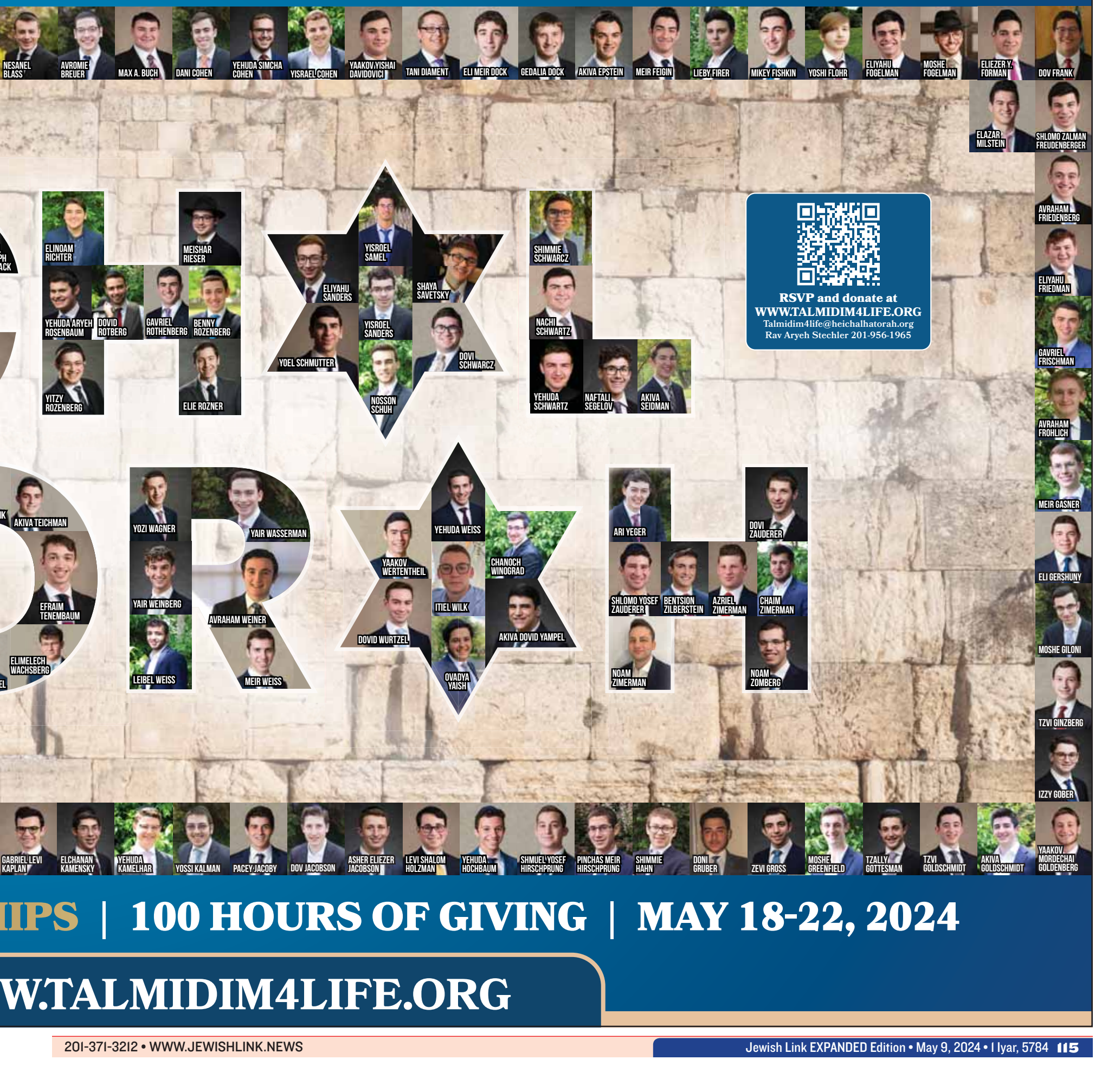
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The Secret Story From Viviers, France

By Barbara Angelakis

The extremely dangerous efforts of thousands of individuals from all walks of life that hid, helped or rescued Jews from Nazi persecution during World War II is legendary. Even after so many years have passed, these gripping stories cry out to be heard and remembered. This is especially so during this time of raging anti-Semitism. Following is the untold story of one indescribably brave woman. At the request of her still-living relatives, names are withheld to protect their privacy.



Gobelin Tapestries Viviers Cathedral. (CREDIT: BARBARA ANGELAKIS)

My husband and I were on our fourth Viking River Cruise, this time exploring the Ardeche region of southern France. Viviers was on Viking's enrichment excursions program and our small group was lucky to be assigned a local guide that had a secret story to tell.



Star of David Ring. (CREDIT: BARBARA ANGELAKIS)

Viviers is a charming medieval town situated along the right bank of the Rhone River with typical narrow winding cobblestoned streets connecting the lower to the upper town. Many of the original houses with their uniformly tiled roofs and ubiquitous shutters painted in pastel colors are still occupied. Viviers claim to fame is its continually in-use 12th century Saint-Vincent Cathedral that sits high above the lower town, where the common folk lived, from its great height in the upper town, where the clergy and wealthy citizens lived. The building has undergone periodic updates but still has details that hark back to Roman times, while the apse with its eight chapels is traditional Gothic architecture. The Cathedral is renowned for the six original Gobelin tapestries gracing its walls. According to our guide, there had been seven, but the one of the Last Supper was "temporarily" removed in the 1970s by the French government for "restoration" and has subsequently ended up on permanent display in the Louvre Museum in Paris.



Viviers City Hall. (CREDIT: BARBARA ANGELAKIS)

During our tour of Viviers, our guide pointed out his ancestral home. This is the house where his parents lived during World War II with their firstborn child, along with his mother's brother and his wife. We stopped at the town square just a few yards further on where he dramatically recounted their heroic story.

As Western Europe began to crumble under the yoke of the Third Reich, a small group of Jewish professionals fled Poland and made their way southwest, barely outrunning the rapidly advancing Nazi occupation, until their arrival in Southern France in the spring of 1942. Perhaps they had been trying to reach Avignon, with its sizable Jewish community, but the town of Viviers was as far as they got before the area was completely overrun by German soldiers and they were out of options. Among the frantic group were a young doctor and his wife. The survival of the other members of the group has been lost to history but we did learn of the good doctor's fate that afternoon, and even almost 80 years later its telling still had a visceral effect.

Viviers was a small town with a few thousand inhabitants of which only a handful were Jewish. The Nazis arrived in November 1942 and were garrisoned in Viviers and the surrounding towns after rounding up all the Jewish residents for transport to Auschwitz. Only a few Jews were successfully hidden by the staunchly Catholic population. Somehow our guide's mother found the young Polish doctor separated from his group trying to hide from the Gestapo. She literally grabbed him off the street and hid him in a small cupboard in her attic, caring for him for two full years.

Viviers was not bombed during the war and there was little action until November 1944 when the American troops began the liberation of France. All the German soldiers stationed in Viviers were hastily moved to the front to repel the American invasion leaving the occupation of the town to a squad of Hitler Youth led by a 15-year-old boy.

The boys of the squad, aged 9-15, full of their own power and the cruelty of youth, ran amuck killing and terrorizing at will and somehow uncovered the secret of the family hiding a Jew. The 15-year-old leader had our guide's parents and young sister, along with his mother's brother and wife, brought to the square outside their house; the very same square in which we were standing listening to the harrowing tale.



Vivier's Square. (CREDIT: BARBARA ANGELAKIS)

The leader inquired where the Jew was hiding and our guide's mother casually replied "I don't know what you are talking about." This response predictably displeased the young man who removed his pistol from its holster and unceremoniously shot her brother in the head, killing him instantly. Again he asked where the Jew was hiding and with her brother lying dead at her feet, she again replied "I don't know what you are talking about." The frustrated youth responded that if the hiding place of the Jew was not revealed he would shoot every member of the family until the hiding place was exposed. We don't know what her response would have been, and thankfully she did not have to make one because US forces arrived in the square just in the nick of time, having broken through the German ranks. Seeing the deadly scene before them, they shot the leader before he could pull the trigger again. The pistol that killed the brother was retrieved and is still in the possession of the family.



Viviers Square. (CREDIT: BARBARA ANGELAKIS)

When the fighting ended, the Jewish doctor was miraculously reunited with his wife. She had found refuge in a neighboring town when they were separated, but for two long years neither knew the other was alive. When they fled Poland, everything was left behind but one sacred possession—a star of David family ring. This precious ring was gifted by the doctor in gratitude to the family that sacrificed so much for him, and our guide proudly wears it to this day.

After the war the Jewish couple settled in Viviers, where over the years the doctor was credited with the saving of many lives and of bringing new ones into the world, including that of our guide and his siblings, until his death at the ripe old age of 97.

The final irony is that being a devout Catholic, the mother felt it her duty to act as she had, and she never wanted to be acknowledged as a hero. That is why her name is not mentioned in this story. It's also the reason she refused to have her name inscribed in the wall of honor in the Garden of the Righteous at Yad Vashem when Israel's National Holocaust Memorial reached out to her with this offer.s

As it is inscribed in the Talmud (Sanhedrin 37a), "Whoever saves a life, it is as though he had saved the entire world."

Am Yisrael Chai.



House in Barbara's Viviers Article. (CREDIT: BARBARA ANGELAKIS)

Westchester Shuls Join for Yom HaShoah Program

By Judy Berger

On May 5, Westchester communities commemorated Yom HaShoah at the Young Israel of Scarsdale (YIS) in New York. The program was entitled "Stories of Survival Throughout the Generations." Six community rabbis lit memorial candles.



Dr. Jeffrey Berger, speaking, leads Dor L'Dor L'Dor panel: (l-r) Malka Helft, Judah Sosnick and Nicole Horowitz seated at table.

YIS Rabbi Morgenstern remarked, "The last time we were here together as a community was in the immediate aftermath of Oct. 7. But our strength is in our unity, as a community." Morgenstern quoted President Herzog's speech earlier that day at Israel's Yom HaShoah observance. "Throughout the decades that have passed since the Holocaust, we reassured ourselves time after time never again. We swore the Jewish people would never again stand defenseless and unprotected.

"Despite all that, the horrors of the Holocaust shook us all during the October massacres, echoing in all our hearts. To me, the description of mothers silencing babies so they wouldn't cry in a way that would give away their hiding place, of children torn from their parents and abominable murderers, who saw in the Nazis, a model to emulate. The most Jews were slaughtered in one day since the Holocaust." Herzog noted, "Oct. 7 was not a Holocaust because today we have the state of Israel and the Israel Defense Forces, although the results of the tragedy and the shock still haunt us. Our brothers and sisters who perished in the Holocaust would only dream of a country and an army of our own in the homeland two millennia after being exiled from it."

Herzog spoke to Holocaust survivors stating, "You are our eternal heroes. Your legacy is a legacy of resilience, of pride, of hope, the source of our unwavering belief that our people can overcome anything."

The program continued with the screening of Maaleh Film Institute's short film, "Girl #60427," which won a BAFTA, Britain's equivalent to the Academy Awards. In the film, director Shulamit Lifshitz tells her own story of learning her grandmother was a Holocaust survivor. In Tel Aviv during the summer of 1998, she finds her grandmother's secret Holocaust notebook. Grandma's story resonates in her well-developed imagination. The fun week in Tel Aviv with Grandpa and Grandma turned into something else entirely. Lifshitz's grandmother's diary is now at Yad Vashem.


YIS Rabbi Jonathan Morgenstern reciting memorial prayer at Yom HaShoah observance. Six memorial candles lit by six local rabbis.

The event continued with the Dor L'Dor L'Dor panel discussion led by Dr. Jeffrey Berger, son of Holocaust survivors, and three grandchildren of Holocaust survivors, Nicole Horowitz, Judah Sosnick and Malka Helft.

Horowitz told the story of her bubby from Poland, who was 12-years-old in 1939 when the Germans invaded her town. "Polish neighbors, who the day before called them their friends, shouted 'Death to the Jew.'" Her bubby watched her father and two brothers taken to camps. She watched her mother's sheitel ripped off as she was herded onto a train. Surviving the camps and death marches, she was liberated from Bergen-Belsen in April 1945.

Sosnick described listening to his grandfather from a recording. "It's striking how everything happens slowly, then suddenly, all at once. Their business is taken away. There's no jobs, no school, patches on clothing, and then, in the winter of 1942, shipped off to a ghetto." On arrival at the ghetto, his grandmother passed away from typhus. Later, the grandfather also nearly died from typhus and typhoid. Hearing the ghetto was going to be liquidated, they ran to the forest, which was hell on earth; starvation caused him and his brother to break into a labor camp just to survive.

Sosnick added, "A couple of months after that, at the end of 1943, they [the two brothers] heard that [the Germans] were going to liquidate that labor camp." They escaped into the forest, somehow reuniting with their father and one sister. The second sister died in the forest from appendicitis the week before they were reunited. A few weeks later, they split up to search for food. One day they heard the Germans; her grandfather's brother and father were captured and killed while he survived by escaping barefoot in the snow. He told of constantly being hunted, praying constantly, on the move, starving, looking for a place to survive from moment to moment until the area was liberated.


YINR's Rabbi Chaim Axelrod lights memorial candle for Shoah victims.

Helft relayed the story about her grandmother, who lived in Czechoslovakia before the war. "Right after Pesach 1944, they [the family] put their Passover dishes away. The next morning, they were taken to Auschwitz. The family went together but were separated immediately. Her mother and father were sent to one side; she was sent with her sister and brother to another side. They were lucky enough to work until they were let out." In 1945, after camps were liquidated, their mother survived the death march."

The audience joined Morgenstern, singing "Acheinu" and "Ani Ma'amin," "in the firm belief in unity and a better tomorrow."

The event also featured the Young Israel of North Woodmere's Oct. 7 exhibit "Reflections of Past; Promises of Renewal," bearing witness to the destruction and loss in southern Israel.

Yom HaShoah to a Lone Soldier

By Michael Racer

I drafted to the IDF as a lone soldier on April 7. Speaking recently to my madricha from Mechina (pre-army preparation program) she said "מיכאל, אתה משוגע" – "Michael, you're crazy" in response to me saying that I love being in שריון – the IDF Armored Corps, I enjoy being on a base in the middle of the Negev Desert, far from civilization, and I enjoy being in the field during the daily, half-day sandstorms. And you know, maybe I am crazy. But I don't really think so.

Today, Monday May 6, 2024, is my first יום השואה as a soldier in the IDF. With all the training going on, I nearly forgot. However, last night, my commander sat my מחלקה down and started a conversation about יום השואה. He asked us the following question: "What does it mean 'to remember'?" Those who answered said the obvious - "to not forget what happened." While that is the obvious answer, it's not enough.

When it was my turn to answer, I said that growing up in America with grandparents who are children of Holocaust survivors, I was taught that remembering the Holocaust means understanding that it can happen again. All it takes is one generation to turn on the Jews. That statement emphasizes why I decided to serve in the IDF. The IDF isn't just an army to defend מדינת ישראל, but to defend all of עם ישראל, all around the world.

Every יום השואה and International Holocaust Remembrance Day we see on various internet platforms the memorial candle, with "Never Again" written below. It's a nice message, but sadly, these days that message doesn't have as much impact as years before. Go to any college campus in the U.S. right now with that on a sign and you'll hear the echoes of Nazi Germany screamed at you, "Dirty Jew!" "Filthy Jew!" "Jewish Pig!" Clearly now, just remembering doesn't seem to be enough. Clearly, we need to take more action in defense of our people, the Jewish People.



For me that meant coming to Israel and drafting to defend our right, as Jews, to exist - to prevent what happened 80+ years ago from happening again.

As the old adage goes, "Actions speak louder than words." I ask you, what actions are you taking to ensure that "Never Again" means exactly that. Never. Again.

So, you can call me crazy for gladly eating food covered in sand some days, but it doesn't matter to me because in the end I'm here defending my existence and my people's existence. I'm putting action behind the words "Never Again."

Michael Racer is a 19 year old from Teaneck. He is a proud member of the IDF's 188th "Barak" Armored Brigade.

Dealing With the Rise of Antisemitism on Our Doorstep



By Rabbi Tzvi Pittinsky

When I was growing up in Highland Park, I remember fondly our monthly family drive to visit my grandparents in Brooklyn. We would first stop in Borough Park or Flatbush to load the car with kosher meat, the latest Artscroll works from Eichlers Bookstore, and sometimes some Paskesz candies for me and my siblings. We would then take the side streets to my grandparents' apartment in the "new" development of Starrett City.

Along the way, we would drive through my father's childhood neighborhood of East New York, where he would point out all the Jewish sites which were now churches or random stores. I particularly remember a very large shul with a Jewish star carved into the edifice where my father told us he became a bar mitzvah, which is now a Christian day care center.

Through the wonders of Google, I recently researched this shul, which I confirmed from my father was the New Lots Talmud Torah that in its heyday had hundreds of students and two Shabbat morning minyans in the upstairs and downstairs with some 500 people davening in each. In the early 1960s, as the neighborhood changed, the shul fell into disrepair and eventually was sold, becoming the Bishop Gregory Day Care Center. On Google Maps you can still see it, mostly intact, although many of the windows and the Jewish star on the building have been paved over.

In my hometown of Highland Park/Edison, all three major shuls when I was a kid were continuations of synagogues in neighboring New Brunswick which had closed down. Similarly, where I now live in West Orange, the largest shul, affectionately known as the "alphabet shul," AABJ&D, began as a merging of three shuls from nearby Newark and since then has collected Torah scrolls and yahrzeit plaques from a number of other Newark synagogues. And two of the most prominent Jewish day schools in Essex and Bergen counties are continuations of schools originally in Newark and Paterson.

This phenomena encapsulates the story of American Jewry in the 20th century. Jews move to a community, build Jewish institutions, and then as their personal economics and/or the nature of the neighborhood changes, flee to the suburbs to start anew. I share this here not just for nostalgia or as a Jewish history lesson but because I wonder if history will repeat itself and my grandchildren will someday have a similar experience pointing out the shuls and schools from their "old" neighborhoods in West Orange, Highland Park and Teaneck. I wonder if our days in this goldener medeina of America are numbered.

The rise of antisemitism on our college campuses and in our Jewish communities has caused many of us to feel uneasy. A study just released by Tel Aviv University and the Anti-Defamation League (tiny.cc/antisemitism2023), reported a 103% increase in antisemitic incidents in the U.S. this past year while "nearly three-fourths of American university students have said they experienced or witnessed some form of antisemitism since the academic year began." A shocking number! As believing Jews, we all know that our future lies in Israel. Perhaps this future is much closer than we think.

Rabbi Meir Simcha of Dvinsk wrote about this in his classic Torah commentary, the "Meshech Chochmah." In Parshat Bechukotai 26:44, he described the situation of the Jew in exile.

Israel has been among the non-Jews for many, many years — none of the world's inhabitants could believe the Jewish nation would exist for such a long time in such a miraculous fashion; it is incomprehensible to any intelligent person. For the thousands of years that swept over the diminutive nation, so weak and helpless, it was the way of hashgacha that they would rest for close to 100-200 years. Afterward, a storm wind would emerge and give rise to many waves; it would destroy, decimate, wear them out, demolish and sweep them away without mercy. The Jews would flee to a distant place and there they would reunite into a nation.



New Lots Talmud Torah, East New York now Bishop Gregory Day Care Center

They would grow and rise up, and their wisdom would lead them to success until they would forget they were strangers in a strange land. They would think this is the place from which they originated, and lose hope for Hashem's spiritual salvation at the appointed time. There, an even stronger storm wind would come and it would remind them with a raging sound and an earthquake: "You are a Jew. Who made you into a man? Go for yourself to a land you do not know."

When we use our intellect to examine history, we see the alternating pattern of the Jew's situation and his existence among the nations. This is for two reasons: to keep the true religion and its purity, and for the nation's continued existence ... the nation will abandon religious study and study foreign languages; they will think that Berlin is Jerusalem .... Then a storm wind will come and a tempest will uproot the nation from its main root and put it in a distant nation whose language they never learned.

In almost prophetic words composed in the 1920s, he wrote, "They will think that Berlin is Jerusalem." Just substitute Columbia or Harvard or Teaneck or West Orange for Berlin. A sobering thought as we watch the world erupt on our college campuses and in our Jewish neighborhoods.

Many of us still live in the Diaspora for many valid reasons; I include myself although I wonder at times if I am a hypocrite. We can never forget that our existence here is temporary. So what are we to do?

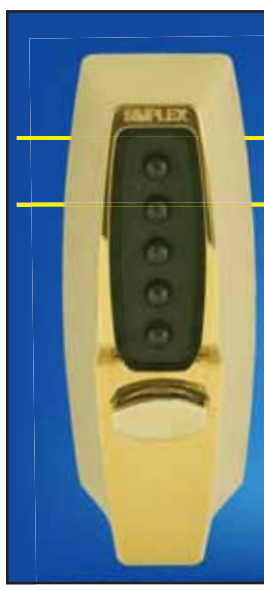
I recently heard Rabbi Ari Berman, the president of my alma mater Yeshiva University, on The Times of Israel podcast, as he described the brave steps that Yeshiva has taken in these trying times. He talked about a multipronged approach advocating for college presidents to join together in signing a public letter and taking action against antisemitism, opening up the doors of Yeshiva University by extending admissions deadlines for students who wish to transfer from the most egregiously antisemitic schools, and opening up a new branch of Yeshiva University for the first time in Israel.

I believe this approach by Rabbi Berman can serve as a template for us. Firstly, we must enlist allies from the non-Jewish world both from politics or popular culture, and regular people we meet at work or in the grocery store or at the gas station, in order to fight antisemitism. I have written about this in these pages in the past. Secondly, we must open our doors, both figuratively and literally, to Jews of all types and join together as one Am Yisrael. We live in a post-denominational world where institutional allegiances no longer matter much to most of our Jewish brothers and sisters. If we engage all Jews we interact with in person and online in a nonjudgmental fashion, with cords of love as our prophets described, we can make our people stronger. And finally, we should all begin to plan on some level for when we will be going to Israel. This will mean different things for each of us but Israel should never be far from our minds.

As Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik said in his classic work, "Kol Dodi Dofek," our beloved is knocking through the establishment of the state of Israel. God is knocking in many ways. And one of those knocks is that in Israel, דם יהודי אינו הפקר, Jewish blood is no longer cheap. Theodore Herzl's dream of the Jewish state being the solution to the age-old problem of antisemitism is unfortunately not yet true. But in Israel, we have agency. We have a Jewish nation with a Jewish army to fight back against the forces of hate. God is knocking on the door for us to return. The question is, when will we answer.

Rabbi Tzvi Pittinsky is the director of educational technology at Yeshivat Frisch in Paramus. He can be reached at tzvi.pittinsky@frisch.org.

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House Passes Antisemitism Awareness Act

By Debra Rubin

As antisemitism triggered by the Israel-Hamas War surges to unprecedented levels, federal initiatives are being leveraged to protect the Jewish community.

The House passed the Antisemitism Awareness Act by a large bipartisan majority, 320-91, with 70 Democrats and 21 Republicans voting against it. The bill was introduced by New York Rep. Mike Lawler (R-Dist.17). Among its area co-sponsors was New Jersey Rep. Josh Gottheimer (D-Dist. 5).

If passed by the Senate and signed into law by President Joe Biden the bill would mandate that the federal Department of Education use the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism when determining anti-Jewish discrimination.

The IHRA states "antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews," and cites several examples, including the "targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity."

The IHRA definition has been adopted by more than 1,000 entities worldwide, including 34 states and 43 countries and the U.S. State Department, which adopted it in 2010.

Lawler said on X, formerly Twitter, the adoption of the act "gives teeth to federal anti-discrimination laws to go after those who attack their Jewish peers.



Pictured with Congressman Gottheimer are Ma'ayanot students Sophie Fine Miri Hochberg, Devorah Luber, Halleli Lippe, Eva Yuster, Sophia Landau and Raizel Kleinman.

"Politics should never get in the way of the safety of students," he wrote. "The strong bipartisan support for and passage of this legislation will ensure that it won't."

In a program May 3 at Ma'ayanot Yeshiva High School for Girls in Teaneck, Gottheimer spoke about the bill, calling it "a framework to evaluate antisemitism and hold those who harass and discriminate on campus accountable."

There was pushback against the bill from those who felt it painted too broad a definition of antisemitism, which is already covered under anti discrimination laws.

Gottheimer was at the school to announce that $4.8 million dollars had been earmarked through the federal Nonprofit Security Grant Program for 34 institutions, which will receive grants of up to $150,000, in northern New Jersey. Included is Ma'ayanot, which "like other institutions are facing a surge of hate and antisemitism," he said.

Those grants were awarded despite the program being "oversubscribed" with applicants requesting $679 million for a program that only had $300 million available, resulting in just 42 % of applications being approved.

However, through the $95 billion supplemental aid and security bill providing assistance to Israel, Ukraine and Taiwan, Gottheimer said he helped negotiate an additional $400 million in new extra funding for the program.

The funds go toward physical barriers such as bulletproof glass, technologies such as cameras as well as the hiring of security guards at houses of worship, schools and religious community centers. It also assists with training needed by nonprofits to ensure their safety and security.

"New Jersey, like the rest of the country, should be a no-hate state," said Gottheimer. "You can't just say it. You must do something to ensure it."

The congressman noted that last year the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) recorded a record number of antisemitic incidents, particularly since the Oct. 7 terror attacks by Hamas.

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‘Israel Friends’ Provides Critical Aid to Soldiers

By Dassi Lewis

“Israel Friends” is a nonprofit organization that, like many others, started in the wake of October 7. What sets it apart from other groups that began at that time is that its leadership was immediately prepared to hit the ground running with specialized expertise in aid delivery.

Israel Friends is a spinoff mission of an already established and successful organization, The Worldwide Friends Foundation (WFF), which is a North American nonprofit started by entrepreneurs to help communities and countries during crises. WFF started after Russia invaded Ukraine and its focus was evacuating children and families from war zones, housing and feeding them, providing education for the children, and sourcing and supplying critical medical supplies. Over the course of two years, the WFF’s specific mission, Ukraine Friends, provided $35 million in critical aid to Ukrainian families and children in need.

Kyle Blank, the executive director of Israel Friends, shared with The Jewish Link that on October 7, the leadership of WFF heard what was happening in Israel and immediately sprang into action, saying, “We know what to do and how to do it, and it’s our moral responsibility to do this.”



Israel Friends provides thousands of life-saving items in Israel.

Israel Friends has a lean team: a staff of just eight people, some of whom are part-time. They believe that donation dollars are meant for the soldiers and people of Israel, so 95 cents of each dollar goes to the field. “We hold ourselves to that standard,” said Blank. A large, committed group of volunteers helps the organization fundraise, do marketing and, most importantly, deliver gear to the front lines.

Israel Friends also has 30 advisors between the ages of 30 and 70 who have made many crucial introductions to government officials and potential donors.

These advisors have been able to open many doors for Israel Friends, because they are well respected in the Israeli military and political environment. As an example, Blank explained that before he joined Israel Friends in November, he had spent the first month of the war volunteering with the Israeli Ministry of Defense where he brokered deals between Israel and safety equipment vendors around the world. That experience opened up new relationships for him that have proven helpful for Israel Friends.



On International Women’s Day, Israel Friends shows how it provides therapy for female survivors and first responders.

Within the first week, they had organized full flights to Israel with soldiers, reservists, doctors, nurses and tremendous amounts of cargo, on some of the first planes to land in Israel that week. In fact, on October 10 – within 72 hours of the crisis – there was a full plane chartered of reservists and cargo from LAX to TLV.

Blank explained that Israel Friends was able to organize so quickly and effectively following the events of October 7 because it was built by a board that had already operated together to great success providing aid to Ukraine, so the team was able to create this new entity within hours. Furthermore, each of the board members are proud Zionists, and provided substantial support from their for-profit businesses, from staff time to proprietary technology, to get Israel Friends up and running in no time.

Israel Friends has three main areas of focus: delivering critical aid to soldiers and first responders, supplying commercial technology to soldiers that changes the modern battlefield, and providing timely access to mental health support for Israelis who need it.

Providing aid and technology solutions for soldiers, first responders and civilian guards (*kitot konennut*) is crucial. “That’s our largest bucket,” said Blank. So, if other groups such as new nonprofits start working in that sector, Israel Friends either collaborates with them or pivots to something else within the larger goal that needs more attention.

“What is critical to note,” said Blank, “is that commercial technology can dramatically change the battlefield situation for a soldier today and significantly increase the chances that a soldier comes home alive and well.” Visibility is the underlying theme of this war – with commercial and military technologies being used to provide enhanced abilities. This comes from commercial drones (house to house or thermal overwatch), camera systems, night vision capabilities and more. Giving soldiers the ability to see their surroundings is the number one thing that Israel Friends is focused on today.

Providing mental health support to individuals and communities who have experienced trauma or may be suffering with PTSD is another key area of focus. “Thank God in Israel there are so many groups helping people through many variations of therapy. There are so many nonprofits providing support. But when we spoke to the Ministry of Health, we found that because it’s not covered by governmental insurance, there’s a growing gap in the ability to provide and receive psychiatric care. Before October 7, most often when people needed therapy in Israel, they didn’t go to a psychiatrist. They sought other forms of counseling, partially based on the knowledge that there was a three to six month wait time to see a psychiatrist. The system was backed up even then. Then October 7 terrorized the nation. Now the system is completely overwhelmed with tens of thousands of people who want to see psychiatrists and get care that only medication can provide,” Blank said.



Six-month update.

Israel Friends saw this massive wave of need for psychiatric care and stepped up to find a way to help. They realized that many displaced people staying in Eilat or the Dead Sea area were not near psychiatrists and that many traumatized people, wherever they were, were afraid to leave their homes. Israel Friends realized that psychiatric services provided by Israeli practitioners were needed (as it’s too much paperwork for psychiatrists from abroad to participate). They also needed a telehealth platform so that people could meet with psychiatrists virtually. Israel Friends is now supporting a telehealth platform called “Healthy Mind.”



Volunteers packing at Israel Friends.

“The bottom line,” said Blank, “is that it’s not spoken about, but the suicide rate in Israel is going up. We are seeing it in every avenue—survivors of the 7th, Nova survivors, first responders, civilian guards, soldiers and reservists. It’s not spoken about because there is so much trauma going on that people don’t have a second to note the wave of suicide. And the main way to stop it is to provide psychiatric services in the country.” “Healthy Mind” is now integrated with Israel’s resiliency centers. An individual who needs psychiatric care can go to a resiliency center where a mental health professional will refer them to “Healthy Mind,” and instead of waiting 90 to 180 days, they will meet with a psychiatrist within five days. The company makes no profit from the patients they see. The end-to-end psychiatric care (including intake processing, diagnosis and follow-up) is priced at $500 for an adult and $1,000 for a child (since more sessions are necessary for a child).

Esther Marcus, clinical manager of the Sdot Negev Regional Resilience Center, said, “The needs are great. This service, Healthy Mind, has been life-changing for me both as a therapist and also a manager. There is a huge lack of psychiatrists in our area and people need the service right now, faced with huge anxiety and lack of sleep.” A patient who prefers to stay anonymous said, “Everything was done so professionally, and the most important thing for me was the help I received in this most difficult time.”

Today, Israel is still in crisis. While the government and army may be better situated in some ways since October, the truth is that private groups are providing substantial support in the areas of key technologies for soldiers, civilian guard and community safety assistance, and PTSD / trauma support for a nation that is experiencing waves of intense and dangerous emotions. Private groups – mainly nonprofits – are here to stay for the foreseeable future.

To find out more information or to donate, please visit: https://israelfriends.us

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ISRAEL FRIENDS

Israel Friends isn't like other non-profits. We were founded by tech entrepreneurs, supply chain experts, logistics specialists, and more. We have a unique perspective that enables us to understand needs and effectively fulfill them.



A Quiz About Israel and Hamas for Politicians, Pundits and Protesters



By Moshe Phillips

The six-month anniversary of the savage Hamas terrorist attack of Oct. 7 came and went, and I was left with the feeling that fewer and fewer of the American politicians, TV talking heads, protesters and so-called journalists, who feel they must comment about Israel, should be. Far too many just don't know the simple historical facts needed to intelligently speak about this war. They refer all the time to what they call Palestine, "the Israeli occupation," "Israeli apartheid" and "the Israeli settlements," which shows they lack a basic understanding of simple facts.

How many of these so-called arbiters of truth do you think would be able to pass a simple quiz? Could they even score a 50%? And if they could not, what drives them to speak out so harshly against Israel?

How many pundits and protesters could score a 50% on the below short quiz?

1. What year was the First Zionist Congress held?

This founding Zionist meeting was held in Switzerland in 1897. The idea that Zionism originated as a response to German Nazism is false as is the claim that the Zionists wanted a Jewish state outside of the Holy Land and Jerusalem. The anthem selected at the 1897 Congress included the words: "The land of Zion and Jerusalem." The false claims about Zionism's origins and goals were created to portray Zionism as having been created to further European colonialism and solve the European problem of antisemitism. Antisemitism was never only a European hatred and was just as strong or stronger in Islamic majority countries.

2. What percentage of Israelis are not descended from European Jewish communities but hail from the Middle East and North Africa?

According to the Pew Research Center, a majority of Israeli Jews are Sephardim or Mizrahi (48%), compared to 45% Ashkenazim (European). The remaining 7% are mostly Ethiopian and Indian Jews. The idea that all Israelis are descended from European Jews who came to Israel to escape Nazism and are not from the region is false.

3. Do Palestinian Arabs serve in the Israeli Knesset?

The Israeli government system is the antithesis of apartheid. Multiple parties led by Arabs participated in Israel's first election in 1949 and Arabs have been candidates and have been elected throughout Israel's history. Currently 10 Knesset members are Arab. The Likud, which is very often labeled as racist by those ignorant of Israeli politics, had an Israeli Arab Druze Knesset member for over 22 years named Ayoob Kara.

4. Who occupied Gaza from 1948 to 1967?

Egypt occupied Gaza from 1948 until June 1967. No attempt was made by any Gazans to free the area from Egypt nor was there any international pressure to create a Palestinian state there, nor serious calls for such from Arab nations.

5. When was the first president or prime minister of Palestine elected?

Yasser Arafat became president of the Palestinian National Authority in 1994. Before that there was no modern, independent, viable Palestinian Arab nation that existed nor any government. The idea of separate Palestinian nationhood did not exist prior to the creation of Israel.

6. What are Israeli settlements?

Settlements are Jewish communities where there are neighborhoods of families in areas that Israel did not control before 1967; put another way, these are cities and towns founded by Israelis in Judea and Samaria, the so-called "territories." No settlements were attacked on Oct. 7. There are families with deep roots in the settlements with several generations of children born and raised in the settlements.

7. How long has Israel occupied Gaza?

On Oct. 7 no Israeli troops were in Gaza at all. All Israelis were removed from Gaza in 2005 as part of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's disengagement plan. Gazans had complete control within their territory for 19 years before Oct. 7. Many of the Jewish families who were removed from Gaza in 2005 had previously lived in the Sinai and removed from their homes there when Israel surrendered the territory in 1982 to Egypt as part of the Camp David Accords. Israel has already relinquished control of over 23,000 square miles of territory it captured in 1967. By contrast, Israel is only 8,000 square miles. Israel has already sacrificed tremendous amounts of territory in its efforts to achieve peace with the Arab nations that surround it.

8. When was the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) formed?

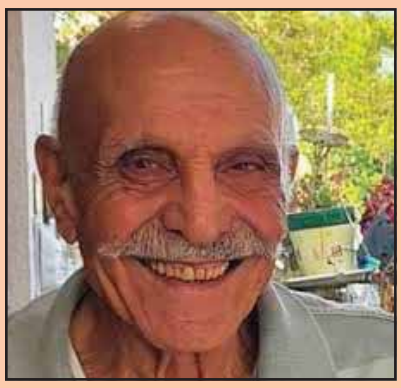
The PLO was founded in 1964 when the Old City of Jerusalem, Gaza and Judea-Samaria (the so-called "West Bank") were all occupied by Jordan or Egypt. So, the PLO was created to end the existence of any Israeli control of any land it held after the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.

9. What did Hamas call its Oct. 7 surprise terrorist attack and why?

Hamas and its terrorist allies named the attack Al-Aqsa Flood after a Jerusalem mosque built on the Temple Mount above the Western Wall. Hamas (like Al Qaeda, ISIS, Hezbollah and the Muslim Brotherhood) is dedicated to a violent, expansive militant version of Islam that sees the murder of civilians as a legitimate part of the wars they launch. Moreover, the use of the name Al-Aqsa is their way of saying that the war doesn't end until Jews are driven out of Jerusalem and kept out just as the Jews are banned by the Saudis from Mecca and Medina.

Moshe Phillips is a commentator on Jewish affairs whose writings appear regularly in the American and Israeli press.

Profile of Shlomo Asad Mansour





Shlomo Asad Mansour, 86, (Shlomo ben Marcel) was beaten and kidnapped by Hamas on Oct. 7 from his home on Kibbutz Kissufim. His wife of 60 years, Mazal, escaped. Eight residents of Kissufim, a small kibbutz, were killed and four were taken captive.

Shlomo was born in Iraq and immigrated to Israel at the age of 13 after surviving the 1941 Farhud Massacre in Baghdad. He manages the chicken coop and the carpentry shop for the kibbutz and is known for his warm heart. He is the oldest of the 134 captives still being held by Hamas in Gaza, and turned 86 in captivity. Shlomo and Mazal have 15 grandchildren.

House Passes Antisemitism Awareness Act

CONTINUED FROM P. 119

"The numbers are way up and they aren't showing any signs of coming back down," said Gottheimer, who called Bergen County "a hotbed" and New Jersey "a hub" for antisemitic hate with the ADL reporting almost 10 % of incidents occurring in the state, with Bergen County topping the list.

Gottheimer said since being sworn in he has been focused on "clawing back" millions of dollars from Washington and said his legislative district, which includes Bergen County, had received more funding than any other in the state.

The surge of anti-Jewish hate makes passage of the Antisemitism Awareness Act and granting of security grants even more critical, as Gottheimer recounted receiving call after call about college students being threatened with "Jew-hating antisemitic rhetoric," some of which called for the killing of Zionists and support for Hamas.

"Think about that," said Gottheimer. "They're crying out in support of Hamas, a foreign terrorist organization that would like to kill Americans even more than Israelis. It is a blatant, hate-fueled harassment, intimidation and discrimination campaign."

The pro-Palestinian demonstrators are emboldening Hamas, which has put out statements that they are their leaders of tomorrow, he added.

"I'll be the first one to say we need to protect innocent Palestinians who are being used by Hamas as human shields in Gaza," said Gottheimer. "I believe we must do everything we can to get them humanitarian aid. And I believe we should all feel that way. But there's a huge difference between supporting innocent Palestinians and the terrorist organization Hamas."

Gottheimer also pushed for the Holocaust Education and Antisemitism Lessons (HEAL) Act, which he introduced, which would increase access to Holocaust related educational materials to schools and communities and mandate Holocaust education in all public schools.

"Education is the key," said Gottheimer. "We've got to educate people about the Holocaust and Oct. 7. One of my biggest fears is that, and actually we're seeing it already, people are trying to rewrite what happened on Oct. 7 or deny that it happened. We can't allow that to happen... By teaching about hate we can promote peace, dialogue and understanding."

Debra Rubin has had a long career in journalism writing for secular weekly and daily newspapers and Jewish publications. She most recently served as Middlesex/Monmouth bureau chief for the New Jersey Jewish News. She also worked with the media at several nonprofits, including serving as assistant public relations director of HIAS and assistant director of media relations at Yeshiva University.

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AMERICAN FRIENDS OF MAGEN DAVID ADOM מגן דוד אדום

Spotlight on Orthodox Grammy Winner Linda Korn

By Ronit Mershon

The fact that there were plenty of Jewish people on this year's list of Grammy nominees and winners is nothing new. However, sitting in the audience that night was multi-Grammy winner Linda Leah Korn, an observant Jewish woman who was there that evening as a nominee for the audiobook she produced, "It's Okay to Be Angry About Capitalism," by Bernie Sanders, published by Penguin Random House.

A senior executive producer for audiobooks at Penguin Random House, Korn has been producing audiobooks for about 35 years, and her first Grammy-win was for her role as an associate producer on Gilda Radner's audiobook, "It's Always Something." The list of people with whom she has worked is long, diverse and impressive— James Woods, Tovah Feldshuh, John Lithgow, Kevin Hart, Pope Francis and the late Elizabeth Montgemery.

Not just another form of entertainment, audiobooks, Korn explained, have a much wider reach now than ever. They first came on the scene to serve the visually-impaired community, but now play a vital role in our society. "They serve as a legitimate form of reading, entertainment and education. Besides being an accessible form of books to those who enjoy 'reading' while doing something else, or who digest story and content best aurally, and for so many commuters and families on the road, audiobooks have become and continue to develop as an entertaining, immersive listening experience. Stories connect people and the human voice connects us even more so."



Linda Korn at the 2024 Audie Awards, recognizing distinction in audiobooks and spoken-word entertainment.

Korn fondly recalled directing Lily Tomlin for the the audiobook "The World According to Mr. Rogers" (which was nominated for a Grammy but didn't win) and is particularly proud of her Grammy win for the audiobook "With Ossie and Ruby: In This Life Together."

Grammy awards for audiobooks are handed out during the non-televised preshow. When Ruby Dee was called up to accept the award, "she accepted the award and then called me up to the stage during her acceptance speech," said Korn. "I think that was probably the highlight for me out of any of these award shows because when someone is so grateful to you for helping them actualize their project, then that is very rewarding knowing that I helped make it happen."


Linda Korn

She directed legendary comedic actor Steve Martin's Grammy-winning audiobook "The Pleasure of My Company" and called it one of the biggest highlights of her career. At one point, joking with Korn, he said she must usually get a professional to do this type of work. To which she replied, "And you are?" which made him laugh. "I made Steve Martin laugh!"

Korn continued: "Even though I know that I am good at what I do, I also know that these performers are amazing at what they do but they don't know me and have never worked with me so a trust has to be built between us." There was a point during the recording session with Martin where she felt she had to give him a piece of direction for some dialogue, and he graciously agreed with her. "I had just given Steve Martin a piece of direction and he took it and played it and then he got nominated for a Grammy!"

Another highlight of her career was meeting Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg while recording the forward she had written for Justice Antonin Scalia's posthumously published "Scalia Speaks: Reflections on Law, Faith, and Life Well Lived."

"Meeting a woman who had such an impact on women's lives and laws in this country was incredibly impactful." Doing the recording in the Supreme Court Building surrounded by portraits of all the justices, Korn described it as one of the most powerful experiences she has ever had.

Korn has also been instrumental in bringing notable Jewish writers and speakers to audio listeners, including Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis, z"l. Korn produced and directed Jungreis' book "Life is a Test: How to Meet Life's Challenges Successfully," which was narrated by Jewish convert Mare Winningham.

"You don't have a lot of experiences like that working in the secular world," said Korn. "Rebbetzin Jungreis was someone who showed me how to be unapologetic about who you are and what you need to do when you need to do it."

Korn is also responsible for introducing audio listeners to Holocaust survivor Ben Lesser's "Living a Life That Matters: From Nazi Nightmare to American Dream," narrated by actor Jonathan Silverman.

Through Korn's connections, she introduced Rabbi David Aaron, dean rosh yeshiva of Orayta and prolific author, into the world of audiobooks, and recently produced Torah scholar Avivah Zornberg's "The Hidden Order of Intimacy: Reflections on the Book of Leviticus." She was also sent to Israel to produce author Ayelet Tsabari's book "The Art of Leaving: A Memoir."

"Something that has been really transformative for me and has grown with me is my passion for the human voice," Korn reflected. "To me, there is nothing more Jewish than the human voice, and I feel that the voice is in some way connected to the soul because the world was created with breath. I find recording someone's voice to be a very personal way to tell stories.

"Jewish people are inherently storytellers and that it is a very powerful way to be in the world every day, to be listening to voices and to be thinking about what people want to say and helping them say it out loud in a way that is going to represent their story and their book, whether it is fiction or nonfiction. So I think it gives purpose to the kind of work that I am doing.

"After all the years of my own growth, I'm still learning and practicing to be a good human in the world. But what I've learned works best is to show up as yourself, unapologetically, ask for what you need, get the job done well, and don't compromise your values... It's critical to one's growth and success in every area of life to stay grounded and connected to your faith, your values and your way in the world, while staying humble, as flexible as possible, and nonjudgmental of others."


Linda Korn walks the red carpet at the 2024 Grammy Awards.

Ronit Mershon is a staff writer at The Jewish Link.

Edison Native Advances in IDF

By Harry Glazer

The Highland Park/Edison Jewish community is deeply proud of all its young members who make aliyah and serve in the IDF. One of the most recently promoted chayal bodeds hailing from the area is Sylvie Culang, daughter of Sara and Jay Culang of Edison. Jay is the co-president of Congregation Ahavas Yisrael in Edison.

Sylvie initially served as an officer in the air force and in the summer of 2023 moved to the IDF Spokespersons' Unit, where she serves as a welfare counselor and assists soldiers with financial or social problems at home.

In April, Sylvie participated in a tekes (military ceremony) to honor and recognize lone soldiers, at which she received congratulations from Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, head spokesperson of the IDF.

Sylvie intends to complete her military service and then start an academic program in the fall at Bezalel School of Art and Design, working toward a degree in visual communications. She lives in Herzliya with three other lone soldiers.



Sylvie Culang, right, receives congratulations from Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, head spokesperson of the IDF.

Harry Glazer is the Middlesex County Editor of The Jewish Link. He can be reached at harryglazer615@gmail.com and he invites your feedback. Harry is awed by the drive and dedication of lone soldiers in the IDF.



HEALTH LINK

First Move Physical Therapy Combines Urgent Care Framework and Traditional PT Services



Ephraim Yablok and Donald Martin, Jr, owners and physical therapists.

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The Diet Soda Debate



By Temimah Zucker, LCSW

A number of years ago I entered the "Diet Coke" debate with some colleagues — should an eating disorder therapist drink diet soda? The argument of the anti-diet soda side was that diet drinks are established to support a disordered relationship with food. This relationship includes deprivation and limiting oneself and the idea that the only way to enjoy soda is to know that there would be no "guilt." Those in favor had a simple argument: it tasted better to them. They said that they had been raised — for better or worse, worse meaning under the influence of a parent's diet — only drinking diet soda and therefore grew accustomed to the taste and actually disliked a regular can of cola.

Let's put aside what may be your response, dear reader, on the arguments of sugar, chemicals and brown soda in general. Instead, I'm going to ask you to focus on the question of how we can discern between what is disordered and what is not.

It is important to note that I'm not actually presenting this piece in the hope of convincing everyone to ditch the diet soda. While that would absolutely be a step toward an anti-diet world (quite literally), I know that this issue is layered for many. My actual hope is to help you reflect on decisions and how to assess for a disordered mindset.

If you enjoy the taste of diet soda, then great! Go with what you like. But how do we know when decisions could be negatively impacting our relationships with our bodies, body-esteem, self-image and mental health? A number of years ago I was asked my perspective on beauty routines such as threading/tweezing eyebrows, dyeing hair and makeup. The question was then followed by an immediate second question of, if people are being told that dieting and the pursuit of weight loss is bad, then shouldn't all these cosmetic practices also be condemned as they promote a specific beauty standard?

The all-or-nothing answer is yes, these practices do promote a particular beauty standard that sends messages to individuals that promote shame. Individuals are essentially taught that if they do not try to erase aging or accentuate one's eyelashes then the person will be less appealing, which can ultimately lead to lower confidence, obsessive behaviors and the reliance on image to define or accept oneself. And for some, there is an obsession with a particular body type which is diagnosed as body dysmorphic disorder.

But for most, there is an important distinction between these practices and the practice of pursuing change in one's weight, shape or size by manipulating food and movement: time, level of obsession and functioning.

For so many people, the pursuit of changing one's shape takes over many aspects of one's life: social engagement and preparing for events by knowing how to eat/compensate; ruminating and time spent debating, calculating, considering; negative internal dialogue, including a harsh and judgmental narrative limiting one's worth toward "results" of the disordered behavior. We eat every single day, many times per day. We make decisions about these meals and snacks and when one has an unhealthy relationship with food, these decisions and obsessive thoughts take up so much space and rob the individual of the freedom to simply live.

Decisions about makeup, Botox, hair coloring, etc., can absolutely take up time. And whenever I discuss this subject, nearly all people respond that the time is minimal; they are able to move on fairly quickly and it does not usually threaten their ability to engage in actively living. And yes, there may be extremes in all cases, but when we look at the majority we will find that most people are not preoccupied the same way because of how often we eat, talk about food, judge food and bodies in a level that is much more extreme.

Do I wish we could all recognize the way we try to protect "youthhood" by erasing lines and gray hairs? Yes. Do I wish that as a world we could celebrate aging, honor and respect all body times, and move away from judgments based on appearance? Resounding absolutely!

And I also know that we have a lot of work to do. So let's start by reflecting on being honest about whether our decisions are disordered or about preference. And then consider how much time you are spending surrounding an appearance-based behavior and consider if you see the connection between how you might view your self-worth and this behavior. I'm not asking you to even change it just yet — start by understanding and being honest with yourself. Then, if there is space, think about how else you might feel worthy or what else you could be using this time for that might support or enhance a value of yours.

I'm not saying it's easy and I understand the nuance; there are many unknowns I still sit with on the subject of this article. And, I believe that we can all move away — even a tiny step — from the negative patterns we set. So drink diet soda if you like it or maybe you just feel it's harmless — okay! But take a moment to recognize that you are so much more than any food behavior or mascara and there is so much opportunity for growth and freedom.

Temimah Zucker, LCSW, works in New York and New Jersey with individuals ages 18 and older who are struggling with mental health concerns, and specializes in working with those looking to heal their relationships between their bodies and souls. Zucker is an advocate and public speaker concerning eating disorder awareness and a metro New York consultant at Monte Nido. Zucker is honored to now serve on the board of Atzmi. To learn more or to reach her, visit www.temimah.com.

It's Skin Cancer Awareness Month



By Alexander Doctoroff, M.D.

May is Skin Cancer Awareness Month, and skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States. The highly skilled dermatologists at Metropolitan Dermatology specialize in detecting basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, melanoma, as well as various rare skin cancers. We welcome the opportunity to provide some answers to the most commonly asked questions about skin cancer.

Who is most likely to get skin cancer?

Unfortunately, skin cancer can affect anyone, regardless of skin color. Factors that contribute to the incidence of skin cancer include, but are not limited to, excess exposure to UV radiation from sunlight or use of indoor tanning, developing sunburns, having blonde or red hair, a weakened immune system, and a family history of skin cancer.

What are the most common types of skin cancer?

Basal cell carcinoma (BCC) and squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) are the first and second most common forms of skin cancer and are highly curable. If BCCs and SCCs are neglected, they can spread and ultimately kill. Fortunately, most patients choose to undergo timely treatment, sparing themselves severe complications.

Melanoma is the most serious type of skin cancer and may appear on the skin suddenly or can develop within an existing mole. If untreated, melanoma can spread to the lymph nodes or other organs in the body (known as metastasis) and is potentially fatal. However, if detected and treated early, melanoma has a high cure rate.

How is skin cancer treated?

The selection of the treatment method depends on multiple factors (some of which are related to the tumor and some are specific to the patient). Some cancers can be treated with electrodesiccation and curettage ("scrape" technique). For others, excision is warranted. Some low-grade cancers can be treated with a cream called imiquimod, thus avoiding surgery. A more specialized tissue sparing technique called Mohs surgery is also commonly used. During the Mohs procedure, the surgeon removes any visible skin cancer along with some additional tissue around the tumor for detailed analysis.

After the initial removal, a piece of skin is frozen and examined under a microscope in thin slices. If any cancer remains, the surgeon returns to remove any remaining cancer roots. Because tissue is only removed where cancer is present, the precise layering leaves the smallest wound and scar possible. Metropolitan Dermatology is a home of four highly experienced Mohs surgeons: Drs. Elena Maydan, Alex Doctoroff, Aton Holzer and Marc Handler.

Image-Guided Superficial Radiation Therapy (IG-SRT) is a nonsurgical skin cancer treatment that uses low levels of X-ray energy to kill cancer cells and allow normal tissue to grow back in its place. For many people dealing with skin cancer, Image-Guided SRT can be a highly effective treatment option without the downtime, side effects and scarring sometimes associated with surgery. There are several different radiation-based technologies for the treatment of skin cancer. Cure rates and cosmetic outcomes vary based on the technology and protocol. We use only Image-Guided SRT with an adaptive radiotherapy protocol, because both the cure rate and cosmetic results are superior to other radiation-based options. IG-SRT is available in our Belleville and Hillsborough, New Jersey locations.

How can I help prevent skin cancer?

The easiest way to decrease your chance of developing skin cancer is to protect yourself from the sun's harmful rays and avoid tanning beds. When outside, apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher to all skin not covered by clothing. We recommend mineral sunscreens containing zinc oxide or titanium dioxide. You have to look at the sunscreen labels to see the list of active ingredients. There is no specific brand offering only mineral sunscreens. In fact, often brands have sunscreen products with chemical ingredients and other products with minerals. There is no way around it: you have to look at the label.

For skin cancer detection, have your skin checked annually by a board-certified dermatologist, a board-certified dermatology nurse practitioner, or a dermatology trained, certified physician assistant. The American Academy of Dermatology recommends regular self-skin checks at home, using the ABCDEs of skin cancer, which stands for asymmetry, border, color, diameter and evolution. If you discover anything on your skin that has changed between your annual skin checks, make an appointment to see your dermatologist.

The pursuit of academic and clinical excellence informs every step at Metropolitan Dermatology's 20 offices in central and northern New Jersey and Staten Island, New York. Our group was founded 20 years ago by Dr. Doctoroff, an affiliate of the world-renowned Columbia University and New York Presbyterian Hospital. Our well-trained staff provides thorough treatment for the full spectrum of dermatologic conditions, including skin cancer treatment. We are accepting new patients and offer same day appointments.

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Building a Strong Foundation Through Better Hearing



By Deborah Orlan-Marcus, MS, CCC-A

Each May, Speech Language Hearing Month (SLHM) provides an opportunity to raise awareness about communication disorders and the role of American-Speech-Language Hearing Association members providing life-altering treatment. The theme for 2024 is "Building A Strong Foundation."

Hearing is the foundation for effective communication, strong relationships,and healthy brain functioning. For many people, communication is difficult because of hearing loss or speech conditions. In fact, more than 48 million people in the U.S. experience some degree of hearing loss, and one in 10 Americans have some type of communication disorder.

Audiology Associates of North Jersey
Helping You Hear With All My Heart

Hearing Affects Communication

Hearing loss makes it difficult to not only hear the sounds around you, but to clearly understand speech. When your brain is working hard to fill in the gaps of a conversation due to hearing loss, you may feel exceptionally tired after interacting with people. This can lead to withdrawal, social isolation and depression.

How to Take Care of Your Hearing

Preserving your hearing is a crucial part of taking care of your overall health. Follow these tips to start being proactive about your hearing health:

- Avoid loud noise exposure
- Wear hearing protection when sounds exceed 85 decibels
- Avoid sticking objects in your ears
- Schedule regular hearing exams

Early identification and intervention for hearing loss is important. Many people live with unidentified hearing loss, often failing to realize they are missing certain sounds and words. Long-term studies have shown greater risk of dementia with untreated hearing loss.

Educate Yourself

There is a lot to learn about hearing loss and communication disorders. In order to normalize and decrease the stigma surrounding hearing loss, it's important to spread awareness.

Audiology Associates of North Jersey is located at 185 Cedar Lane, Suite L2 in Teaneck. Visit https://audiologyassociatesofnj.com/ or call (201) 928-0808 to schedule a hearing exam and start being proactive to improve your hearing, communication and quality of life.

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Israel-based Startup EFA Develops Portable Blood Test Lab

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(Courtesy of EFA) eHealth Ventures proudly announces its continued partnership with EFA Technologies together with international and local investors.

Imagine a world where you can walk into your local GPs office or pharmacy, take a small prick of blood, and get your Complete Blood Count (CBC) results instantly. With the new solution developed by EFA technologies, this future reality has already arrived.

Patients, worldwide, can face difficulties when trying to access adequate healthcare facilities equipped with CBC testing capabilities. This leads to limited options when it comes to diagnostic services, resulting in delayed diagnosis and treatment.

Israeli startup EFA Technologies is addressing this exact problem with their fully automated portable blood testing lab – RexDx. Under the leadership of CEO Yoel Ezra, the vision of EFA Technologies is to bring access to healthcare by providing affordable blood testing with immediate results.

If a symptomatic patient walks into the doctor's office, there is not always enough information to know if the patient has an infection and needs antibiotics or if it is a virus that will pass on its own. CBC blood results are important because they enable doctors to make decisions on the spot without delaying treatment.

With the RevDx, CBC results are given immediately, allowing physicians to make instantaneous decisions based on clinical results, instead of waiting days or longer for blood work results to be processed and for patients to start the antibiotics.

While the general public could benefit from the cost and time savings of immediate clinical results at the doctor's office, the greatest impact could be felt by remote locations, community health clinics, underserved communities and others.

EFA Technologies' point-of-care CBC testing devices are portable and easy to use, enabling healthcare providers to perform tests anywhere. Weighing in at around fivepounds, the RevDx analyzes a small sample of the patient's blood taken from the finger. EFA Technologies, which has CE approval and ANVISA regulatory approval in Brazil, has just closed a Series A round and initiated their commercial sales in Latin America, where their product will be used in different clinics around the country.

"We're thrilled to witness the impact of RevDx's on healthcare," saysCEO Yoel Ezra on his excitement over the RevDx potential. "Our mission to make Medtech accessible to everybody, anywhere,starting with a complete blood count test (CBC), is coming to fruition. We're dedicated to further expanding our reach for the benefit of patients and caregivers worldwide. Entering the vast and promising Brazilian market is a testament to that."

EFA Technologies is backed by Israeli VC eHealth Ventures. By focusing on affordability and scalability, EFA Technologies ensures that its blood testing solutions are accessible to communities worldwide, regardless of economic status. Through their innovative solutions and commitment to improving healthcare systems around the world, EFA Technologies strives to ensure that every individual has access to essential diagnostic services.



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Plantar Fasciitis

By Dr. Michael S. Hyjek

As a chiropractor, I have seen many patients come into my office suffering from plantar fasciitis, a common and painful foot condition that can severely impact one's quality of life. Plantar fasciitis occurs when the plantar fascia, a thick band of tissue that runs from the heel to the toes, becomes inflamed and irritated. This can cause sharp pain in the heel or along the bottom of the foot, especially when walking or standing for long periods of time.

The traditional treatment for plantar fasciitis typically involves rest, ice, stretching exercises, and sometimes anti-inflammatory medications. While these methods can be effective for some patients, others may not experience significant relief from their symptoms. This is where alternative therapies such as regenerative class IV laser therapy, myofascial release, kinesio taping and orthotics come into play.

Regenerative class IV laser therapy is a cutting-edge treatment that uses focused light energy to reduce inflammation and stimulate healing in the affected tissues. This therapy is non-invasive and painless, making it an attractive option for patients who want to avoid surgery or long-term medication use. By targeting the source of the pain and inflammation with concentrated light energy, regenerative class IV laser therapy can help to alleviate discomfort and promote faster healing of the plantar fascia.



Myofascial release is another effective treatment for plantar fasciitis. This hands-on technique involves applying gentle pressure to the muscles and connective tissues in the foot and calf to release tension and improve flexibility. By loosening tight muscles and breaking up scar tissue, myofascial release can help to reduce pain and improve mobility in the affected area.

Kinesio taping is a popular treatment for plantar fasciitis that involves applying specially designed tape to the foot and calf to provide support and stability. This technique can help to reduce strain on the plantar fascia and improve alignment of the foot, leading to decreased pain and improved function. Kinesio taping can also help to improve circulation and reduce inflammation in the affected tissues, further promoting healing.

Orthotics are another valuable tool in the treatment of plantar fasciitis. These custom-made shoe inserts are designed to provide support and cushioning to the arch of the foot, helping to reduce strain on the plantar fascia and improve alignment. By correcting biomechanical issues in the foot, orthotics can help to relieve pain and prevent future flare-ups of plantar fasciitis.

When used in combination, regenerative class IV laser therapy, myofascial release, kinesio taping and orthotics can provide comprehensive care for patients suffering from plantar fasciitis.

By addressing the underlying issues that contribute to the condition, these therapies can help to alleviate pain, improve mobility, and promote long-term healing. As a chiropractor, I have seen firsthand the positive impact that these treatments can have on patients with plantar fasciitis, allowing them to regain their quality of life and get back to doing the things they love.

In conclusion, plantar fasciitis is a common and painful foot condition that can be effectively treated with a combination of class IV laser therapy, myofascial release, kinesio taping and orthotics. By addressing the underlying causes of the condition and promoting healing in the affected tissues, these therapies can provide lasting relief for patients suffering from plantar fasciitis. If you are struggling with foot pain, consider exploring these alternative treatment options with a qualified chiropractor to find relief and improve your quality of life.

Dr. Michael S. Hyjek graduated from Palmer Chiropractic College West in 2005, Certified Strength Conditioning Specialist since 2002. Hyjek is a human health and wellness professional, committed to using cutting-edge therapies like laser, spinal decompression, chiropractic, lifestyle and holistic health strategies to empower people to achieve their highest inherent potential for optimal health and quality of life.

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(Courtesy of Jump into Shape) Jump Into Shape is launching its first ever eight-week challenge to increase your cardio, flexibility and strength from the comfort of your own home and on your own schedule. After reliving our national and individual freedom on Pesach, there is a special aura in the air that with the help of HaShem, we can achieve anything, be it in *ruchnius* (spirituality) or *gashmius* (physicality). The time is now to bring physical fitness into your life or give new life to your exercise routine.



This program is for people of all levels and ages looking to increase their cardio, flexibility and strength while fostering a habit of regular exercise. The challenge includes five videos per week, starting at 12 minutes per video and increasing one minute a week to 20 minutes per video. Each video is a combination of jump roping, bodyweight and free-weight exercises. The challenge costs only $250, which includes a Crossrope Get Lean set with handles, a 1/4 lb (green) rope and 1/2 lb (white) rope, and an exercise mat (retail value of $160). Sorry, free weights are not included.

The program culminates in a live online class for all challenge participants. Similar to a marathon, we train separately and reach the finish line together.

Register today to get your equipment before the start day of May 17 at https://www.jumpintoshape.fun/challenges.

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First Move Physical Therapy Combines Urgent Care Framework and Traditional PT Services

By Ellie Wolf



Have you ever been referred for physical therapy, in pain or unable to function normally; only to learn that the next available new patient initial evaluation appointment is weeks away? First Move Physical Therapy is changing all that! They recognize that lack of availability is frequently an obstacle to the essential access of early treatment needed for acutely painful conditions.

Their early intervention approach distinguishes First Move PT from most traditional clinics. By providing timely treatment for urgent cases of neck and back pain, a patient can call even the day they first notice a painful condition, and First Move PT can initiate treatment immediately.

According to Ephraim Yablok, "Our unique and creative scheduling structure allows us to provide each patient with the time they and we need to provide the necessary treatment." Therefore and in most cases, the earlier treatment clears the road to some initial relief, with the recovery beginning much sooner. Same day physical therapy intake: where have you ever heard of that?!



Donald Martin, MS, PT, and Ephraim Yablok, MS, PT, DPT, are physical therapists with over 40 years of combined experience. They shared, "When a person develops pain there is frequently a period of time during which they rest, self-medicate, and hope it'll resolve spontaneously, or begin trying to make appointments with their PCP or other specialist. It can take days or weeks, during which they may be unable to properly function in their home, community and work or school environments. This is where we come in. First Move Physical Therapy combines the traditional services that physical therapy offers, along with a strong emphasis on the timely treatment of painful conditions in an "urgent care" framework. With our decades of experience and specialized skill set, we provide a unique brand of physical therapy and rehabilitation to northern New Jersey and beyond," points out Martin.

Both Martin and Yablok hold graduate degrees, Martin from Ithaca College and Yablok from Long Island University. Each has already blazed a lengthy trail of care that results in being recognized as top professionals in the field. Thirteen years' experience working in tandem at a well-known multidisciplinary clinic lead them to develop a unified treatment approach that facilitates caring for patients in an assertive yet compassionate way. Their primary focus underscores treating acute as well as chronic orthopedic conditions such as back and neck pain, shoulder conditions, sports injuries; hip, knee and ankle pain, post-op rehab, and balance disorders. Additionally, Martin is highly skilled in the treatment of vertigo and other vestibular conditions. Yablok has decades of experience working with the pediatric population. Both are expert manual therapists and bring advanced training and treatment methodologies to the management of various musculoskeletal conditions.

"When a person is in pain, they are unable to perform necessary home, work and community tasks. Their families need them, their job needs them, and they want to feel capable of functioning. With this pain comes limited mobility and frustration. We don't want to miss important events; we are concerned with how long this episode will last," noted Yablok. He explains that people often feel confused about what they should or shouldn't do, partially due to conflicting information on the internet and from well-meaning friends and family. "With a proper assessment we can educate a patient on the nature of their issue and provide clarity and direction regarding their role in the recovery process."

When the appropriate intervention is provided early, explain Martin and Yablok, "The outcome is often better and reduces the potential for other issues to arise. Professionally advised self and home care might include some of the following decisions: Is it better to lie down, sit or stand? What activities should I avoid or modify, and how? Should I use ice or heat? Is there a brace, support cushion or other product that can be helpful? What's a safe position for sleeping? Should I avoid exercise?" Well managed early intervention addresses these issues, and sets a person on a safer and progressive road to healing and recovery.

The First Move clinical approach maximizes interaction with the physical therapist. They prioritize patient education and facilitate the acquisition of the tools and skills that will complement and support the treatment received in the clinic. Further, First Move therapists are also experts in the assessment of mechanical pain. The spectrum of experience in the management of both acute and chronic conditions enables the First Move therapists to accurately assess and identify the appropriate treatment interventions that can initiate relief of pain, and begin the restoration of function.

Martin outlined the considerations for choosing a physical therapy provider. First, he noted that level of experience is key. "Therapists with decades of experience offer a perspective and level of expertise to assess the most relevant and appropriate treatment approach." Second, he said that generally speaking the fewer people directly involved in your care in a given session or on a session-to-session-basis; the higher quality and more directed an experience. In other words, continuity of care with the same therapist is optimal. He highlighted, "Giving attention to the concept of how many patients the physical therapist schedules per hour, so that appropriate time is planned for individual attention."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



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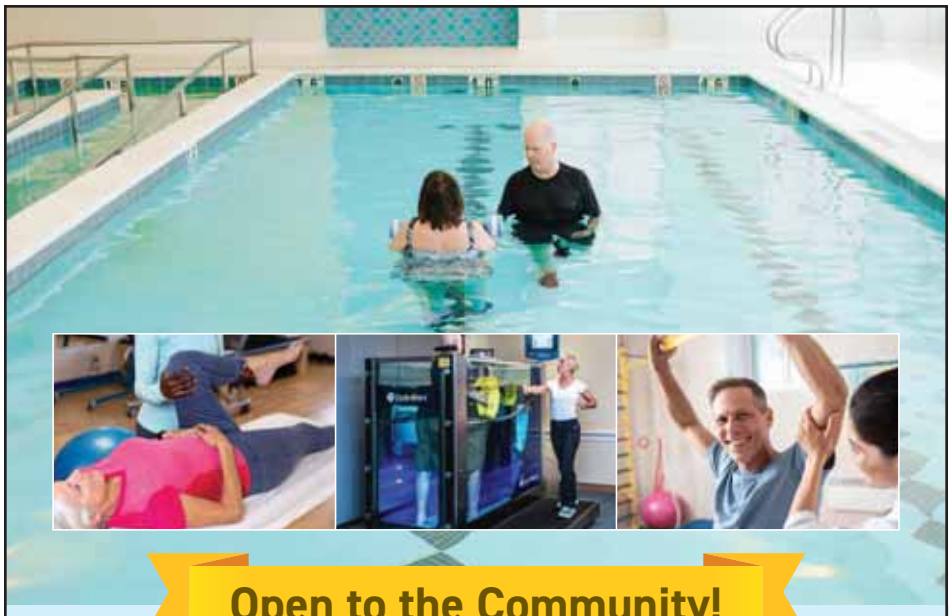
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Mental Health Awareness Month



By Dr. Haviva Malina

May is Mental Health Awareness Month and offers an occasion to raise awareness and educate the public about mental illnesses, reduce stigma and promote overall mental health and well-being. Keta Medical Center is dedicated to educating the communities that it serves about the benefits of Ketamine, and providing accessible care to all. This mission is incorporated into all aspects of Keta Medical's practice – from its evening and Sunday office hours, to insurance assistance and its warm and supportive staff.

Ketamine works by targeting glutamate, a neurotransmitter involved in learning and memory. By modulating glutamate, Ketamine may help to repair dysfunctional neural circuits implicated in mood disorders.

In 2019, the FDA approved a nasal spray formulation of Ketamine called Esketamine or Spravato. It has been shown to help patients with treatment resistant depression and facilitates access as it is covered by insurance.



Ketamine, once primarily known as an anesthetic, has emerged as a promising treatment for various mental health disorders, particularly depression, anxiety and PTSD. Unlike traditional antidepressants, which may take weeks to show effects, Ketamine can often produce rapid relief, sometimes within hours. This rapid action is particularly valuable for individuals at risk of self-harm or those facing severe depressive episodes. Clinical studies have shown that

The center provides Ketamine treatment that can offer hope to individuals who have exhausted conventional treatment options and are in urgent need of relief. At Keta Medical Center, the aim is to facilitate treatment to those in need. The center offers an initial free phone consultation with one of its doctors to find out if Ketamine is an appropriate treatment option. Find out more information on the center's website at www.ketamc.com.



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Updated Mammography Guidelines



By Alfred I. Neugut

Regular readers of this column will recall I am a great fan of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) and its recommendations. I consider them the most unbiased agency for evidence-based guidelines for prevention and screening in medicine and cancer. Of course, that does not mean I always agree with their recommendations.

Screening mammography for average-risk women was first proven effective in the late 1970s by the HIP (Health Insurance Plan) randomized controlled trial which showed a reduction in breast cancer mortality of 30% for the mammography group at five years as compared to controls. This became the basis for the adoption of mammography screening guidelines for women over age 50, widely advocated by the American Cancer Society, starting in the early 1980s.

Over ensuing decades, there have been eight randomized trials of breast cancer screening, all conducted in Western countries (the European Union, U.S., Canada); all have been of more or less similar designs, with small variations. All eight gave essentially the same results with the exception of the Canadian study, which did not find a mortality benefit for reasons never well explained. Why the world has needed so many large expensive studies for this question remains obscure to me. It would have been good if at least one of the trials were conducted in a different population such as in Asia.

Most of the trials recruited subjects starting at age 40. When the first trial, the HIP study, did an unplanned subgroup analysis by age, as statisticians frequently do, they found that the screening mortality benefits were restricted to those over the age of 50 and that the subgroup aged 40-49 years had no benefit from screening. That analysis began the question of whether mammography should be extended to those below the age of 50. Almost all the subsequent trials have had subgroups below age 50 and the same thing has occurred—in every study, there has not been a statistically significant benefit for those below age 50.

There was actually one additional trial (beyond the eight mentioned previously) which included only women 39-48 years of age conducted in the U.K. Approximately 160,000 women were randomized in this trial and the follow up was for 23 years. This study showed a 14% reduction in breast cancer mortality, but it was not statistically significant. A subsequent meta-analysis of all these nonsignificant datasets, conducted by the Cochrane Collaboration, a highly respected organization, found a 16% reduction in breast cancer mortality at 13 years of follow-up for those in their 40s (95% confidence interval 0.73-0.96).



Based on these results and the considerably lower incidence of breast cancer in the younger age group, no country, including the U.S., has previously included women in their 40s in their recommendations for mammography. This was in consideration of the fact that, while there may be a small mortality reduction, there was a definite very high rate of false positives and biopsies, as well as severe anxiety accompanied by these extra screening exams. Thus, the trade-off was dubious, and the USPSTF decided that the decision deserved to be up to the individual woman. Therefore, the recent recommendation was that women in their 40s should be advised of the potential benefits and risks and should make their own decisions as to whether or not to undergo screening mammography.

In May this past year, the USPSTF changed its recommendation to make the official starting age for mammography 40 years. What was the basis for this change? There is no new evidence that bears on this issue. Instead, these recommendations rely on statistical modeling which tries to estimate what would happen if the starting age were lowered. The models used by the USPSTF assumed that breast cancer screening from 40 to 50 would reduce mortality by 25%. As noted above, the most optimistic and reliable published meta-analysis concluded that the actual benefit was 16%.

Something else to consider is that we are considering relative risks which can be misleading, not absolute risks which take into account the actual incidence rate of the disease. Bear in mind that the absolute risk of breast cancer mortality for younger women is relatively low, certainly as compared to older populations, so that a reduction in mortality is not so substantial in that population. A commentary published in the New England Journal of Medicine in September presented a table showing the absolute risks for women in their 40s over a 10-year period. Deaths from any cause were 3.0%-3.1% (30-31 deaths/1000 women over 10 years). The estimated number of breast cancer deaths over the 10-year period was 0.31% (3 deaths/1000 women) without mammography and 0.23% (2.3 deaths/1000 women) with mammography. In essence, screening improves the likelihood of not dying from breast cancer from 99.7% to 99.8%. In exchange, 6.6% (66/1000) of the women will undergo a biopsy. I won't speak to the financial cost or the bother of traveling and coping with the waits for annual mammograms, biopsies and follow-up tests.

One final thought is that the incidence rate of breast cancer is not constant across the age range—the incidence and mortality rates increase between 40 and 49. Thus the benefits of mammography may be concentrated for those initiating mammography at the higher ages—47, 48, 49.

As always, my goal is to educate as best I can regarding the published data and statistics on which guidelines and recommendations are based. The reader should make her own decisions after consultation with her healthcare provider.

Alfred I. Neugut, MD, PhD, is a medical oncologist and cancer epidemiologist at Columbia University Irving Medical Center/New York Presbyterian and Mailman School of Public Health in New York. Email: ain1@columbia.edu.

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Using Routines to Encourage Language



By Johanna Stadtmauer

Children thrive on routine. This is because routines provide a sense of security and stability in an otherwise unpredictable world. Routines create a framework to the day, offering children a sense of control and predictability. It is common for a speech-language pathologist (SLP) to use a routines-based approach when working with children in early intervention (birth-3 years). By incorporating elements from your child's everyday routine, you are included in the learning experience so that you can implement what is done in sessions on your own time. Routines are: 1) repetitive, 2) predictable and consistent, and 3) natural! Regardless of whether your child is in speech therapy or not, routines are a great way to promote speech and language development in young children.

Typical language development is when a child can understand many more words than they can verbally express. For example, during bath time, your toddler may understand most of your directions (e.g., give me the soap, come out, splash) but they may not have verbally said any of the related vocabulary yet. By consistently modeling the words attached to the routine, you are "mapping" the word onto the object or action. We just celebrated Pesach in which the youngest of toddlers were singing songs and talking about the Pesach story on repeat. How did our 2- and 3-year-olds grasp it all so quickly? The repetition and mapping of the words in English or Hebrew were modeled through pictures or objects or within a song or gesture. It was fun for them and (likely) practiced daily in school. The chagim are certainly a special time where we can see how much information our children absorb and learn.

A child's vocabulary increases dramatically in such a short time. How many words should your child have? The expected range at 12 months old is 1-5 words, 10-50 words at 18 months, 50-300 words at 24 months, and 250-1000 words at 36 months. Meredith Rowe is an educational psychologist, who researched the factors related to a child's vocabulary development. The 2012 longitudinal study showed that toddlers ages 12-24 months benefit from many exposures to words in order to gain the vocabulary. Children from 2-3 years old benefit from hearing a variety of words, showing us that *quality* over quantity matters at this age. Preschoolers benefit from back-and-forth conversations about the past or upcoming future events and explaining things (like answering those "why" questions).

So now you know *what* is expected of your child's expressive vocabulary, but *how* can you support them? One strategy that I love recommending to my clients is to use verbal routines because depending on your child's interests, it is easy to implement. A verbal routine is a predictable phrase that you say or sing during a specific routine. Eventually, you pause and wait for your child to finish the phrase for you. Here is an example of a verbal routine I would encourage for a mock client: Jon is 12 months and loves pressing buttons and turning lights on/off. Every morning when he wakes up and every night before bed, either Mommy or Daddy can practice "lights on!" or "lights off!" by modeling the action and letting Jon partake in this exchange. Eventually, Jon's mom or dad will pause after saying "lights" to elicit "on" or "off" from Jon. The wait time is key as some children benefit from those extra few seconds to process and respond. Those words used in that bedtime routine can also then be generalized to other daily routines such as getting dressed (e.g., "shoes off") or turning the faucet "on" before washing hands. Now you can see how language and communication grow so quickly in the younger years, especially for the words learned during shared activities and common routines.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Q & A With Colosseum Fitness



By Shane Oran Condappa

What are some effective fitness strategies that can be incorporated into busy schedules, especially around Jewish holidays and Shabbat?

For those with busy schedules, especially during holidays and Shabbat, short, high-intensity interval training (HIIT) sessions can be very effective and time-efficient. These workouts can be done anywhere and typically do not require equipment, making them ideal for days when time is limited or when gyms may be closed. Additionally, incorporating physical activities like walking or cycling to synagogue or using downtime for stretching and mobility exercises can help you keep active even during more sedentary days.

What are some common health myths in the Jewish community regarding diet and exercise, and how can they be addressed?

One common myth is that traditional Jewish foods are inherently unhealthy. While it's true that foods like latkes and kugel can be high in fats and oils, these dishes can be modified for better health. For example, baking latkes instead of frying them, or using whole grain noodles and less fat in kugel, can make these dishes healthier. Another myth is that rigorous exercise is incompatible with a religious lifestyle. Keeping up with a moderate and regular physical activity schedule is beneficial and in line with maintaining one's health. I believe the phrase is sh'mirat haguf, meaning guarding your body. Let's begin to make our health a priority.

How can one manage weight effectively while still enjoying traditional Jewish cuisine, which often includes rich and hearty dishes?

Managing weight while enjoying traditional Jewish cuisine involves making mindful choices and modifications without sacrificing flavor. For instance, when preparing dishes like brisket or kugel, reduce the amount of oil and use lean cuts of meat to lower the calorie content. Incorporate more vegetables into meals to increase fiber intake, which can help in feeling full and satisfied with smaller portions. Practicing portion control during meals, especially during festive occasions, is crucial. Alternating higher calorie traditional dishes with lighter meals throughout the week can also help maintain a balanced diet without foregoing your cultural favorites.

What are some ways to promote physical activity in the Jewish community, particularly among those who may not prioritize exercise?

Promoting physical activity involves integrating movement into existing community routines and values. Organizing walking groups to and from synagogue services, especially on Shabbat, can make exercise a social and spiritual activity. Offering exercise classes at your synagogue, scheduling around times of prayers. Remember the importance of physical health in Jewish teachings, such as the principle of preserving one's body as a vessel for fulfilling religious duties. It is a vital part of life rather than an optional activity.

Shane Oran Condappa of Colosseum Fitness has been dedicated to enhancing lives through fitness and nutrition for over 14 years, passionately providing clients with the tools they need to achieve their health goals. As a committed husband and father of three, he understands the importance of balance and wellness in family life. Shane's approach is tailored to meet the unique needs of each client, ensuring they feel supported every step of their journey.





First Move Physical Therapy

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

First Move PT provides treatment for conditions in ages ranging from infants with congenital orthopedic conditions such as torticollis, to children and adolescents with sports injuries, to adults and weekend warriors with repetitive strain conditions, for post-operative care and for older adults with chronic joint pain or balance and fall prevention concerns.

Yablok continues, "We are passionate about educating patients regarding the role that lifestyle, body mechanics, and daily routine plays in our physical health. Pain doesn't occur in a vacuum. There are physical and/or psychological factors that directly contribute to the development of a painful condition. "Sitting culture," stationary lifestyles, and challenges related to working from home place a consistent level of strain on the spine making us more vulnerable to the development of back, neck and shoulder pain. Emotional stress can trigger an inflammatory response, creating susceptibility to physical pain. This situation necessitates a lifestyle that begs the opportunity for exercise and activities that minimize the physical stressors, and better manage the stresses of life. An integral part of our assessment and treatment process is addressing these and other factors that we often overlook as contributors to the development of pain."

Martin commented on one thing they wish more people knew about physical therapy. "Under the regulation of Direct Access Care in New Jersey, you can get one month of physical therapy without a referral or prescription. If you have a new pain, don't live with it! Physical Therapy should be your first line of defense for injuries and pain. Contact your therapist directly to save time and reduce unnecessary suffering. Quicker recovery time and better outcomes result from early treatment. Physical therapists are trained in screening for other serious conditions, and will refer you to an appropriate health care professional if the assessment reveals a need."

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Using Routines to Encourage Language

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One of my passions in working as a pediatric SLP is to give parents the tools to feel educated and empowered in order to advocate for and connect with their child best. What I advise one family will be different from the coaching tips I provide to another. That may be due to cultural values, working dynamics, sibling dynamics and specific client goals. As a disclaimer, this advice should not serve in place of an individualized speech therapy consultation for your child. It is always important to reach out to a skilled SLP with your specific concerns and questions.

Johanna Stadtmauer is a pediatric speech-language pathologist working with infants through early elementary school-aged children. She has her own private practice, Ready Stadt Speech, where she travels to children's homes, schools and daycares to provide speech, language and feeding therapy around Bergen County. If you have questions or would like to schedule a free 15-minute phone consultation, call Johanna at 201-406-9147 or email Johanna@ReadyStadtSpeech.com.

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Are You Pulling My Leg? What to Expect From Physical Therapy After an Ankle Sprain

By Jessica Lowy PT, DPT, CMTPT, DN, McKenzie A-D, Advanced Schroth Certified SSOL

And Michal Porath PT, MPT, McKenzie A-D, Advanced Schroth Certified SSOL

As springtime arrives people are getting out more, taking walks outside on uneven sidewalks, visiting parks, playing on sports fields and participating in more outdoor recreational activities. This time of year, we see a lot of ankle sprains due to deconditioning, in adults and adolescents, from lack of activity or exercise during the winter.

Physical therapy plays a crucial role in rehabilitating ankle sprains and sports injuries. When someone has an appointment for an evaluation for physical therapy, the first step is to assess the extent of the injury and identify the underlying issues along with forming appropriate goals for the patient. Initially the focus is reducing pain and inflammation, using techniques such as myofascial release, soft tissue mobilization or even using modalities such as ultrasound or electrical stimulation, along with gentle exercises to improve range of motion and flexibility.

Initial exercises often involve simple stretches and small controlled motions. Once the patient can tolerate more, strength exercises are progressed to help rebuild the muscles around the ankle and improve stability of the foot. These exercises will target muscles of the foot and ankle, but also muscles of the knee, hip and core to maximize motor function of the lower extremity as a whole. Balance and proprioception (the body's sense of its position in space) training is an essential component of rehabilitation as well. Various exercises on unstable surfaces, like balance boards or foam pads, are important to challenge the body to re-learn to react on uneven terrain.

As the patient progresses, functional training will be incorporated into the exercises to mimic the movements that the patient performs during sports or daily activities. This is to ensure the ankle can handle the demands of the patient's lifestyle. This may involve a progressive increase in intensity and duration, with close monitoring for any signs of recurrence or overuse. The physical therapist will also work on gait training, which include running mechanics to prevent compensatory movements that can lead to further injury and correct any abnormalities to promote a natural, efficient stride both in walking and running.

Throughout the physical therapy process the physical therapist will educate the patient on proper injury management, self-care techniques and strategies for injury prevention. A personalized home exercise program will be prescribed to supplement the sessions and promote ongoing progress. As the patient gains strength, flexibility and confidence in the ankle, our focus is to return them to their prior level of activity and recreation.

As someone is ready to be discharged from physical therapy it is essential to continue with a maintenance routine to keep your ankle strong and resilient. Remember, every individual and every injury is unique, so your physical therapy program will be tailored to your specific needs and goals. Consistency, patience and communication with your therapist are key to achieving a full recovery and preventing future injuries.

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Jessica Lowy, DPT, CMTPT, DN, Mckenzie A-D, Advanced Schroth Therapist and Michal Porath, MPT, Mckenzie A-D, Advanced Schroth Therapist are owners of Prime Orthopedic Rehabilitation in Tenafly and Northvale, New Jersey. They treat all injuries in their clinic, in addition to general orthopedic and post-surgical patients. Call (201) 503-7173 for an appointment.

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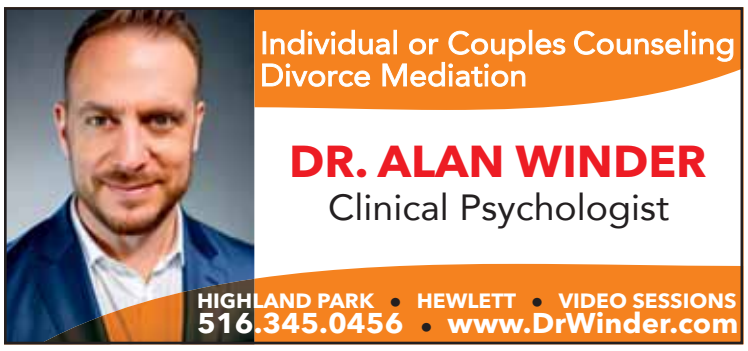
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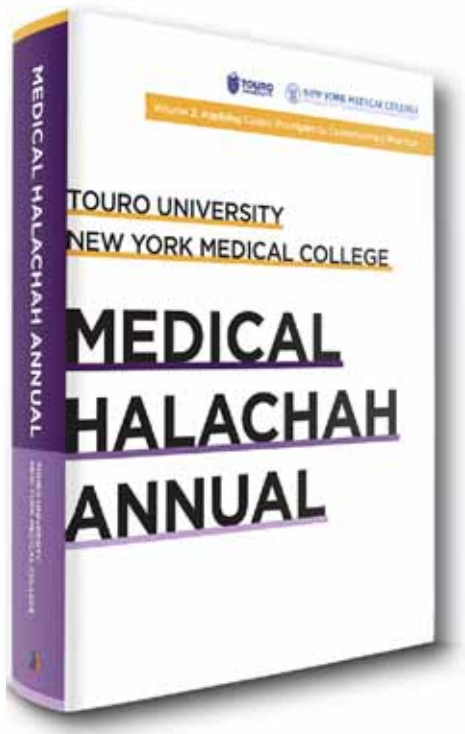
New Volume of 'Medical Halachah Annual' Bridges Halacha and Modern Medical Ethics

(Courtesy of Touro University) Mosaica Press, in collaboration with Touro University and its New York Medical College, is set to release the eagerly anticipated second volume of "Medical Halachah Annual: Applying Classic Principles to Contemporary Practice," scheduled for May 6th, 2024. Expanding on the success of its first volume, this edition delves deeper into the intricate interplay between traditional Jewish law and contemporary medical issues.



Edited by Dr. Edward Lebovics, Interim Chairman of the Department of Medicine, New York Medical College, the journal provides an enlightening exploration into the realms of halachah, medical ethics and modern medical challenges. This volume highlights a range of perspectives on critical topics from non-physiologic threats to life, organ transplantation, and the ethical implications of technologies like CRISPR and Artificial Intelligence. It also addresses current health concerns such as the implications of the legalization of marijuana on mental health, a subject of increasing relevance and debate.

"We are delighted to present the second volume of the Touro University – New York Medical College Medical Halachah Annual. This volume, featuring papers from leading rabbonim and physicians, seeks to address



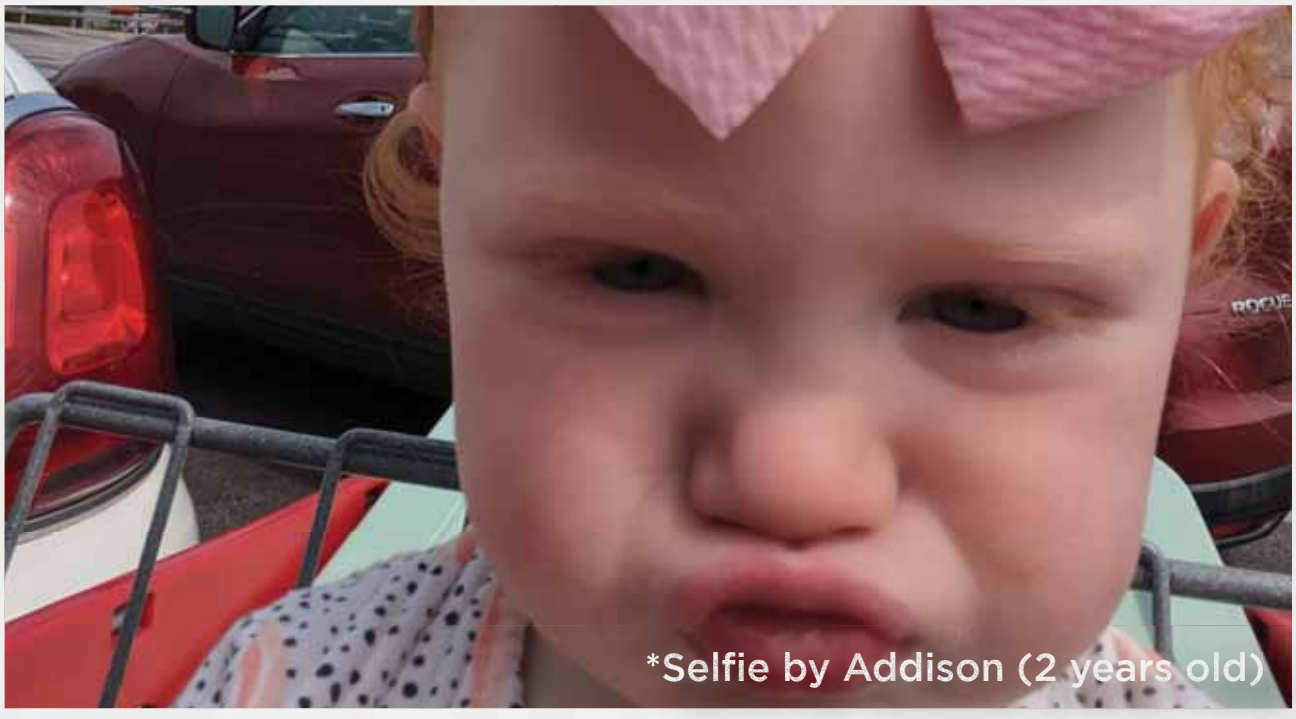
issues in halachah that are either not well defined, such as *choleh l'faneinu,* or those that involve new and evolving medical technologies, such as gene editing, electrolarynx and cochlear implants. We also include timely discussions of healthcare challenges in the Jewish community and a Jewish medical historical perspective of recent headlines. We are confident that Jewish healthcare providers as well as the broad Torah readership will find this volume enlightening," said Dr. Edward Lebovics, emphasizing the journal's role in linking classic principles with modern medical and social concerns.

The contributors to this volume form a diverse and esteemed group of scholars and practitioners, offering a comprehensive and nuanced exploration of each topic. They include Rabbi Dr. Ernest H. Agatstein, Aryeh Berkowitz, Rabbi Dr. Yosef A. Cohen, Rabbi Dovid Heber, Rabbi Aron Jacobsohn, Professor Naomi Klapper, Nachum Lebovics, Rabbi Mordechai Lebhar, Dr. Ariel Felman, Rabbi Dr. Zvi Loewy, Dr. Jonah Rubin, Rabbi Dr. David Shabtai, Rabbi Dr. Jason Weiner, and Rabbi Akiva Willig.

"As the nation's largest Jewish-sponsored institution of higher learning that is a leader in health care education, we are proud to share such an important work with the Torah community and its medical professionals," said Dr. Alan Kadish, Touro President.

The importance of this annual publication in facilitating crucial dialogue within the Jewish community is encapsulated by New York Medical College Chancellor and CEO, Dr. Edward C. Halperin, "Each generation must engage in conversations to interpret its current ethical challenges, posed by new biomedical discoveries, in light of the timeless values and precepts of Jewish law. New York Medical College and Touro University are pleased to sponsor Medical Halachah Annual each year to contribute to these conversations."

The Medical Halachah Annual is available for purchase at mosaicapress.com or at local Jewish bookstores. Pre-ordering is now open.



HEALTH LINK

The Inside Scoop: Your Guide for Finding Pelvic Care



By Riva Preil

When you're in pain, all you can think about is how to eliminate it. But if you have pelvic floor dysfunction (PFD), that's often easier said than done. You have to get a diagnosis, research the right clinician and/or therapist, commit to weeks (or sometimes months) of therapy, and do all the "homework" your therapist assigns. Oh, and let's not forget the emotional work as you learn to be patient while your body becomes a more functional and less painful place to exist. The good news? The process can be a lot easier when you have the right plan in place.

First, let's talk about getting a proper diagnosis because, without that, you can't receive proper treatment. Even if an internist or gynecologist is familiar with PFD, that doesn't mean you'll be immediately (or ever) receiving that diagnosis. As I explain in my book "The Inside Story," misdiagnosis happens because PFD may not be at the top of your doctor's mind. They might want to run diagnostics or perform further testing. If you do, in fact, have PFD, these tests will be negative because they do not detect pelvic floor muscle overactivity. Your doctor may be wonderful and well-intentioned, however many of them simply do not know about PFD from their medical school training. (Shout out to Tight Lipped, a wonderful organization that is working on fixing that problem.) You will likely have better luck with a urogynecologist whose specialty is the pelvic floor, or a gynecologist who has a history of recognizing pelvic floor disorders.

If your doctor can't relatively quickly determine your pain driver, or primary source of pain, then you might have to advocate for yourself. In the United States, we have direct access. This means you can go ahead and schedule an appointment with a pelvic floor physical therapist without a referral. (Keep in mind that not all states allow for the same level of direct access, so make sure you know the rules in your state before seeing a therapist.)

In the same way you should ask for a recommendation for a good doctor, you should do the same for a pelvic floor physical therapist. You may feel like you are the only one experiencing your symptoms, but I promise you that is not the case. Don't be surprised if you find out your aunt or friend had the same problem and knows of a skilled provider. The internet can also be a good starting point for research. In the United States, you should search the American Physical Therapy Association's website for a trusted therapist in your area.

When looking for a therapist, you should make sure they have at least six months of experience. Sometimes this information will be found on their website or LinkedIn, but don't be afraid to ask. Also ask how many continuing education classes your therapist has taken and which ones. Personally speaking, I like the Herman & Wallace Pelvic Rehabilitation Institute. Their courses and teachers are amazing. Finding a therapist who solely treats pelvic floor dysfunction may be tough, but at least half of their patients should be experiencing PFD.

Lastly, inquire about your therapist's credentialing. The letters you see may be confusing, so let me help you break the code. WCS is very good. This stands for the Board Certified Women's Health Clinical Specialist from the American Physical Therapy Association, the gold standard within the physical therapy community for being considered an expert in pelvic health. (To put it in perspective, I am pretty sure I studied longer and harder for my WCS than for my licensing examination.) There are other letters you may want to look for. BCB-PMD means that they are board-certified in biofeedback for pelvic muscle dysfunction. PRPC means that the clinician has Pelvic Rehabilitation Practitioner Certification through Herman & Wallace, and CLT is a Certified Lymphedema Therapist.

Then, evaluate your choice. Interviewing your pelvic floor physical therapist might seem like a tough thing to do, but it is vital. Do a trial visit. Consider how you feel. Is your therapist caring or dismissive? Is the staff friendly, and helpful with insurance or payment plans? Are you given homework? Has your therapist outlined your goals? A therapist may be great at what he or she does, but it's important that you feel comfortable. As you will notice on my website, I allow potential patients the opportunity to receive a free phone consultation before making an appointment with me.

Having pelvic floor dysfunction can be a scary and frustrating experience, but it's less so when you are well-informed about your options and are empowered to best take care of your body. Whether you choose to seek care with Revitalize Physical Therapy or another respected healthcare provider, I hope this guide empowers you to be your own best advocate. To your health!

Riva Preil is a leading pelvic floor physical therapist. She is the founder and owner of Revitalize Physical Therapy, a pelvic floor physical therapy clinic, in Washington Heights, New York. In addition to using therapeutic exercise and manual therapy, Riva is certified in various modalities to help her patients achieve their goals. She received biofeedback certification in treating pelvic floor dysfunction from BCB-PMD. She is also a Certified Lymphedema Therapist (CLT) through the Academy of Lymphatics, allowing her to treat individuals who experience upper and/or lower extremity swelling. Visit https://revitalizephysicaltherapy.com

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Dr. Riva Preil, PT, DPT has over a decade of experience working with Jewish people of all ages.

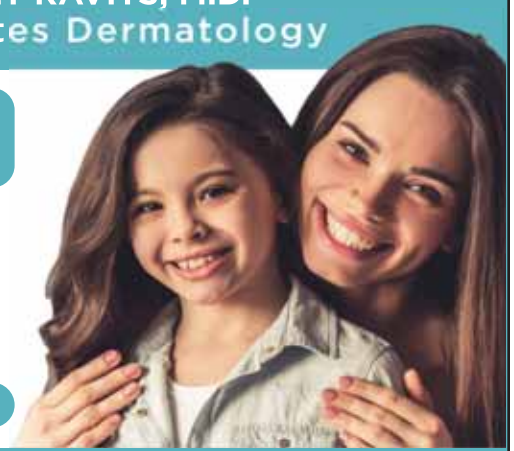
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Gold Fitness Elevates Middle-Aged Men's Wellness Through Functional Training

By Andrea Nissel

Jason Goldsmith was a fitness enthusiast long before catchphrases like "health and wellness" were trending. While studying political science at Michigan State University, he opted to spend a summer interning in the heart of Washington, D.C. It was then that he realized that his true calling lay not in politics, but in personal training. Driven by a newfound passion, Goldsmith redirected his focus to understanding human anatomy and exercise physiology and became certified in fitness instruction.

After graduating, Goldsmith married and started a family. As life unfolded, he felt a pull towards a more stable career path. In the 1990s, personal training wasn't quite as established as it is today, said Goldsmith, who pivoted towards a career in digital marketing where he thrived for many years. Despite his professional success, his love for fitness never waned. Five years ago, he made the bold decision to recertify as a fitness trainer and embarked on a new era dedicated to inspiring others on their fitness journeys, most recently working at Life Time studio in Bergen County.



Today, Goldsmith trains clients under his own brand, Gold Fitness, which is built around his personal fitness experience and his extensive knowledge of anatomy and physiology. His target audience is middle-aged men on a beginner to intermediate level who need to learn how to exercise and respond to changes in their body. At 52, Goldsmith has also struggled with the ups and downs of weight gain and the unique challenges that tend to appear at this stage of life. "I continue to improve as a professional trainer because I have worked through many of my own body issues and ailments," he confided.

Central to Goldsmith's philosophy is the belief that true health begins from the inside out. "It's more about health span than life span," he said, and stressed that his core objective is to get his clients healthy and keep them healthy. His workouts prioritize freedom of movement, cardiorespiratory fitness, and functional strength training, all aimed at making sure you enjoy a positive quality of life. Goldsmith likens his approach to preparing an athlete for a specific sport; in this case, the sport is just moving well and successfully living life.



"Working with Jason has been an absolute game-changer for my fitness journey. He's incredibly knowledgeable about the body and its movements," said David E. "It's clear he is passionate about what he does. Jason has taught me the ins and outs of proper form and technique, making my workouts more effective and a lot more fun."

As a seasoned trainer Goldsmith knows which exercises will work for you. He often meets clients who are eager to work out but have been emphasizing the wrong moves. Effective workouts for middle-aged men take less time and are less taxing on the body, he said, adding that his program focuses on movement patterns that improve physical fitness for everyday life.

Goldsmith views himself as more than a fitness coach. "I think of myself as an allied health professional who promotes healthy living and disease prevention." His expertise extends far beyond traditional training and includes a wide range of fitness mastery, including corrective exercise, cardio conditioning, senior fitness, post-cardiac rehab, and programs focused on Type 2 diabetes. He isn't looking for lifelong clients, rather he aims to help people learn how to work out independently and lead a healthy life. He even helps his clients obtain their own set of equipment so that they could take charge of their own fitness routine.

"I began working with Jason as the pandemic subsided and I needed a boost to restart my fitness journey. Over the ensuing two years, Jason kept evolving the program to keep it fresh and challenging," said Joe H. "A steady trickle of new movements and methods got me back on track; now I'm comfortable getting a workout in at home, at a hotel, or in the local gym."

Goldsmith understands that no two people are alike, which is why a personal trainer who tailors a workout specifically for you is so important. He offers in-person training, virtual coaching and online programs, and his methodology requires minimal equipment, which he feels is all you really need for a challenging workout. He currently trains clients in their homes or at a studio in Teaneck and recommends starting with two training sessions a week to achieve optimal results.

Goldsmith is offering prospective clients a no-obligation consultation to discuss a program that works for you. For more information, please visit www.goldfitnessnj.com or email Jason@goldfitnessnj.com.

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Medicare Fraud Prevention Week Is June 3-9

By Charles Clarkson

Medicare Fraud Prevention Week focuses on the actions everyone can take to prevent Medicare fraud, waste and abuse. Medicare Fraud Prevention Week runs from June 3 through June 9. Medicare Fraud Prevention Week is sponsored by the National Senior Medicare Patrol program, a federally funded program of the Administration for Community Living, known as the SMP.

The mission of the SMP is to educate Medicare beneficiaries about Medicare fraud, waste and abuse. Medicare beneficiaries can learn how to protect themselves and their families from Medicare fraud by joining the SMP program every day during the Medicare Fraud Prevention Week. In New Jersey, connect with the Senior Medicare Patrol of NJ on its website: seniormedicarepatrolnj.org.

Why Is This Week Important?

Medicare loses an estimated $60 billion each year due to fraud, waste and abuse. Every day, issues related to these problems affect people across the country, often costing them time, money and well-being. Medicare-related errors contribute to this annual loss even though errors can be honest healthcare billing mistakes. However, repeated errors by a doctor or provider could be considered a red flag of potential fraud or abuse if not corrected.

When people steal from Medicare, it hurts us all and is big business for criminals. Some common examples of fraud, waste or abuse could include:

- Charging for services or supplies that were never provided
- Upcoding, billing a higher code for services provided so that providers can receive more money from Medicare
- Double billing
- Prescribing or providing excessive or unnecessary tests and services

Who Pays for Medicare Fraud?

Medicare fraud, waste and abuse is paid for by all taxpayers. It is your money. It increases the cost of Medicare and jeopardizes the Medicare program.

Falling prey to healthcare fraud may mean that your Medicare number has been "compromised" as a result of medical identity theft. Stealing from Medicare leaves less available funds for legitimate Medicare services now and those needing Medicare in the future.

How to Take Part in the Week

The most effective way to stop Medicare fraud from occurring is to prevent it from happening in the first place. Learning how to prevent it and then sharing what you learn with others is how Medicare beneficiaries, caregivers, family members, partners and professionals, and the whole community can participate during Medicare Fraud Prevention Week.

If you are a Medicare beneficiary, start the week by learning how to read your Medicare statements. Read your Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) or Explanation of Benefits (EOB) carefully. Even though an MSN may say "This is Not a Bill," it is a statement of the cost of services that Medicare has paid on a beneficiary's behalf.

Remember the Three Steps From the SMP: Prevent, Detect, Report!

- **Prevent:** Learn how to read your MSN or EOB. By reading your statements carefully, a beneficiary can discover any discrepancies in their billing. A beneficiary can also call their state SMP or go to the SMP website to learn how to best protect themselves and their families.
- **Detect:** When reviewing an MSN or EOB, look for services, products or equipment that was not received, double charges, or items your doctor did not order.
  - Request and use a Health Care Tracker from the SMP of NJ to keep track of all of your medical appointments and all the services you received. Then compare the information you recorded with what is printed on your MSNs and/or EOBs. The SMP of NJ will be happy to mail you a tracker. Call us at 732-777-1940 to request a tracker.
  - If you find items of concern, call the doctor or company in question and ask them about potential mistakes. Call your insurance company if you still have questions.
- **Report:** Call or email the SMP of NJ if you believe that you have experienced health care fraud, waste or abuse.

Caregivers, help by educating yourself and your clients or loved ones on how to prevent and detect health care fraud, errors and abuse. Be on the lookout for things like boxes of knee braces (known as durable medical equipment, or DME) lying around the house. This is a common scam and may mean your client or loved one has been a victim. Remind your clients or loved ones to never give out their Medicare number or other personal information over the phone.

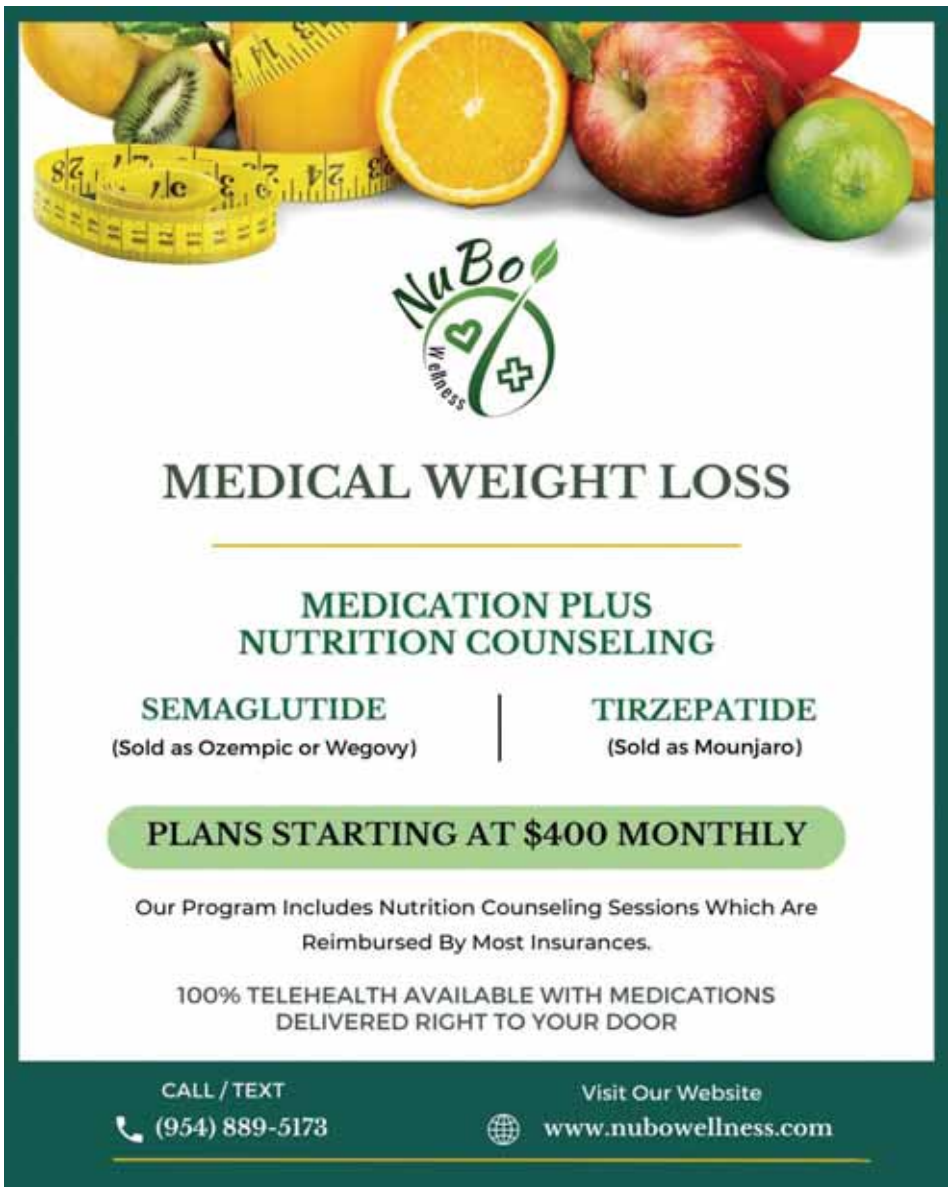
Families, help by talking to your loved ones about protecting their Medicare number just as they would a credit card number. Encourage them to check their Medicare statements for fraud, waste or abuse. Help your loved ones create a Medicare account at Medicare.gov to access their Medicare claims online or remind them to open and review their statements when they come in the mail every three months.

Health care providers, help by talking to patients about healthcare-related scams such as those related to durable medical equipment, genetic testing, or new, plastic Medicare cards that may contain a chip, just like a credit card. Reassure them that your office and their other doctors' offices are not going to call to offer them services or equipment. Teach them that products and services should only be ordered by doctors they regularly visit, and that needed medical items should never be ordered through TV ads or unsolicited calls.

Lastly, as a community, help by looking out for your older neighbors. If you overhear someone talking about Medicare, do not be afraid to give information about the state SMP. Encourage those you know to talk to a trusted source about their Medicare questions and tell your neighbors about the most recent Medicare scams. Consider volunteering with your state SMP so you can help spread the word about preventing Medicare fraud, waste and abuse. Or contact the SMP of NJ to come to your group or organization for a presentation on Medicare fraud. These presentations are free and can take place anywhere in NJ. Schedule a presentation by calling the SMP of NJ at 732-777-1940.

Charles Clarkson is the project director, Senior Medicare Patrol of New Jersey.





Dietary Tweaks for Glowing Skin



By Sarah R. Alter

Looking to enhance your skin's radiance without invasive needles or expensive creams? Here are some effortless tips to achieve healthier skin.

Embrace Healthy Fats: Omega-3 fatty acids, already renowned for their cardiovascular and cognitive benefits, also work wonders for your skin. Research indicates their potential in alleviating conditions like eczema and acne, as well as generally supporting skin hydration and barrier function.

Consider incorporating omega-3-rich foods such as salmon, avocado, chia seeds and walnuts into your meals. Alternatively, opt for omega-3 supplements for an added boost.

Explore Collagen Supplements: Skin loses collagen and elastin due to aging and oxidative stress. Ensuring an ample intake of collagen peptides is an excellent approach to foster firmer skin.



Collagen supplements need to be in a hydrolyzed collagen peptide form in order to be absorbed by the body. These collagen peptides have been shown to enhance skin elasticity and collagen density. By stimulating the body's natural collagen production, collagen peptides contribute to healthier, more youthful-looking skin. Look for reputable collagen formulas to reap these benefits, or message me for my favorite recommendation.

Diversify With Natural, Colorful Foods: Boost your intake of yellow, orange and red natural foods to improve your skin health. These vibrant hues signal the presence of carotenoids, powerful antioxidants known for their skin-enhancing properties. Carotenoid-rich foods like tomatoes, bell peppers, oranges and carrots help combat oxidative stress, reduce redness and improve skin tone. Greens like kale and spinach also contain carotenoids and additional powerhouse antioxidants such as lutein that protect the skin from UVA- and UVB-induced oxidative stress and general skin damage. Incorporating these colorful options into your diet promotes radiant skin.

Remember, a balanced diet rich in protein, fruits, vegetables and hydration is key to supporting skin health. While specific "skin foods" can enhance your glow, don't overlook the fundamentals of nutritious eating.

Sarah R. Alter is a physician assistant with ten years of experience in women's health care. Currently, she specializes in women's mental health and serves as an integrative medicine provider at Custom Wellness NJ. To contact her, please call (201) 494-4733.

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Interpreting Food Labels



By Jenn Chapler MS RD CDN

Dear Jenn,

I'm in the process of losing weight, watching my diet carefully and keeping a food journal. I keep track of foods eaten, portion sizes, time of day eating, hunger levels before and after eating meals and total daily caloric intake. As you have mentioned in previous columns "weight is about the calorie." Following your recommendations, I have reduced mine. Recently it came to my attention that commercial food items might have hidden calories not included in the calorie count on the package. Can you clarify? Is this true?

Sincerely,

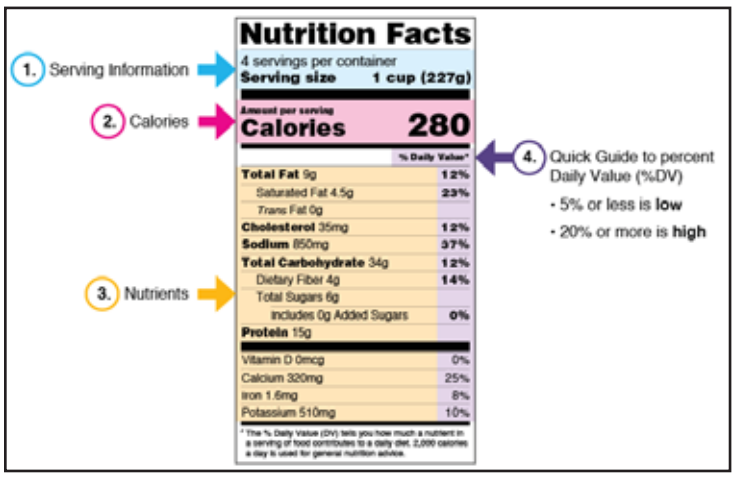
Interpreting Food Labels

Dear Interpreting Food Labels,

Great question! And yes, to lose weight you must reduce caloric intake and increase expenditure. A food diary is highly recommended. It encourages accountability and helps keep focus on the weight goal. "Fat weight loss" takes time and effort; 3,500 calories must be burned to lose 1 pound. Therefore, weight loss is a process and must be worked on. I encourage regular exercise with caloric reduction for the best metabolic results for weight loss efforts. Let's focus on this sample food label below to understand general information food labels provide.

1. Serving Size (#1 on sample label)

When looking at the Nutrition Facts label, first look at the number of servings in the package (servings per container) and the serving size. Serving sizes are standardized to make it easier to compare similar foods; they are provided in familiar units, such as cups or pieces, followed by the metric amount, e.g., the number of grams (g). The serving size reflects the amount that people "typically" eat or drink. It is not a recommendation of how much you should eat or drink.



It's important to realize that all the nutrient amounts shown on the label, including the number of calories, refer to the size of the serving. Pay attention to the serving size, especially how many servings there are in the food package. For example, you might ask yourself if you are consuming ½ serving, 1 serving, or more. In the sample label, 1 serving of lasagna equals 1 cup. If you ate 2 cups, you would be consuming 2 servings. That is two times the calories and nutrients shown in the sample label.

2. Calories (#2 on sample label)

Calories provide a measure of how much energy you get from a serving of food. In the example, there are 280 calories in one serving of lasagna. What if you ate the entire package? Then, you would consume 4 servings, or 1,120 calories.



To achieve or maintain a healthy body weight, balance the number of calories you eat and drink with the number of calories your body expends as energy. Your caloric requirements depend on your age, sex, height, weight and physical activity level. Learn your estimated calorie needs at https://www.myplate.gov/myplate-plan.

Remember: The number of servings you consume determines the number of calories you actually eat. Eating too many calories per day is linked to overweight and obesity.

3. Nutrients (#3 n sample label

Saturated fat, sodium and added sugars are nutrients listed on the label that are associated with cardiovascular disease and high blood pressure. Consuming too much added sugar can make it hard to meet important nutrient needs while staying within calorie limits.

What Are Added Sugars and How Are They Different From Total Sugars?

- Total Sugars on the Nutrition Facts label includes sugars naturally present in many nutritious foods and beverages. These may include sugar in milk (lactose) and fruit sugar (fructose) as well as any added sugars that may be present in the product. No Daily Reference Value has been established for total sugars because no recommendation has been made for the total amount to eat in a day.
- Added Sugars on the Nutrition Facts label include sugars that are added during the processing of foods. Commonly added are sucrose (table sugar), dextrose (corn or wheat sugar), sugars from syrups or honey, and sugars from concentrated fruit or vegetable juices.

Total Fat 9g	**12%**
Saturated Fat 4.5g	**23%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 35mg	**12%**
Sodium 850mg	**37%**
Total Carbohydrate 34g	**12%**
Dietary Fiber 4g	**14%**
Total Sugars 6g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	**0%**
Protein 15g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 320mg	25%
Iron 1.6mg	8%
Potassium 510mg	10%

Note: Having the word "includes" before Added Sugars on the label indicates that Added Sugars are included in the number of grams of Total Sugars in the product.

For example, a container of yogurt with added sweeteners, might list:

Total Sugars 15g	
Includes 7g Added Sugars	**14%**

This means that the product has 7 grams of Added Sugars and 8 grams of naturally occurring sugars—for a total of 15 grams of sugar.

Dietary fiber, vitamin D, calcium, iron and potassium are nutrients on food labels that Americans generally do not get the recommended amount of. Eating a diet high in dietary fiber can increase the frequency of bowel movements, lower blood glucose and cholesterol levels, and reduce calorie intake. Diets higher in vitamin D, calcium, iron and potassium can reduce the risk of developing osteoporosis, anemia and high blood pressure.

4. The Percent Daily Value (%DV) (#4 on sample label)

The Percent Daily Value (%DV) is the percentage of the Daily Value for each nutrient in a serving of the food. The Daily Values are reference amounts (expressed in grams, milligrams or micrograms) of nutrients to consume or not to exceed each day. The %DV shows how much a nutrient in a serving of a food contributes to a total daily diet.

General Guide to %DV

- 5% DV or less of a nutrient per serving is considered low.
- 20% DV or more of a nutrient per serving is considered high.

Dietitian Recommendations:

- Consume Higher %DV for Dietary Fiber, Vitamin D, Calcium, Iron and Potassium
- Reduce consumption %DV for Saturated Fat, Sodium and Added Sugar.

Facts That Affect Calorie Consumption in Commercial Food Product

1. Calorie blockers are compounds that block some amount of carbs and fats absorbed after they are eaten. They can reduce the caloric influence of excess, although they may cause intestinal discomfort at higher doses.

2. The calories listed on labels come straight from the manufacturers—and are regulated by the FDA. The agency allows for a 20% margin of error. Because of this, the caloric content is often higher than labeled, yet still within FDA limits. A 2013 study on the food label accuracy of snack foods found that their average caloric content was more than 4% higher than the calories listed. The researchers suggested this was because the foods contained more carbohydrates than listed.

3. Beyond that, the counts on labels can be inaccurate for other reasons, too. The idea of calorie counts comes from 19th century American chemist Wilbur Olin Atwater, who created the current system by calculating the average number of calories in a single gram of protein, fat and carbohydrate. Yet different foods are digested in different ways, which has an impact on the calories you extract. For example, a series of studies by Agricultural Research Services found that people absorb fewer calories from nuts like almonds, walnuts and pistachios—which can be harder to digest completely—than the labels indicate.

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 9g	**12%**
Saturated Fat 4.5g	**23%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 35mg	**12%**
Sodium 850mg	**37%**
Total Carbohydrate 34g	**12%**
Dietary Fiber 4g	**14%**
Total Sugars 6g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	**0%**
Protein 15g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 320mg	25%
Iron 1.6mg	8%
Potassium 510mg	10%

4. Research shows 98% of the calories in carbs are taken in and used by your body, 95% of the calories in fat, and only 92% of the calories from protein make it past your digestive tract. So, you're shaving off a few calories simply because digestion and absorption aren't perfect.

5. Different people get different amounts of calories from food. Even the same person can absorb different amounts of calories from the same food depending on what else is going on in their body. Caloric intake is influenced by many variables, including age, sex, environmental temperature, energy expenditure, pregnancy, hormonal status and dieting behaviors.

Conclusion

There is a possible 20% margin of error in calories listed on commercial food products. In addition, as individuals we vary in

CONTINUED ON P. 148

No Mother's Day for Stepmoms



By Kate Winkler

If you go to the internet looking for professional advice on how to deal with stepmom life, some of what you'll read will include:

- Speaking only if you can do it with kindness, offering constructive and objective feedback.
- Putting the stepkids first and keeping in mind what will make them thrive.
- Encouraging a healthy co-parenting relationship between your spouse and the other co-parent.
- Avoiding disciplining or exercising control over your stepkids.

If you are a stepmom, you might've heard some version of this advice from your therapist, friends, in-laws, your partner, and even divorce lawyers and mediators.

Though they probably had good intentions and thought they were helpful, you are right to sense that they are far from understanding the stepmom experience and the complicated family dynamic that comes with it.

The advice above, intentionally or not, suggests a hierarchy that puts the biological parents, and the kids, at the top of the pyramid.

The combination of in-laws and supportive professionals who want to maintain the preexisting structure, rules and relationships might lead you to become a resentful, angry and confused wife and stepmother.

The constant feeling of being at the mercy of other people's decisions (instead of part of them), navigating being a partial sideshow parent and partial roommate, combined with the pretty negative reputation that comes with the title, sure don't help.

The internet also offers honest and relatable accounts of other stepmoms. Including how the stress and anxiety that come from your own children, can be multiplied when it comes to living and raising someone else's children, how you don't actually "love them as your own," and how to deal with a high-conflict ex.

Stepfamilies come in many shapes and sizes, but the stepmom experience often feels like an uphill, very lonely battle.

Stepfamilies come in many shapes and sizes, but the stepmom experience often feels like an uphill, very lonely battle.

As a stepmom, your experience of family life is dramatically different than that of your partner and the stepkids. You are an outsider to predetermined ways of running the house, from what's on the grocery list to how you spend a family night.

They have their games, jokes, negotiation style and cleaning habits. They have a shared history. So where does it leave you?

It can seem impossible to assert yourself, claim your place at the top of the pyramid, and say, "Enough."

There are social media groups, webinars, blogs, podcasts and on-demand coaching sessions, but confidential, consistent, relational and professionally-led services are much harder to come across.

Group Therapy NJ offers a distinct experience of an intimate ongoing support group for stepmoms living in New Jersey.

This group meets virtually for an hour and 15 minutes once a week. In this group, you will get plenty of support and encouragement. You will gain tools to deal with emotions of jealousy, alienation, anger and helplessness. You will be with women who are experiencing the same frequent self-doubt and the urge to walk out on it all. You will practice communication skills to bring you and your partner back on the same team.

You don't have to continue being so tense when the kids come, when there's a change to the divorce agreement or when your partner mentions the ex.

You've been in fight mode for way too long. If you're ready to experience real joy and pride in your family, please reach out. I'll be honored to help you.

Kate Winkler is a Licensed Associate Marriage and Family Therapist (LAMFT) at Group Therapy NJ. She is passionate about learning how individuals establish and maintain connections. She works with individuals, couples and families. In addition to English, Kate speaks Hebrew, Russian and is studying Spanish. Kate lives with her husband, daughter and three stepchildren in Highland Park, New Jersey. To work with her, please email katewinkler@grouptherapynj.com or call/text 732.320.3651.

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HEALTH LINK

The Golden Ticket: Turmeric And Its Nutritional Benefits



Melissa Papir, MS, RD

As I was sprinkling turmeric into the ground beef designated for dinner, I was mesmerized, albeit momentarily, by the powder's golden color. Its distinct flavor matches the bright hue in intensity, so I used the spice sparingly in my dinner preparation. However, using it reminded me that I should be using it more often when cooking. Though its physical appearance always attracts any customer, its coveted nutritional profile can reel in even the most skeptical of consumers.

Turmeric is derived from the Curcuma longa plant which is native to Southeast Asia, primarily in India. Indians have embraced this herb wholeheartedly into their culinary language, deeming it almost synonymous with their culture. Historically, turmeric was used in both Ayurvedic and Chinese medicine to treat ailments of the skin, joints, upper respiratory tract, and digestive system. Today, turmeric is touted as a health and wellness agent, combating conditions from arthritis to cancer.

Turmeric has been lauded as a possible conduit for reducing inflammation and oxidation in the body. In a nutshell, oxidation involves the breakdown of oxygen in the body, which creates unstable molecules otherwise known as free radicals. These free radicals wreak havoc on our bodies, breaking apart stable molecules by stealing electrons, damaging these molecules in the process and spurring on inflammation. Antioxidants are our superheroes, swooping in and saving the day by giving over their own electrons so that these free radicals don't have to steal them.

Antioxidants include nutrients such as vitamins A, C and E, minerals like copper, zinc and selenium, as well as phytochemicals like lycopene and anthocyanin. Oxidative stress and inflammation are major contributors to chronic disease, an increasing alarming epidemic that our nation is facing at this time. They can cause damage to nerve cells in the brain (potentially contributing to conditions like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's Disease), joints (contributing to arthritis), artery walls (free radicals encourage low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol to stick to artery walls, increasing risk for coronary artery disease), just to name a few.

The main component of turmeric is called curcumin, which imparts turmeric's distinctly beautiful color and nutritional benefits. According to Edwards et al. (2017), dosages exceeding 1 gram per day are needed to experience any positive effects. Hence, supplementation may be warranted in order to reap any sort of reward from the golden spice. However, it definitely doesn't hurt to incorporate it into your meal regimen. It can enhance soups, rice and lentil dishes, coffee or tea, and even milk! A relatively novel drink on the market, aptly named "Golden milk", consists of turmeric, warm milk, black pepper, cinnamon, and honey or maple syrup, boiled over low heat for about 10 minutes. Curcumin has a low bioavailability rate, which means the body has a harder time absorbing it into the bloodstream. Piperine, a natural substance in black pepper, is found to increase absorption and bioavailability, so adding black pepper to your turmeric amalgamation is key. Curcumin is also a fat-soluble substance, which means it breaks down and dissolves in fat or oil. It may be a good idea to include turmeric in a meal that's high in fat as well. Whether turmeric is getting sprinkled in your soup or being ingested via supplement, it may be your golden ticket towards better health and wellness!

Melissa Papir is a registered dietitian working in long term care nutrition in Washington Heights, New York. She works with middle-aged to elderly residents to provide nutrition that can help boost their quality of life. Melissa loves to write about nutrition in her spare time. She can be reached at mpapir@forttryonrehab.com.

Interpreting Food Labels

CONTINUED FROM P. 146

our ability to digest, absorb, and accumulate nutrients and calories.

The following is a quick guide to reading the Nutrition Facts label.

- Step 1: Start with the Serving Size.
- Step 2: Compare the Total Calories to your individual needs.
- Step 3: Let the Percent Daily Values be a guide.
- Step 4: Check out the Nutrition Terms.
- Step 5: Choose "low in saturated fat, added sugars and sodium."

The Bottom Line

The calculated number of calories in a food or meal assumes you're able to digest and absorb all the macronutrients, which is seldom the case. You likely take in fewer calories when you eat whole foods, foods high in fiber and resistant starch, and foods that are uncooked and haven't been exposed to heat. Now you have another reason to add more whole, unprocessed foods to your diet.

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When Worlds Collide



By Michael Feldstein

They say it's a small world — and an even smaller Jewish world (although as comedian Steven Wright once quipped, "Yes, but I wouldn't want to paint it!"). And I discovered the truth to this saying once again ... ironically in the midst of close to 1,000 other attendees at the Pesach program at the Armon Hotel in Stamford, where our family celebrated the holiday.

We met a second cousin ... we connected with a relative of the former head of school at our local day school ... and when we met folks from Teaneck, Riverdale and the Five Towns; it was not hard to make an immediate connection with someone we both knew.

However, there was one person in particular who we met that might be one of the most interesting examples of two worlds colliding.

Here's the story ...

Tziri Preis is a lovely young woman who was at the hotel for Pesach helping to run the day camp for kids. We met her the first day of Pesach and when we told her we lived in Stamford, she casually mentioned that her father taught at Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy in Stamford for several years while she was a toddler.

Of course, when she told us that, we immediately asked for her father's name and she replied, "Rabbi Doniel Frank." Rabbi Frank was our son Yosef's fourth-grade teacher and Yosef loved him as a teacher! He is also a mohel. In fact, when our grandson was born and a mohel was needed, Yosef decided to reach out to Rabbi Frank to ask him to perform the brit, which he did. So there is a huge family connection here, and we were delighted to meet Rabbi Frank's daughter given the admiration the members of our family have for him.

But here is where it gets even more interesting. Tziri's mother grew up in Los Angeles and her maiden name is Gottesman. That fact alone might be insignificant, except that my wife Sharon, whose family is from Phoenix, spent a year in Los Angeles attending the Jewish high school there. That year, she boarded at the home of one of the teachers at the school, Rabbi Menachem Gottesman, Tziri's grandfather. Sharon remembered Tziri's mom as a very active and verbal 3-year-old child!

But wait, there's more...

Tziri, who lives in Baltimore, hosts a very successful podcast called InKredible Kids, which is designed to help empower youngsters to develop a growth mindset, motivating them to believe in themselves and to recognize their own self-worth. Immediately after the Oct. 7 massacre in Israel, Tziri gathered several hundred children from various backgrounds and countries, including some children who were staying in safe rooms in Israel, to jointly recite Tehillim together. Since then, at 6 p.m every evening, thousands of children tune in to a livestream Zoom call to say Tehillim on behalf of the IDF soldiers and those living in Israel.

When Sharon heard that Tziri hosted a nightly podcast, she mentioned that a young girl from Florida (who happens to be a relative of ours), was recently connected to an Israeli soldier who was looking for her and the shidduch was facilitated by a podcast host.

"That was me!" Tziri told us.

If you haven't heard the inspiring story of Emma Platt (the young girl from Florida, who is our nephew's niece) and Eitan Turgeman, the IDF soldier who regained the will to survive after reading a letter he received from Emma, you definitely want to learn more ... it's quite a story!

Turgeman was called up early in the Gaza War and before he went out to battle he remembered that he had received a letter from a young girl in America, which he kept inside his combat vest. The letter was written by Emma and read as follows: "Thank you for fighting for us. I am davening for you. Am Yisrael Chai."

Unfortunately, Turgeman suffered severe injuries while fighting — a broken hand, two broken vertebrae in his back, a facial injury, and shrapnel in both of his legs. On the verge of death, he remembered the letter from Emma, which gave him the determination to survive. He turned to the visitors at his bedside and expressed his heartfelt wish to find Emma so that he could properly thank her and meet the girl who had given him the strength when he needed it the most.

Immediately, the visitors sprang into action. They recorded a short video of the soldier with an appeal to help him find Emma. One of the men, Avi Pruzansky of Passaic, sent the video to his daughter-in-law Leah in Baltimore, who reached out to Tziri for assistance in locating Emma. Within an hour, Tziri had located Emma in Florida.

That evening on her nightly Tehillim call, Tziri phoned Emma and her parents, so that all her podcast listeners could share in the emotional moment of having found the youngster who wrote the letter to the soldier.

The following morning, Tziri was able to connect Emma with Turgeman, and the meeting between the IDF soldier who wished to give thanks to the young girl who had written him the note was held through the magic of Zoom technology.

Indeed, it's a small Jewish world.

Michael Feldstein, who lives in Stamford, is the author of "Meet Me in the Middle" (meet-me-in-the-middle-book.com), a collection of essays on contemporary Jewish life. He can be reached at michaelgfeldstein@gmail.com.

Making Our Digital World Safer With Multi-Factor Authentication

By Shneur Garb and Akiva Mensh





In today's digital age, where cyber threats loom larger than ever, safeguarding our personal and work-related information is crucial. We've come to realize that traditional password protection just doesn't cut it anymore.

Most of the community will use a variable of the same familiar passwords. We can't see our readers, but we know you are nodding your heads and laughing that we are right. It's time to reassess and make your passwords more complicated, while still keeping them easy to remember.

Due to our love of Israel, our children and our pets, your passwords may be: 1948, Peace, Shalom, (add your children's name here), (add your pets name here), etc.

A little technique we teach clients especially if you have a name in Hebrew or Yiddish that can be translated to English. You could use something like this:

Garb—in Hebrew is Beged

Then change the letters to numbers.

B3g3d

Add the middle parts of your telephone number or cell phone. iIf your number is 2015551212, our new password can be: B3g3ed555#

My team is adapting to this method so that we can say Beged and we know the rest.

A good time to change your password is when you change the clocks for Eastern time zone twice a year, if you aren't prompted to do this earlier.

The column lesson is out the window if you keep the same password for years.

Why You Need Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)

Passwords can still be hacked, through a series of random attempts by bad actors. That's where Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) comes into play, acting as a cybersecurity sentinel that we've increasingly come to rely on.

MFA introduces an additional layer of security, requiring more than just a password to access an account—perhaps a code sent to an email or a phone. While it might seem like a hassle initially, the peace of mind it offers significantly outweighs this minor inconvenience.

Passwords, sophisticated as they might be, are still vulnerable to various hacking techniques like phishing or brute force attacks (which is a trial and error way of hacking to find passwords, login credentials and even encryption keys). However, with MFA, the likelihood of unauthorized access drops significantly. If a hacker gets your password, they'd still need another verification method to breach your account, making MFA a formidable defense against cyber threats.

Beyond just bolstering defenses, MFA also reduces security risks related to human error such as misplaced passwords or lost devices. It enables businesses and individuals alike to embrace digital innovations with confidence, knowing their data is more secure against cyberattacks.



However, it's crucial to address a potential pitfall of MFA—accidental lockouts. I've experienced this firsthand when I broke my smartphone, rendering me unable to receive the two-factor authentication codes necessary for access. This situation isn't uncommon and can be a significant inconvenience.

To mitigate this risk, when setting up MFA with services like Microsoft or Google, use a personal email that doesn't require another MFA for access. This advice comes not just from personal experience but also from a similar situation faced by my daughter. Select a trusted individual, possibly a spouse or child, who can assist in recovery efforts and avoid using corporate emails for recovery options.

Furthermore, consider having a backup smartphone or device that's already authenticated. This step is crucial, especially for those traveling internationally, where receiving a text message might not be possible. Additionally, ensure you have backup codes from Google and a reliable cell phone number or email address for Microsoft that isn't tied to your corporate accounts.

Adopting MFA might not be a perfect science, but facing a lockout due to MFA is preferable to the consequences of not having it at all. MFA stands as one of the most effective barriers against hackers, and as technologies like fingerprint and facial recognition become more mainstream, these minor inconveniences will seem trivial compared to the security benefits they provide.

In sum, embracing MFA isn't just a proactive step; it's an essential measure in protecting our digital identities in today's cyber-threat landscape. By fortifying our digital defenses with MFA, we enhance the security and integrity of our sensitive information against unauthorized access.

Akiva Mensh attends MTA as a junior. He joined GCG in January as a Level I engineer and is working in the business development and social media department. The IT world is an ever-growing, lightning-fast industry. Akiva brings the social media and Gen Z perspective and has been instrumental in helping grow our AI requirements.

Shneur Garb is the CEO of the Garb Cloud Consulting Group in Teaneck. Contact him at shneur@garbcg.com.

Mitzvahs Come in All Shapes and Sizes



By Avi Ciment

Mitzvahs come in all shapes and sizes. We do not know the true value each commandment holds in the eyes of God. Some are easy, while others are hard. Easy or difficult, the obligation to perform them exists nonetheless. Naturally we can reason, "Well. it's raining, so I guess I'll skip minyan today" or "I would keep kosher but there's very little kosher food where I work, so what can I do?" Yet as my wise pal Andy often quips, "Your excuses are your own."

The good news is that Chazal understood this all too well, letting us know that "the reward is in proportion to the exertion." Rather than viewing certain more challenging mitzvahs as a hindrance, view them as a golden opportunity to maximize that very mitzvah—and our reward—along the way. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to see the difference between a guy who throws on his tefillin for a minute, as opposed to the guy who is exhausted yet wakes up earlier and goes to minyan for a more meaningful, not to mention more effective davening.

Going the extra mile, particularly when the challenges are great, and fighting for your mitzvot, can elevate our neshamas to the loftiest heights.

No one understands this better than Judah Wallis, z"l, who was walking in Dachau in 1945 when suddenly a Jew being taken to his death flung a small bag of tefillin towards him. Being caught with tefillin was punishable by death, so he hid the tefillin under his shirt and headed for his barracks.

In the morning, before roll call, he awoke early and quietly lay tefillin when suddenly a German officer appeared from nowhere, and sentenced him to death.

"Dog, what is your last wish?"

"To wear my tefillin one last time," Wallis replied. The officer was dumbfounded, and Wallis put them on, reciting the brachas aloud.

The entire camp, including the neighboring female camp, was forced to watch, and the cries were many. In Yiddish, Wallis called out, "Yidden, I am the victor. Don't you understand? I am the winner!"

Because German and Yiddish are similar, the German officer understood what he said and was livid. "You dog, you think you are the winner? He grabbed Wallis, who was then forced into a squatting position, and two huge rocks were placed under his arms. Then he was told that he would be receiving 25 lashes to his head—the head where he placed his tefillin. The officer told Wallis that if he dropped even one of the rocks, he would be shot immediately. In fact, because this was such a painful form of death, the officer advised him, "Drop the rocks now. You will never survive the 25 lashes to the head. Nobody ever does."

Wallis' response was, "No, I won't give you the pleasure."

At the 25th lash, the prisoner lost consciousness and was left for dead. Later, a Jew moved him to the side, covered and eventually hid him for two months until he was ultimately liberated. During the beating episode, a 17-year-old girl witnessed the events and was clearly moved by this man's unyielding kiddush Hashem. After the liberation, she eventually found Walls and said, "I've lost everyone. I saw what you did that day when the officer wanted to hang you. Will you marry me?"

The couple requested that the holy Klausenberger Rebbe perform the marriage ceremony. He wrote the *ketubah* (marriage contract) by hand from memory and married them. Their son still has the handwritten ketubah to this day. The greatness Wallis achieved, along with the brachas he brought his family from that one act, is unfathomable.

Hashem sees the efforts we make to fulfill many of the mitzvot, which not only heighten the mitzvah, but also shows Him how far we are willing to go for that mitzvah. Sometimes the effort we exert is the very ingredient that empowers our future generations to reach epic heights. I was reminded of this idea recently when I heard the following speech from my neighbor's father, Ephraim, who along with his fabulous wife, just became great grandparents, b"ah.

"We lived through the vicious oppressive communist regime in the Soviet Union. Any religious activity was strictly forbidden. It was unimaginable and even scary to think and plan a bris for your baby. It was a criminal offense punishable by many years in prison.

"But we came out with a plan. There was one mohel in the town of Tchernowitz, about 250 miles from Khust where we lived—an old, dedicated man, a military feldsher comparable here to a PA, physician assistant, who risked his freedom to perform the mitzvah. But since he lived very far, he would prefer to do it for at least three babies.

"Chasdei Hashem, three babies were born within a month and he agreed to come. We hired a taxi for him and arranged for the day of the bris, which was in our house. But how do you get a minyan that the neighbors should not realize that some kind of Jewish gathering is taking place in your house? They would immediately inform the KGB about suspicious activity by us.

"We came up with a plan that the people would gather at 6 in the morning when the neighbors were still asleep. It worked and the bris was b"H successfully performed. There were no caterers, bagels, cream cheese or lox. My mother, a"h, baked bilkelech and a lekach. We opened cans of sardines, shared one lemon, had a l'chaim with Slivovitz and a piece of lekach. It was a real Yom Tov and a great feeling of relief that the important mitzvah of the bris was successfully performed.

"The men were filing out of the house one by one, so the gathering would not be detected by the goyishe neighbors. Later in the day, one neighbor walked over and inquired what was happening in our house. So Vera came up with a story that her parents visited us early in the morning and woke us up, causing a whole commotion. The lie worked. Then came the next issue: How do you conceal the baby's bris from the visiting nurse? So Vera left Khust and went to her parents' house in Selish, the next town. She stayed there until the baby healed.

"Had the authorities found out that we performed the bris, we would be charged with a criminal offense of abusing and injuring the baby and would be sent to prison. This is briefly the true story of mesiras nefesh we had to go through to perform the mitzvah of bris milah and secretly observe other mitzvahs to continue the way of Jewish life."

This story took place so many years ago, but the seeds were set as this family went to great lengths to fulfill a mitzvah. Today, Ephraim and his wonderful wife have two amazing boys, grandchildren, and now, great-grandchildren b"ah, who are legitimate pillars of their communities.

It makes perfect sense to me. The seeds that were planted so many years ago by these courageous people became strongly entrenched and firmly rooted in the ground, making them impervious to even the harshest evil regimes. Indeed, the reward is not only proportional to the exertion, but it is also the blessing that sustains us as well as our future generations.

Avi Ciment lives in Florida and is a longtime columnist for The Jewish Press. He lectures throughout the world and has just finished his second book, "Real Questions Real Answers." He can be reached at www.AviTalks.com.



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Couple Receives Prestigious Fellowship in Jerusalem

By Shmuel Jablon

Shapell's/Darche Noam and Midreshet Rachel v'Chaya in Jerusalem are proud to announce that Matan and Kayla Zucker have been awarded the third Slomo and Cindy Silvian Foundation Married Couples Fellowship. They will begin their studies in June, just before Shavuot, a most fitting time for this newlywed couple to begin their intensive Torah studies.

College basketball devotees may recognize Matan as the 2023 captain of the Yeshiva University basketball team who was named the Most Outstanding Player of the 2022 Skyline Championship and the All-District Team in 2023. But they may not realize that his pursuit of Jewish growth has been even more impressive than his feats on the court.

Matan grew up with a limited Jewish education and spent his teenage years totally focused on basketball. Despite being one of the few Jewish students in his high school class, when he was 17 he agreed to study an hour a week with Rabbi Shmuel Honigwachs, an Orthodox rabbi from Lakewood, New Jersey. This began a process of gradual growth of Torah studies and observance. He decided to transfer to Yeshiva University prior to his sophomore year in order to seriously learn Torah (and major in economics) in an Orthodox setting while still being able to play college basketball. At YU, he impressed both rabbis and classmates with his sincere desire and tremendous progress. He even skipped his winter vacation in order to be part of a YU study program in Israel.

But Matan, who at 6 feet 4 inches will presumably be Shapell's tallest student, knows that he needs more than just that short stay in a yeshiva to go to the next level in his Jewish growth. Matan shared, "I never had a real formal Jewish education where all I did was focus on Torah. I know that a year of committing to learning in Israel will enhance my life tremendously. I believe that a year in the Married Couple's Program will be an investment in our future. I am leaving my full-time job in pursuit of learning because I believe it is more important for the life I want to live. I have gaps in my Jewish education, and attending Shapell's will be the kick start I need to reach new heights in my learning."


Matan and Kayla Zucker

Kayla is also a star both in Jewish growth and leadership. The daughter of Persian immigrants to the U.S., she grew up in a traditional home and went to Jewish day school for elementary school. After graduating public high school, she attended the Bar Ilan XP gap-year program. She credits that program with saving her Jewish life and enabling her to choose for herself to be a committed Orthodox Jew. This led to her changing college plans and studying at Stern College (of Yeshiva University) where she studied Torah and majored in psychology. Later, Kayla helped start a branch of Moishe House, assisted with a program for homeless New Yorkers, started work with the Friends of the IDF... and met Matan, who quickly impressed her as someone who was focused on his love for God and Jewish growth.

Matan and Kayla were recently married. They are leaving full time jobs to come to Jerusalem to spend a year learning Torah and growing together as a couple. Matan will study at Shapell's and Kayla at Midreshet Rachel V'Chaya, and together they will participate in special programs designed for young married couples who will serve as future leaders in the Jewish community. The Silvian Foundation Fellowship, awarded in partnership with American Friends of Darche Noam, will provide them with full tuition, half board and subsidized housing for their time in our yeshiva and midrasha.

Like the Jewish People at Mount Sinai, Matan and Kayla are truly of one heart and one mind, ready to accept the Torah and devote their lives to building their Jewish family and the Jewish community. Kayla said, "The first year of marriage is where the foundation is created, and having mutual teachers and mentors who can guide us cohesively, especially given our drastically different upbringing, is vital. We want to live a Torah life. We want to build a strong foundation for our marriage. We want to inspire the people around us. We want to raise our children in a religiously observant and loving household. We both know that there is one place where we will be given the proper time, space and guidance to achieve all that, and that is at the Shapell's and MRC Married Couple's Program." Matan added, "We aim to come out of Shapell's and MRC with an even deeper connection to Torah, along with a passion and ability to inspire young Jews to grow in their Judaism."

The Slomo and Cindy Silvian Foundation memorializes Mr. and Mrs. Silvian of Long Beach, New York. They were well known and respected for their friendship, business leadership, civic-mindedness and their philanthropy. Shapell's/Darche Noam and American Friends of Darche Noam are grateful for the foundation's support and proud to again be one of the many important organizations it so generously supports.

Matan and Kayla are also profoundly grateful. Kayla shared, "We are beyond grateful for the Silvian Foundation providing us this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. We cannot thank them enough for helping us develop in our Torah studies and marriage. With their assistance, we will strive to build and inspire Jewish homes wherever they may be!"

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A Lesson From the 48

By Andy Goldsmith

AMIT Children has always been touted as promoting Jewish values. It's part of our mission statement, core to our century-old organizational narrative and, at the end of the day, our raison d'etre.

But like the term "tikkun olam," the term Jewish values is greatly over/misused and as a result, it fails to resonate. At all. At Yeshiva College legendary English professor Dr. William Lee railed against the use of the word "important." "What isn't important?" he would thunder, "It's the most overused word in the English language!" Of late, we have even seen the term bastardized by the intellectually pathetic Jewish pro-terrorist demonstrators who use it as license to protest against their people.



Is it possible to re-energize words — to give Jewish values a meaning again? A year ago, well before the Oct. 7 nightmare war emerged as daily life, I visited AMIT Or Akiva. Or Akiva is a rarity in the AMIT network: where many of our schools serve a dati leumi population, Or Akiva is a secular vocational school in a small city near Caesarea. The student population of 150 is considered at extremely elevated risk during usual times and the school, knowing that free time is a great danger, was one of the first to reopen in Israel during the war. It is a "last chance" school — meaning that students have either failed miserably in other schools (sometimes many) or are referred to us by the police or court system as a final effort to correct a teenager's downward spiral to oblivion.

My AMIT school visits are fairly template; I meet the administration and teachers, tour the facility, hear their challenges/wants/needs, connect with the students, and often meet with a representative from the city as well. (Each city/region in Israel has an education director who is a critically important partner, so much so AMIT will not partner to operate a school unless it has confidence in that professional). I learn about the uniqueness of the school and make connections, and then my job is to help them in any way possible, sometimes by steering program funding but often it is as simple as expressing to the staff our appreciation for their work. It is not hard: the measurable outcomes of most last chance schools like Or Akiva in terms of students passing the Bagrut and entering Tzahal/National Service is well above the national average. In short, our remarkable staff take very broken kids with all sorts of problems and fix them.

The discussions with the staff are enlightening and exhaustive and there is a lot of drilling down that takes place. Because of the partnership of our supporters worldwide it is common for these conversations to lead to solutions in terms of more resources, programming, or as we say, "tachlis" in terms of meeting student and staff needs in a direct, speedy and straightforward fashion. Since Israelis are among the warmest people in the world (and respect the "tachlis" factor) friendships often develop.

But not this day. The education director for the city, Sigal, and I just did not hit it off. The school very much wanted to open a vocational culinary track and Sigal did not agree. I advocated strongly for it, and she and I got into it a bit. What quickly became apparent was that the proposed program was not the true concern. Sigal was, fairly, doubting AMIT's ability to effectively run a secular school in a secular city. The discussion turned quickly to the assertion that this generation lacks values — "interested only in TikTok and their iPhones" — and what values can AMIT possibly teach? And if so, how do you prove it?"

A heated conversation ensued and let us just say she was not inviting me for Shabbat dinner when the day ended. That said, after a few months of back and forth she was persuaded and the culinary track was opened.

But her last question was the real rub: How do you *prove* AMIT inculcates our students with Jewish values? What measurable outcomes exist? U.S. organizations use the intermarriage rate, attendance at Jewish day schools/camps, synagogue membership (or whatever barometer matches their organizational agenda). But in Israel? A hard measure? Not simple at all because there are so many additional factors simply by living in Israel that influence outcomes.

But there is one that will resonate harshly with all of us — in the current war (as of this writing and please God let it be the last) 48 AMIT alumni have died in combat. Almost every single one was an officer, commander or member of the most elite combat units; every single one of them a volunteer because the best units accept only those who *want* to be there. That is 48 out of the national total of holy souls killed in action since Oct. 7, a highly disproportionate number attributable only to their desire to serve the Jewish state at the highest possible level and accepting the potential sacrifice being asked of them.

At AMIT we teach Jewish values. In what is the most horrific and tragic measurable outcome imaginable that sometimes means dying for them. Hashem Yikam Damo.

Andy Goldsmith is the executive vice president of AMIT Children. He can be reached at andrewg@amitchildren.org.



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Depart: (JFK) New York 1:55 AM,
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Arrive: (TLV) Tel Aviv 11:00 AM (on 4 Sep)

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Depart: (EWR) Newark 9:00 PM,
Arrive: (TLV) Tel Aviv 2:25 PM (on 4 Sep)

Sun, 8 Sep - El Al Israel Airlines #0026
Depart: (EWR) Newark 9:00 PM,
Arrive: (TLV) Tel Aviv 2:25 PM (on 9 Sep)

Mon, 9 Sep - El Al Israel Airlines #0012
Depart: (JFK) New York 1:55 AM,
Arrive: (TLV) Tel Aviv 7:25 PM

Mon, 9 Sep - El Al Israel Airlines #0004
Depart: (JFK) New York 10:30 AM,
Arrive: (TLV) Tel Aviv 4:00 AM (on 10 Sep)

Tue, 10 Sep - El Al Israel Airlines #0002
Depart: (JFK) New York 5:30 PM,
Arrive: (TLV) Tel Aviv 11:00 AM (on 11 Sep)

Tue, 24 Sep - El Al Israel Airlines #0008
Depart: (JFK) New York 11:50 PM,
Arrive: (TLV) Tel Aviv 5:20 PM (on 25 Sep)

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YUHSB Class of 1985 Maintains a Strong Connection Almost 40 Years Later


Many members of the class of 1985 at a recent get together.

(Courtesy of MTA) "There's nothing like original old friends that know you in a way that is without pretense and those are friendships that stand the test of time," said Ron Offer of Silver Spring, Maryland YUHSB class of '85. Offer's feelings for his old friends are not unique but what is unique is the way his class has rekindled their old friendships in a meaningful and impactful way over the last few years.


Avi Lauer

During COVID a few graduates from the class lost their fathers. When a number of classmates were unable to pay a shiva visit to three friends that were sitting shiva, the guys arranged for a Zoom shiva call. On that call, the group was enjoying catching up and schmoozing with one another and no one wanted to get off. Offer thought that if the group enjoyed spending time together so much, they shouldn't limit themselves to getting together for sad occasions, but should make their interactions more frequent.

Offer decided to invite a group of friends to a Zoom get together on Sunday, Sept. 23, 2021. On that call, Jonathan (Jon) Ehrman from Passaic expressed that his niece was in need of a refuah sheleima and he suggested that at the next virtual meeting they could learn for the merit of his niece getting well. Also, on that initial Zoom Yudi Teichman from Suffern, New York challenged Offer and Ehrman to make the class's Zoom get together a weekly gathering' the rest, as they say, is history.


Rabbi Yisrael Kaminetsky

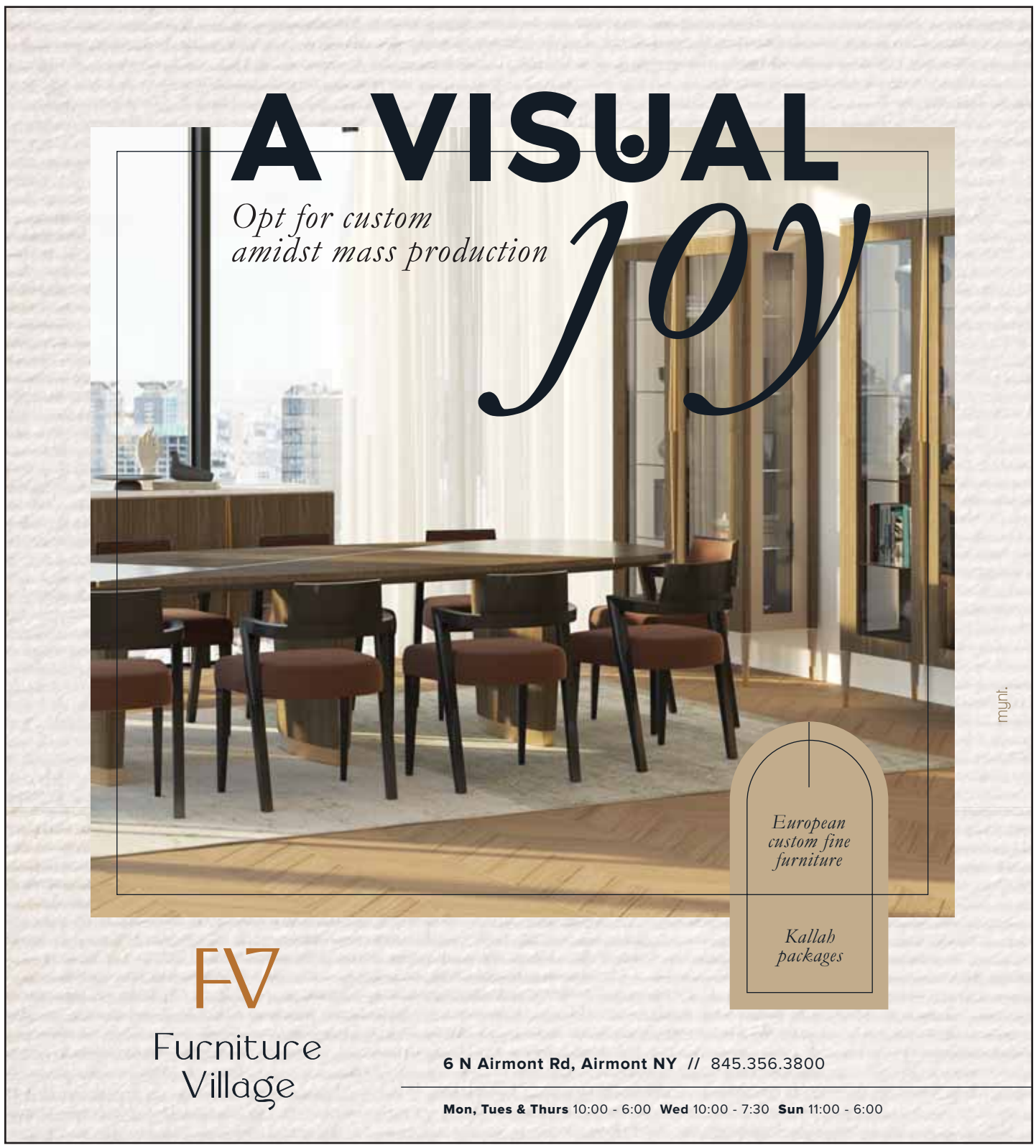
Rabbi Yisroel Kaminetsky, menahel of DRS and graduate of the class of '85, explained that "the weekly Torah Zoom sessions have been a vehicle for strengthening our class' religious identity, Torah study and connections with each other. The fact that our friend's niece is in remission since we started learning together has also been a powerful force for our group to keep learning together."

Beginning on a Sunday in November of 2021 and continuing every week until today, the YUHSB class of '85 has a standing Zoom meeting where they schmooze and learn Torah together. Various guests have addressed the group, from past YUHSB rebbeim to current YUHSB leadership, and many within the class have also led the learning portion of the weekly program.

The Zoom meeting takes place at noon so that classmates from all over the world, including Israel, can join. (Noon on a Sunday isn't the most convenient time for the East Coasters in the group, but it enables their 25 friends living in Israel to join; inclusion is the priority.) On any given week the Zoom includes around 15 participants and lasts about 45 minutes. Rabbi Mark Wildes of New York added, "It's a testament to MTA that after all of these years we are still connected and want to express our connection through a weekly Torah class."

The class of '85 not only meets on Zoom every week but has also created a WhatsApp group where 100 messages pop up in the chat daily — 100 messages from 90 classmates. Offer and Ehrman may have started the weekly Zoom get-togethers, but it was the effort of the entire class that made it grow and flourish. Offer said, "It definitely would not have happened if so many people would not have pitched in." Two alumni alone, Gary Berger and Stephen Slamowitz, connected 50 classmates within the group. As the number of participants grew, the impact of the group grew organically, with various speakers addressing the classmates during the weekly sessions,

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Home



By Anna Gotlieb

Home. Sweet home. LaGuardia Airport. The chaos and cacophony. And I am happy. Relieved to see a sea of men in kippot and women in long skirts. I have returned from a week in the Midwest where Jews are few and far between.

Never before has LaGuardia felt so welcoming. Familiar. Recognizable. I know this place. These people. Two teenage girls with ponytails, long sleeves, flat shoes and backpacks. Five boys with knitted yarmulkes perched on curly hair. A cheerful Rebbe with a bushy black beard and a broad smile—his wife and children in tow.

There are others of course—folks from other cultures, wearing different garb, different head gear. But these—these Jews are mine and I am theirs. With the current wave of vitriol against Israel and Jews across the globe, I find that suddenly, I am in love with LaGuardia Airport.

Anna Gotlieb is the author of four books: Between the Lines, In Other Words, Full Circle and Pinkey's. She spends a few minutes each day collecting her thoughts. Sometimes, she shares them with others.

YUHSB Class of 1985

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

in person get togethers, celebrating simchas together, helping each other with job searches, giving advice on places to visit in Israel, and mourning together when classmates were grieving.

Jason Greenblatt, a former White House Middle East special envoy and current senior director of Arab-Israel diplomacy at the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, said, "The WhatsApp group enables us to connect with one another in this fast-paced world. The group is used for various mitzvot, such as raising funds for the IDF during these very difficult times, but it also allows us a glimpse into one another's lives and to share messages of chizuk, simcha and, at times, condolences. The Zoom shiurim are a big plus for those who are able to make it and shows the deep connection to Torah instilled into this remarkable group. Kudos to those who created it and who keep it going."

Most recently, classmates with children serving in the IDF reached out to the group because their children's units needed protective gear. With one of their own serving as a captain in the IDF, the cause was extremely close to the group's heart and they worked together to purchase the much-needed equipment, including phones, drones and tablets. A couple of weeks ago, a terrorist shot at two buses and one of the drones that the class purchased was used to find and help eliminate that threat. In addition, the tablets are used to direct helicopters as they airlift injured soldiers out of harm's way.



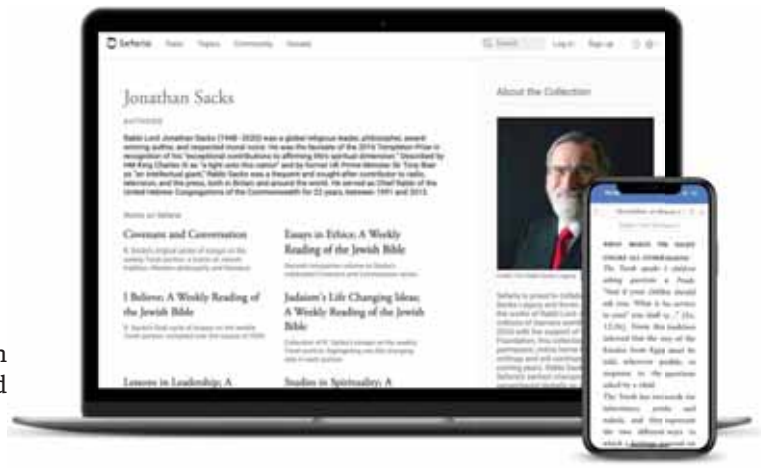
Avi Lauer, a member of the class and Yeshiva University's vice president for legal affairs, secretary and general counsel, added, "Some of my closest friendships began in Yeshiva University High School (MTA) and continue until today. The fact that so many former classmates take time from their busy schedules to get on the weekly Zoom to learn Torah together is a testament to the educational and religious foundation we received in high school. This group is truly something special — perhaps other YUHS/MTA classes will read this and do the same."

While the class of '85 has made their individual mark and now collective contributions to the Jewish community and world at large, perhaps the most special part of the class is the simplest: the fact that everyone is accepted for who they are with no judgments passed. The bonds formed once one walks through those heavy brass doors are not only for life, but are also unbreakable.



Sefaria Adds Works of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks' to Digital Library

All Sacks' works published by Koren Jerusalem will be accessible on the Jewish online library; collection is supported by William Davidson Foundation.



(Courtesy of Sefaria) Sefaria, the nonprofit organization that digitizes and freely shares Jewish texts in Hebrew and in translation, is collaborating with Koren Jerusalem and The Rabbi Sacks Legacy to bring all of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks' works published by Koren into the Sefaria library.

"We are deeply grateful for this collaboration that brings Rabbi Sacks' literary legacy online and will maximize its impact and reach," said Sefaria Board Chair Sam Moed. "Rabbi Sacks was one of the most consequential, contemporary Torah scholars with thought-provoking insights that inspired countless lives. Adding his work to our digital library is particularly special because Rabbi Sacks believed in Sefaria when we launched in 2014."

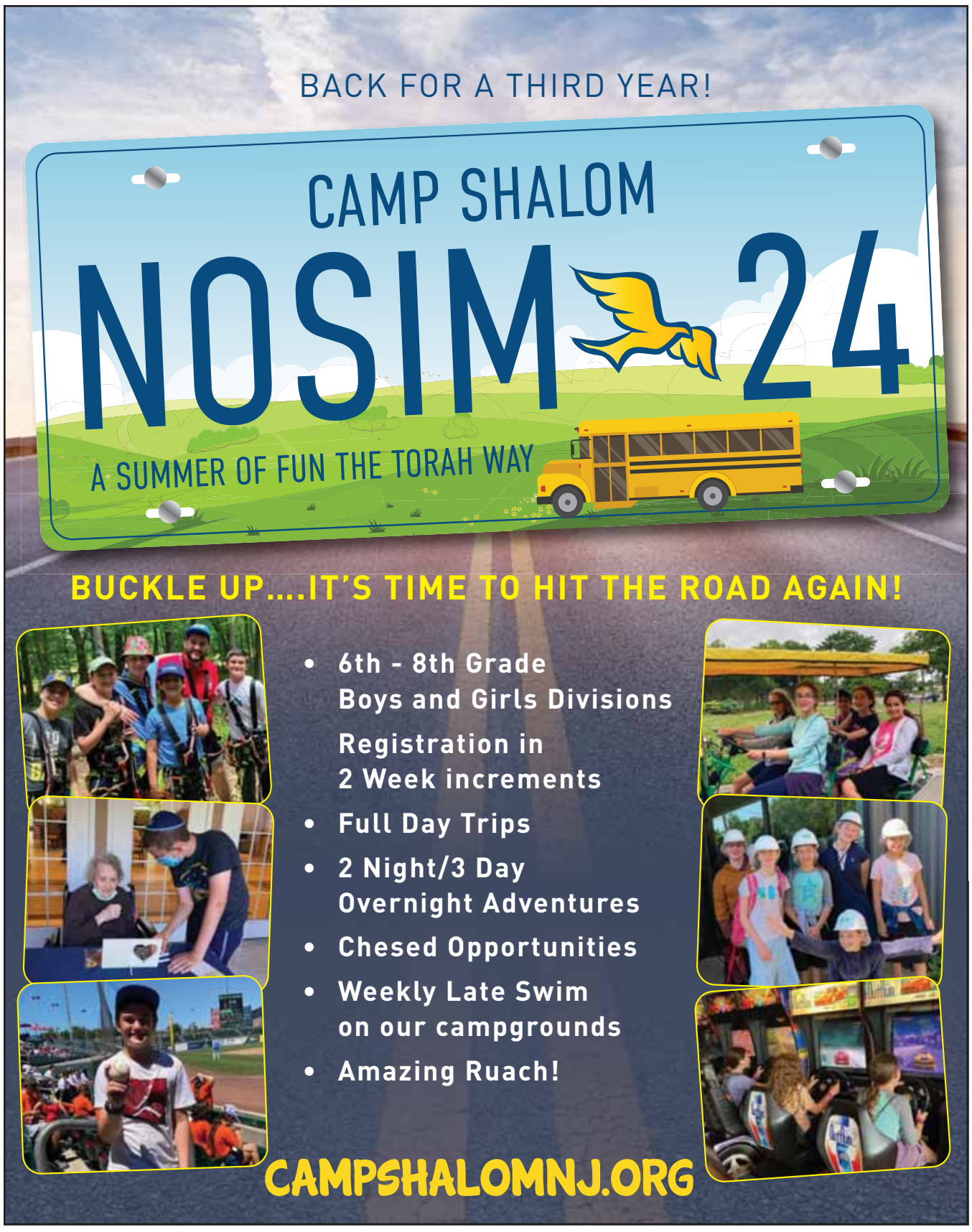
Sefaria will add more than three dozen volumes by Rabbi Sacks to the library, released in stages over several years. The April 2024 release is the first batch of these works. The entire collection of Rabbi Sacks' writing that will be accessible on Sefaria is made possible through the support of the William Davidson Foundation. This initial collection includes:

- The Jonathan Sacks Haggadah: Much more than simply a guide to the seder meal, this volume includes commentaries on the Haggadah, essays about Passover, and the Haggadah base text with a translation by Jessica Sacks.
- The five-part Covenant and Conversation series: Rabbi Sacks's thoughtful writings about the weekly Torah portions are known for bringing together different schools of philosophy with the stories of the Five Books of Moses.
- Collected essays about the weekly parsha: In addition to the Covenant and Conversation series, Rabbi Sacks wrote many further meditations on the wisdom and ideas found in the weekly Torah portions. These five books examine the Torah from various vantage points such as ethics, spirituality and leadership.

At Sefaria's recent 10th anniversary gala, Rabbi Sacks's daughter, Gila Sacks, said that her father was a passionate supporter of Sefaria from the beginning because "he knew that Sefaria was a gamechanger for the Jewish people. It was the next step in a tradition spanning thousands of years of tearing up old hierarchies and democratizing learning and knowledge for all."

"Sefaria has opened up the world of Jewish learning to everyone helping to make genuine universal Jewish literacy a true possibility, perhaps for the first time in modern times," added Gila Sacks at the gala, where the new Sacks collection was announced. "Sefaria and its partners make possible the ongoing Jewish conversation that continues throughout the generations up to today, throughout the globe. This conversation doesn't simply study Torah, but expands it, creates it and enriches it."

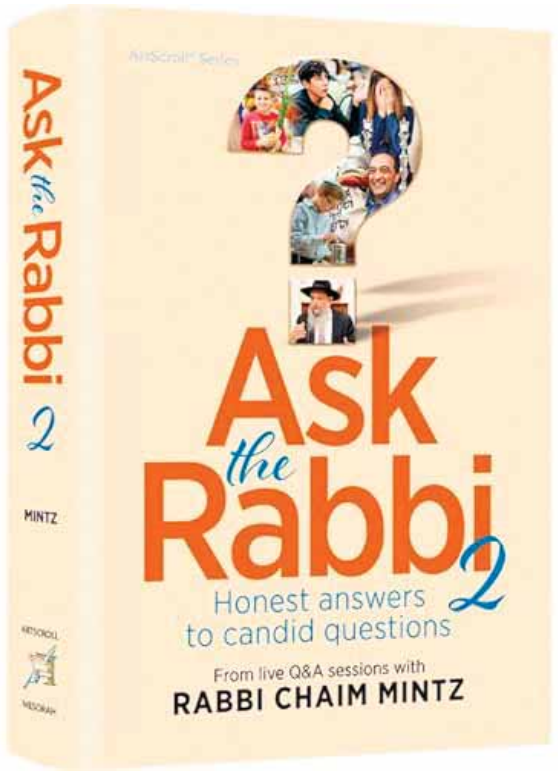
Beloved by millions the world over, Rabbi Sacks was a central intellectual force in modern Jewish thought. He authored over 40 books, many of which became touchstones of Jewish thought, spoke at venues the world over on myriad topics and received many accolades during his 72 years, including the 2016 Templeton Prize in recognition of his "exceptional contributions to affirming life's spiritual dimension." Before his death in 2020, Rabbi Sacks wrote, "Judaism is, in short, an ongoing conversation between that once—and once only—divine voice at Sinai and the human interpretation of those words that has continued in every generation since. It is the great conversation that has never ended."



Honest Answers to Candid Questions

By Chaim Yehuda Meyer

Reviewing: "Ask the Rabbi Volume 2" by Rabbi Chaim Mintz. Mesorah Publications Ltd. 2024. Hardcover. 404 pages. ISBN-13: 978-1422640340.



In the introduction to the second volume of Ask the Rabbi, Rabbi Chaim Mintz, founder of the kiruv organization, Oorah, reflects on the success of the first volume with Jews of all backgrounds. Rabbi Mintz found that it wasn't just people who were starting their quest on religious Judaism who had questions; people who were frum from birth also wanted to know best practices. As the host of a weekly Q&A on YouTube, Rabbi Mintz answers queries covering all facets of religious life from prayer to chinuch, hashkafa to mussar, birth to death.

Ask the Rabbi Volume 2 is divided into different sections; each section features questions asked of the Rav and his thought-out, well reasoned and richly sourced answers. This book is only intended as a guide; the same answers might not apply to every situation that arises. However, this book gives us something to think about. What are you going to ask your Rabbi? The issues that have arisen seem challenging, but Rabbi Mintz addresses them from all sides before presenting his response. At the end of each answer, Rabbi Mintz summarizes his response with a message to the reader.

As an example of a question presented, one person wanted to know if they should daven for someone who is on their deathbed. Rabbi Mintz responded that we don't know how much time a person has in this world. Through tefilah, we can help the ill merit to have a longer life despite what the doctors say. Rabbi Mintz then offered a story as an example of this.

When asked if a person who is turning 60 can really grow in yiddishkeit, Rabbi Mintz said that Rabbi Akiva did so exponentially at 40. Additionally, one young person who Rabbi Mintz helped in their kiruv journey ended up inspiring their parent to do the same. It is really never too late; don't be afraid to ask the tough questions, learn and grow.

Aside from dveykus to Hashem, Rabbi Mintz also addresses, amongst other things, relationships with our neighbors. When asked if someone should attend the wedding ceremony of a non-Jewish acquaintance at a church, Rabbi Mintz went over the rules prohibiting entering a church, the impression idolatry leaves on us, and offers a compromise for the questioner: perhaps there is a part of the ceremony the questioner could attend without entering the church proper.

When it comes to the various customs and traditions of Judaism, Rabbi Mintz responds to questions such as why we dress the way we do, leave stones on kevarim, or celebrate the Yomim Tovim the way we do. Whether newly religious or "frum from birth," we all have questions on Jewish life. The Torah is a living tree: Ask the Rabbi 2 provides answers to our questions which are rooted in the Torah. Was Hashem selfish in creating the world? No, answers Rabbi Mintz. Hashem created the world for our benefit. As the Ramchal says in Derech Hashem, this world allows us to earn our ticket to Olam Habah.

Rabbi Mintz is not afraid to answer life's questions. Thanks to Ask the Rabbi 2 the reader will hopefully have the courage to ask them. This book is recommended for everyone.

Chaim Yehuda Meyer is an attorney and writer living in Brooklyn. He has reviewed Jewish books covering all facets of Jewish life. He can be reached at howard.jay.meyer@gmail.com



Mega Children's Book Giveaway for Jewish American Heritage Month

(Courtesy of Jewish Heritage Month) To celebrate Jewish American Heritage Month this May, a group of authors has organized a giveaway of 72 new Jewish children's books—from board books through Young Adult. "Shelves" of eight books each will be distributed to nine random winners after the May 31 deadline.

"Our goals are to educate, spread light, and share Jewish joy during these difficult times," said Chana Stiefel, a children's book author from Teaneck, who has published more than 30 children's books.

Ann Koffsky, a picture book author and illustrator from West Hempstead, agrees. "It's so important for Jewish children to see themselves in books, and it's also key for others to see Jewish characters as well. We want readers from all backgrounds to have the opportunity to experience the diversity and richness of Jewish life."

Stiefel and Koffsky teamed up with authors Liza Wiemer, Michal Babay and Ellen Leventhal to organize the giveaway, which launched on May 1. They received more than 200 entries on the first day.

The books, which have been donated by Jewish authors, illustrators and publishers from the U.S. and Israel, include a wide array of topics, including Jewish history, culture, traditions, humor, biographies, Shabbat and holidays. Many New Jersey children's book authors, including Stiefel, Joshua Levy, Faygie Holt, Sari Kapitnikoff and Richard Ho, contributed books.



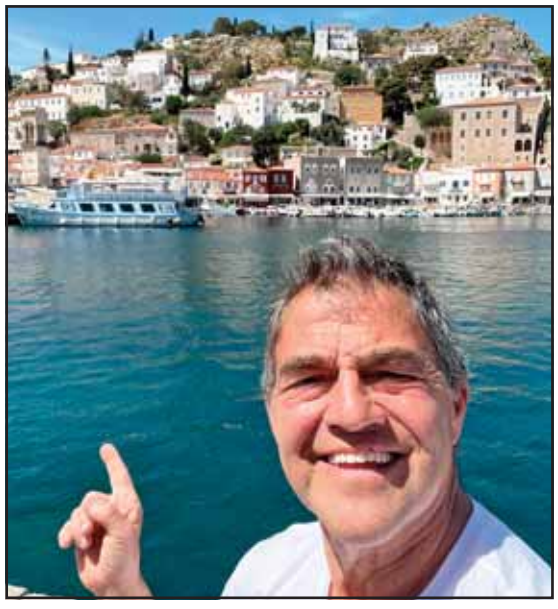
"All readers, Jewish and non-Jewish, teachers, librarians, parents and grandparents are welcome to enter," said Stiefel. (U.S. shipping addresses only.) To see the list of book titles and to enter, fill out the form at the following link by May 31: https://tinyurl.com/JAHMgiveaway.

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By Jewish Link Staff



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Beyda has been in the retail business for over 30 years. He worked with his father and now he works with his son. Beyda speaks to store managers weekly who give him feedback on what customers are buying and what needs to be added. The knowledgeable, helpful sales staff is one of Marburn's great strengths. "That's one of the things that I was impressed with when we bought the Marburn stores," said Beyda. "Each manager is a diamond. The sales staff is tremendous; they know what they're doing and are very helpful to customers."

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Marburn has the largest assortment of curtains and accessories in the area at much lower prices than larger department stores. With such a large selection of different styles, Beyda said people are coming in and buying for four, five and six windows at a time.

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THE ARTS

Teaneck Teen Idol Arielle Pfefer to Sing at Teaneck Community Chorus Concert

(Courtesy of Teaneck Community Chorus) It's a special event to hear a Teaneck Teen Idol perform. The 2024 winner from the Frisch School, Arielle Pfefer, will sing a solo at a delightful Teaneck Community Chorus concert on Sunday, May 19.

"A Place at the Table" caps the chorus 25th Anniversary season with a concert celebrating humanity's love of food through song. Food brings people together. So, the chorus will be singing musical flavors from around America and the world, from "New England Clambake" to "Rozhinkes mit Mandlen" and "Chile Con Carne."

There are other special events at the concert in addition to Arielle's performance: One of them is a joyous transition. The chorus will honor Steven Bell, who is retiring after 25 years of inspired and dynamic leadership as artistic director. He will "pass the baton" to the new artistic director, Teresa-Marie Gotanco, who has been the Teaneck Community Chorus' accompanist for the past two years and has worked closely with Bell. Both have remarkable artistic vision for the unifying power of music.

Finally, there's a Grand Finale and a reception afterwards. The chorus asks all former members to join it on stage and sing its signature song together: "A Place at the Table," written by Teaneck resident, former teacher and singer Loren Daniels. It will be thrilling.


Arielle Pfefer TTI 2024.

The chorus invites the audience for refreshments after the concert in the media center to congratulate Bell and welcome Gotanco.

Ticket prices: Adults $20; Seniors $15; Students $5.

Sunday, May 19, 3 p.m. Teaneck High School. Doors open at 2:30 p.m.

For more information visit www.teaneckcommunitychorus.org. Find the chorus on Facebook and Instagram.



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Be a Mensch: Healing the Secular-Religious Rift in Israel

By Chaim Goldberg

"We were preparing for October 8th 12 years ago."

So declares Be A Mensch, an organization that has been working to bridge the secular-religious divide in Israel for over a decade. Be A Mensch (BAM) says they are quietly engineering a tectonic shift in Israel's tattered social landscape. But why this—and why now?

One might categorize Israel's social ills as a secondary or even tertiary concern when compared with the recent iron rain of Iranian missiles or the quagmire of Gaza, but five former IDF chiefs of staff think otherwise. Gabi Ashkenazi, Ehud Barak, Gadi Eisenkot, Benny Gantz and Moshe "Bogie" Ya'alon, in a joint 2022 interview, were of one mind that internal solidarity is a greater threat than Iran.



Public opinion has validated the united assertion of these five leaders. In a 2021 Gesher study assessing the harshest threat to Israel's internal solidarity, 14% said the right/left conflict, 18% said the Israel/Palestinian conflict, and a shocking 65% said the charedi/secular conflict. Given the breadth of the rift between them, both secular and charedi leaders have been at a loss to devise a mechanism leading to meaningful communication.

But a potential solution emerged some 12 years ago with the publication of "Be a Mensch: Why Good Character Is the Key to a Life of Happiness, Health, Wealth, and Love," by Moshe Kaplan, M.D., chairman and CEO of the Mensch Foundation. The book featured a compilation of socially relevant essays from luminaries such as Rabbi Dr. Abraham J. Twerski, Nobel Prize winner Prof. Robert Aumann, and IDT CEO Howard Jonas. The universal message appealing to positive character traits struck a chord. Divided Israelis now had a unifying approach all could agree to. In interpersonal encounters, just be a mensch! A humble and time-tested prescription for better interactions.





Soon after, BAM found itself at the forefront of diffusing high-profile cases of secular/charedi conflict, such as the famous case a decade ago of a young dati-leumi girl being spat on while walking to school on the border of Ramat Beit Shemesh Bet. More recently, BAM staff were the cholent providers when protesters against the government's judicial reform marched through Bnei Brak last year. Other times, their members have made surprisingly celebrated speeches at protests arranged by virulently anti-religious organizations.

In the public eye, BAM believes in saying little and doing much. Their key activity is in establishing long-term, weekly or bi-weekly meetings between secular and charedi people. Separately, they facilitate workshops where charedi representatives field Q&A sessions from secular groups about charedi life and values.

While this may resemble how some Orthodox outreach groups operate, there is a critical difference in BAM's operation. There is no religious agenda, no religious pressure. They don't ask secular people to go out of their comfort zone and commit to a Torah study partner, nor ask them to come for a Shabbat. The agenda is to increase menschlichkeit—to foster real relationships, friendships, mutual respect and understanding and in the end, to change the trajectory of people's lives toward a healthier view of the "other side." Any religious changes made by a participant come only out of the participant's own initiative.

Over time, word spread about curious charedim who facilitate a "safe space" for conversation, not religious coercion. As BAM likes to say, it's Anthropology 101. Israeli charedi society is so insular that, from the secular perspective, they are an anachronistic enigma.

BAM discovered that popular TV shows such as "Shtisel" and "Srugim," showcasing the inner world of religious communities, triggered an interest to learn about charedi culture, not dissimilar to Americans' interest in learning about Native American culture. The groundswell of inquiry created a challenge for BAM. The mostly word-of-mouth demand for encounters currently outstrips the capacity to supply.

Asked why BAM gains access and acceptance where other groups are met with closed doors, group facilitator Moshe Shachor said: "It's two simple things. When people know you care, they'll care to hear you. Secondly, the respect on both sides is genuine. We insist on finding common ground up front. After all, we are extended family, sharing common ancestry. As we explore and affirm that, we find common values and a common heritage. That is something our secular brethren are motivated to explore."



Who is knocking on BAM's door for encounters? It's a surprising list. Weekly meetings are conducted with *hatzofim* advisers (Israeli Scouts). Historically, the next generation of politicians, educators and social influencers emerge from hatzofim. The scouts' warm regard for these meetings is evidenced by a letter to Israel's Homefront Command during a lockdown in late 2020, requesting their meetings with BAM be classified as essential activity.

Numerous kibbutzim have found the BAM experience to be eye-opening and enlivening, often resulting in a melting away of "myth-perceptions" about charedi contributions to the betterment of Israel.

BAM was awarded a tender from the Ministry of Education to conduct group sessions with high school students across the country. Tova Aharoni, faculty member at a Tel Aviv area high school, said: "The meeting was very significant. For the first time, the students made in-depth acquaintances with charedi society. Thank you for your openness and desire to bring different factions of society together. Specifically now, during these turbulent times, you proved things can be different. I strongly recommend that every school in the country participate."

The IDF, Israel's natural melting pot for diverse enlistees, has called on BAM to meet with elite army units such as sayeret, maglan, and Air Force fighter pilots. But perhaps the most unexpected frontier of engagement for BAM has been among top-level business leaders, especially in the high-tech sector. Recently, a select group of them shared a half day at the Ponevezh Yeshiva to explore Talmudic principles in business practices.

The number of these varied encounters is now well over 1,000, with over 50,000 people. What's the guiding mantra of these meetings? "No question is off-limits when asked respectfully."

The efforts produce immediate results as prior misunderstandings and animosity give way to a desire to know more. But they pay long-term dividends as well. The heartwarming messages and feedback received during the past year, both during the judicial reform crisis pre-October 7 and during the Israel-Hamas war, have been especially meaningful for BAM staff. As Shachor observed, "While unity galvanized by grief can be short-lived, unity founded on common values, purpose, and identity persists."

The past year saw BAM take a major step forward with the introduction of for-credit dialogue courses at Hebrew University and Reichman University (formerly IDC). The vision is to expand to all seven Israeli universities. Gavriel Sanders, an adviser to BAM's leadership, said: "There has never been a finer hour to actualize shevet achim gam yachad. Anyone who aligns with BAM will participate in the greatest unification of the Jewish people since Har Sinai."

To find out more, visit https://beamensch.com





The Nitzavim Fellowship: Educating and Empowering Future Jewish Leaders

By Jewish Link Staff

In today's politically charged climate on college campuses, Jewish students need all the strength, support and resources they can get. With the Nitzavim Fellowship, students are empowered to combat anti-semitism and anti-Zionism once they step out of the cocoon of their gap year and into the secular world. The Nitzavim Fellowship is a nonprofit organization founded by Rabbi Adi Isaacs and the 7 Schwartz Brothers Leadership Trust.



A few of last year's Nitzavim fellows. (CREDIT: KIRA KLETSKY)



Nitzavim fellows gathered for a photo op. (CREDIT: KIRA KLETSKY)

Now in its third year, the Nitzavim Fellowship boasts 80 fellows and is open to Jewish students headed for a gap year in Israel before continuing to secular college. According to Isaacs, "Nitzavim tremendously adds to the gap year experience by giving students the skills and tools that they will need to successfully navigate their college years and beyond as leaders for Israel and the Jewish people."



A Nitzavim group stating next to a poster of their idea. (CREDIT: KIRA KLETSKY)

The goal of the fellowship is to educate, empower and engage students through a three-credit course accredited by Hebrew University. The fellowship features exciting speakers, mentors and an innovative project that students implement once on campus.

"It's crucial that these students know what they are up against so that they can come in with the right skills to stand up for themselves, for Israel and the Jewish people," said Netanya Greiff, director of Nitzavim. "They are taught how and when to respond to anti-Israel sentiments and interactions, how to converse with someone who harbors different perspectives, and when it is best to walk away."

An exciting new component added this year is the opportunity for the students to interact with professional business mentors. At the beginning of the course, fellows work within a group to identify a key issue that Jewish students are facing on their college campus. After developing a creative solution to solve the issue, each project group forms a business plan to be presented to their mentors for critique and feedback from a business perspective.



Students meeting with Dr. Harry Ritter, CEO and co-founder of Alma. (CREDIT: KIRA KLETSKY)

The impressive list of business mentors includes Harry Ritter, co-founder and CEO of Alma; Daniel Kraus, vice president of strategic partnerships at Birthright Israel; and acclaimed Jewish content creator Melinda Strauss; to name a few.

"The Nitzavim Impact Projects are essentially a social startup where students create an entire business portfolio including a mission statement, financial analysis, market analysis and action plan," said Greiff. "Once their project is created, each group gets paired with a student mentor, a Nitzavim alum who is currently on campus and can give insightful feedback from an on-the-ground vantage point so that the project can be effectively implemented on campus."

Current projects that fellows are building include "Beyond the Beis," an app that matches students with chavrutas at different universities to help them stay connected to Torah learning following their year in Israel. "It's a terrific idea that is really going to hold students accountable to learning once on campus."



Business mentor meeting with Melinda Strauss, Jewish content creator. (CREDIT: KIRA KLETSKY)

Other projects have included the University of Michigan's "Mich Tisch" and its University of Maryland counterpart, the "Terrapin Tisch," a Thursday night gathering for Jewish college students that brings Jewish students of all denominations together for some kugel, singing and Shabbat ruach.

Nitzavim students meet once a month on Fridays for over two hours of classroom learning and interactive training. A typical Friday session begins with an inspiring and enlightening lecture from well-known writer and speaker professor Akiva Gersh. Afterward, the sessions continue with an impressive roster of speakers throughout the year including venture capitalist Michael Eisenberg, renowned content creator Danielle Renov, and Israel's Minister for Economic Affairs to the U.S. Eli Groner.

The common theme among the speakers that Nitzavim offers, explained Greiff, is that they are Americans who have come to Israel and made a tremendous impact on the Jewish people. "We want to give students the opportunity to meet these inspiring people, learn from their experiences and ask them questions."

At the end of the year, there is a showcase where the fellows present their final projects to a panel of judges who ask critical questions to ensure that students will be able to implement their ideas once they arrive at their respective colleges. The three groups with the highest scores receive funding to help implement their projects once on campus.

"Last year, all of the attendees at the showcase were blown away by our fellows who are going to be the voice for Israel on their college campuses." Next year, fellows are expected to have a private meeting with Israeli President Isaac Herzog.

To apply for next year's cohort, current high school seniors must complete an online application followed by a Zoom interview with Greiff. Positions are awarded to students who demonstrate commitment and passion to leadership and to Israel. "We seek students who are dedicated, have impressive leadership experiences, demonstrate academic excellence, and have volunteering experience.

Applications are being accepted on a rolling basis and are due before the summer. To learn more or to apply, visit www.nitzavim.org.

YU Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education Offers New Areas of Study

By Harry Glazer

When you've been successfully training Jewish educators for 35 years like the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration, you develop a keen sense of the needs of the field and will promptly add valuable new features to your curriculum.

In that vein, the leadership of the Azrieli Graduate School has announced that it has added new areas of concentration in four areas: School Leadership, Hebrew Literacy, Jewish Special Education and Advanced Text Study.

As Dean Dr. Rona Novick shared with The Jewish Link, the Azrieli Graduate School program requires students to complete seven foundational courses: Models of Teaching I, Models of Teaching II, Curriculum and Assessment, Learning and Cognition, Big Ideas in Jewish Education, Teaching Values in Jewish Education, and Teaching Hebrew Literacy. The four new concentrations will enable students to focus on areas of professional and personal interest with a set of three or more courses on that topic.

"One of the strengths of Azrieli is that we have deep resources in many areas at the university, which allows us to benefit our students and the community by partnering with different schools," Novick said.

For the School Leadership concentration, Azrieli is working with the Sy Syms School of Business to fashion courses that will help students who are either new to the field or who have years of teaching experience and are now moving into a leadership role.

For the Jewish Special Education concentration, Azrieli is working with the Ferkauf Graduate School of Psychology to offer courses on the unique challenges of special education in Jewish studies. As Novick elaborated, "We're not just concerned with teaching the students the subject matter, we are concerned as well with their identity and beliefs."

For the Hebrew Literacy concentration, Azrieli will build on the work of their faculty member Dr. Scott Goldberg, described by Novick as "one of the leading experts on Hebrew reading," who guides students in skillfully "making sense of and decoding sacred texts." Novick added, "A student who can't read Hebrew will feel that he or she is not part of the kehilla in the same way," so this area of concentration can be essential to effective teaching.

For the Advanced Text Study concentration, Azrieli will work with Rabbi Dr. Mordechai Schiffman and other noted educators at YU to offer courses that focus on both the traditional areas of scripture (Tanach, Mishna, Gemara) as well as those often underserved in Jewish teacher education, such as mussar, Kabbalah and chasidut.


Dr. Rona Novick

Novick pointed out some of the features that make the Azrieli School of Jewish Education and Administration particularly compelling for students.

Azrieli offers deep and generous scholarships, "because we never want money to be the reason someone goes into a classroom unprepared." She added, "We are blessed with generous donors," who enable the school to offer these scholarships.

The school has a rolling admissions process, which allows prospective students to start their application process at any time. Azrieli offers entirely online options, attracting students from Israel, South Africa, points across the U.S., and many other places in the world. Azrieli also offers an accelerated track that allows a student to complete the master's degree within 15 months, with summer, fall, spring and summer courses.

Over 85% of Azrieli students are already working in the Jewish education profession, teaching in a wide variety of schools or informal Jewish educational settings. The school is mindful of the challenges students face as they balance working and completing their degree.

The school welcomes both novice and experienced teachers, all across the Limudei Kodesh spectrum. Azrieli's graduates can be found in all sorts of educational settings. "Our graduates are our best advertisements," Novick noted.

"We know that burnout is a major issue in the teaching profession, if teachers are not adequately prepared. Azrieli works to fortify aspiring teachers or current teachers with the skills, instincts and perspective to experience continued success and professional growth in their careers and to grow their students to become knowledgeable, committed members of the community."

For more information on the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration, please see: https://www.yu.edu/azrieli

Harry Glazer is the Middlesex County Editor of The Jewish Link. He can be reached at harryglazer615@gmail.com. He found it a real pleasure to interview Dr. Novick.

Mesivta Yesodei Yisrael

CONTINUED FROM P. I

Rav Shimon Kronenberg: At the Helm of Innovation

The guiding force behind Mesivta Yesodei Yisrael is Rav Shimon Kronenberg, whose diverse background in Jewish education and organizational development is central to the yeshiva's mission. With close to 15 years of experience in both formal and informal Jewish education, Kronenberg has impacted a wide range of institutions, from NCSY to Yeshivat Noam in Paramus and Heichal HaTorah in Teaneck. His expertise is not just limited to educational strategies but extends into business and organizational development, equipping him uniquely to lead this pioneering institution.



Mesivta Yesodei Yisrael is emerging as a culmination of decades-long efforts by families, individuals and community leaders who have successfully navigated the challenges in the establishment of a robust communal infrastructure in Israel. This ongoing development has been crucial in facilitating the successful transition of North American families into an integral part of Israeli society. Each new institution, including Yesodei Yisrael, builds upon this foundation, expanding the support network and enhancing the opportunities for a successful aliyah.

The approach of Yesodei Yisrael's dedicated mechanchim is tailored to address the unique needs of olim, recognizing the distinct challenges they face when adapting to a new cultural and educational environment. Yesodei Yisrael's leadership is poised to ensure that it does not merely teach, but actively engages with each student's personal, spiritual and academic growth. Kronenberg emphasized the significance of those who have contributed to this foundational work. "Our success at Mesivta Yesodei Yisrael will only be attributable to those who have laid the groundwork before us, continuing a tradition of community building that bridges generations. By building upon this foundation, we strengthen the ties that bind the Jewish communities of America and Israel, ensuring a promising future for Jewish people in Israel."

Yesodei Yisrael is set to extend its impact by serving as a vibrant community center for the broader community. The institution will host a variety of programming and events that cater not only to its students but also to extended members of the yeshiva family and the local community. This initiative will position Yesodei Yisrael as a unique hub where individuals and families can come together to learn, celebrate and grow.

Building Bridges: Mesivta Yesodei Yisrael's Impact on the Future of American Aliyah

The creation of Yesodei Yisroel is relevant to American readership for at least two important reasons. First and foremost, broadening the path for Americans moving to Israel. For American Jews contemplating making aliyah, Yesodei Yisrael will provide a vital educational resource that will ease the transition of their children into Israeli society. The school is specifically being designed to support first-generation olim, ensuring that they receive the necessary tools, values and guidance to thrive in their new environment. This commitment will make Yesodei Yisrael a cornerstone for American families looking to build their future in Eretz Yisrael.

Secondly, American Jews have a unique opportunity to participate in a broader mission by investing in the development of Israel's next generation. By engaging with Yesodei Yisrael through financial partnerships, donors can extend their influence far beyond immediate family circles. They can invest not only in the physical and educational infrastructure of a pioneering school but also in the lives of countless young olim who will one day lead and enrich Israeli society. This strategic contribution will foster a deep connection between Jewish communities in America and Israel, reinforcing the bonds that unite Jews worldwide.

Rabbi Larry Rothwachs, rabbi of Congregation Beth Aaron in Teaneck and founding rabbi of Meromei Shemesh in Ramat Beit Shemesh, emphasized the significance of Mesivta Yesodei Yisrael: "This initiative is an exciting addition to Israel's evolving infrastructure. It's pivotal in ensuring that the American community integrates successfully into Israeli society, fostering communal, educational and spiritual growth across Eretz Yisrael. I have personal confidence in Rav Shimon Kronenberg, whom I've known for many years. I am continually impressed with his skills as an educator and a visionary."

For more information about how to become involved with Mesivta Yesodei Yisrael, visit myy.org.il. Join the yeshiva in building the next generation of successful olim and strengthening the bonds within Am Yisrael across continents. Together, with Hashem's help, Yesodei Yisrael will continue to build a bright future for the Jewish people in Eretz Yisrael and beyond.

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Steven Aiello: Building Bridges of Peace



By Alisa Bodner

Steven Aiello has spent Shabbat in a Palestinian village, dined with Muslim leaders in the sukkah and stood under the chuppah alongside a Bedouin friend during his marriage ceremony. While relations between Arabs and Jews in Israel and the surrounding territories are complex, Aiello has spent a good part of the past decade building bridges between different groups.

Though his roots are in Brooklyn and Elizabeth, while growing up Aiello felt his mind and heart were across the Mediterranean Sea. As an undergraduate student in NYU, he headed the campus Israel club and was also involved with many Israel advocacy programs. He made aliyah in 2009. While pursuing his master's degree in diplomacy and conflict studies from the IDC in Herzliya, Aiello joined the university's Model United Nations club. After graduating, he continued with Model UN as a trainer for Jewish students in Petah Tikva and Arab students in the northern Israel villages of Tira and Tayibe.

Aiello could not believe that these Israeli Arab and Jewish youth who lived so close to one another and dealt with many similar struggles in the classroom had such different perspectives of their own country. After spending many hours separately with the groups, he was eager to create an opportunity for the students to hear different voices and learn about one another's backgrounds.

In early 2012 Aiello held the first Model UN conference to bring Arab-Israeli and Jewish-Israeli youth together. The first topic he gave the students to debate was the question of recognition of a Palestinian state. He recalls that initially not one of the Arab students was able to suggest any reasons not to recognize a Palestinian state, and not one of the Jewish students was able to suggest any reasons to recognize a Palestinian state. But he pushed the youth to step outside their comfort zones and to take the position of the "other side." At the end of the gathering, the students gave speeches and debated both sides. "They went home happy. They were proud of themselves for doing this in English and for meeting Arab and Jewish peers," Aiello said.

The seeds were planted for what would become Debate for Peace, a nongovernmental organization Aiello formally launched in 2017 for Arab and Jewish youth to come together to debate, negotiate and try to resolve some of the most pressing challenges in international relations. He was determined to use dialogue as an avenue for Arab and Jewish youth who ordinarily would never meet one another to become familiar with other perspectives and to learn to respect views that challenged their own way of thinking.



Debate for Peace participants at a Model UN conference in Kosovo.

The makeup of participants in Debate for Peace is diverse. The Jewish students come from mostly secular or traditional schools, with some representation from national religious frameworks. Non-Jewish students come from Druze, Bedouin and Arab backgrounds, including Christians and Muslims. Some Arabs join the program from Palestinian villages in the West Bank.

During its first year, Aiello ran one Model UN conference. Today he holds 12 conferences a year for some 400 students from more than 100 cities, towns and villages. The students debate in Israel and abroad and have won multiple awards for their skills. In addition to the conferences, he holds meetings in Tel Aviv multiple times each month for participants to meet with ambassadors of different countries to learn about their governments and relations with other countries, including Israel.

Some students travel multiple hours each way from the north or south of the country to attend these meetings. After each meeting, the young people often spend time together at the beach or at a cafe, where they continue to debate, but also talk about their families and what they value, and engage in typical teen conversation. "They are living in the same space but they don't have the opportunity to meet," Aiello said. "And then they meet and their interactions are amazing."

Debate for Peace is composed of top students from both the Arab and Jewish sectors of Israeli society; Aiello describes them as future change-makers. He is positive that the tools these young people are learning now—including the ability to listen to diverse perspectives and to

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Don't Leave Her Speechless



By Rabbi Shawn Zell

I have no idea how much is spent on mothers the second Sunday of May each year, but I do know of a unique Mother's Day gift that would not leave mom speechless. Consider sharing with mom various usages of the Yiddish word for "mother." To begin with, whether one's mother is referred to as **Mameh** or **Mooter** depends on one's European roots. Those who trace their roots to Eastern Europe are more likely to use the term **Mameh**, while those who claim central European ancestry typically employ the term **Mooter**. Oddly enough, it is the term **Mooter** and not **Mameh** that has spawned a variety of terms.

MOOTER SHPRAHCH (mother tongue). Even though the majority of American Jews are familiar with the term "**mameh loshn**," the term "**mooter shprahch**" is equally acceptable. Furthermore, it should be pointed out that "**mameh loshn**" is an amalgam of Slavic and Hebrew, while "**mooter shprahch**" is derived directly from the German. Admittedly, few would say "Let's talk '**mooter shprach**' when wanting to cut through the fluff and get down to basics. On the other hand, knowing that "You can speak **mameh loshn** with him" is both comforting as well as reassuring.

MOOTER NAHKET (stark naked). **Mooter nahket** refers to one's wardrobe upon entering this world from the loins of one's mother. A Yiddish synonym for **mooter nahket** is **oddem nahket** (Adam naked). Whereas the former speaks of the state of dress of every human emerging into this world, the latter takes us back to the Garden of Eden where neither shame nor conscience had yet entered this world. Obviously, Adam could not have been **mooter nahket** in that he wasn't born of a woman. What **mooter nahket** and **oddem nahket** have in common is that they both refer to one's birthday suit.

MOOTER TZAYCHEN (mother mark/birthmark). Closely related to **mooter nahket**, **a mooter tzaychen** is a mark on one's body upon emerging into this world. Among the more thoughtless questions posed in our culture is "What's that mark on your neck?" or "What's that mark on your face?" Rather than replying "It's a birthmark" or "I was born this way," one might consider answering "It's a **mooter tzaychen**" and await a response. And should there be a follow-up question, "What's a **mooter tzaychen**?" one could reply, "That's what I have on my neck, or face" etc.

MOOTER FAHRAYN (mother's organization). Just as synagogues have sisterhoods, the Yiddish Day School I attended had a **mooter fahrayn**. The **mooter fahrayn** served two purposes. On the one hand it served as a social outlet for the mothers of day school students, in that once upon a time, when the majority of American mothers were homemakers. On the other hand, the **mooter fahrayn** helped raise much needed funds for the school through rummage sales, fashion shows and bazaars. As quaint as all this sounds, the **mooter fahrayn** did a world of good. And if some Yiddish was spoken at a meeting of the **mooter fahrayn**, so much the better.

MOOTER SHEEFF (aircraft carrier, mother ship). One thing is certain. And that is that our Eastern European ancestors did not know from any aircraft carriers. They did, however, know from a ship. But that's because they were able to leave the shtetl and embark on a life changing journey to America. What about a **mooter sheeff**? In all likelihood, the ship they were on was designated a **mooter sheeff** when, upon sighting the shore, the passengers noticed a tugboat coming toward them. In answer to why that **sheeffeleh** (little ship) was coming toward them, they were told that the **sheeffeleh vet bahld bahglayten dee mooter sheeff** (the little ship will soon escort the mother ship).

Come Mother's Day, there is no shortage of quotes and sayings to express what the child should ideally be feeling towards his or her mother. Why not be the only kid on the block capable of sharing with your mother how **mooter shprahch**, **mooter nahket**, **mooter tzaychen**, **mooter fahrayn**, and **mooter sheeff** enriched the Yiddish language. By all accounts, it makes for one priceless Mother's Day gift.

Rabbi Shawn Zell has recently returned to New Jersey, after serving at a pulpit in Dallas. He possesses certification in teaching Yiddish. Rabbi Zell is the author of three books.

Business & Finance

From Passion to Prosperity: A Guide to Entrepreneurial Success



By Akiva Mensh

Hey there! I'm Akiva Mensh, a junior at MTA in New York City and a passionate entrepreneur of four companies: I do small waitering, sell watches, small construction services and mobile detailing. I have a mission to inspire others to chase their entrepreneurial dreams. Join me on an exciting journey as I unveil the inner workings of my business ventures, showcasing how I transformed my hobbies and connections into companies and how you can do the same!

Picture a teenager deeply immersed in the world of business, driven by a genuine passion for the work. That teenager was me. But how did I transition from a mere hobbyist to a business owner? The answer is simple: I followed my passion. I've always had a love for construction and other endeavors, so I decided to turn that passion into a service I could offer to others. We all have hobbies and skills. So why not turn it into a moneymaker? There shouldn't be anything stopping you. We are in a world where there is demand for a lot of services, whether it be power washing, babysitting, etc. There will always be services people need.

Some tasks may seem doable by oneself, but often people prefer to hire a professional who knows what they're doing. This is where you step in with your hobby or passion and offer your services. For instance, imagine someone who wants to get their patio washed but feels unsure about doing it themselves for fear of making mistakes. That's where you come in, providing a valuable service.

In my experience, I've noticed that people require a wide range of services. There's an excellent opportunity to offer various services; you just need to focus on what makes you comfortable and what you excel at. That's why I have many different side hustles because there is always something people need to get done.

Once you've identified a hustle or passion you want to pursue, the next step is to acquire clients. However, there's a secret to this process, and it lies in connections. We all have networks of people we know, and sometimes you'll find that you share mutual connections with someone you meet. It's a small world indeed, and connections hold immense power.

When you're just starting, you might not have a vast network of connections. However, as you progress, you'll inevitably meet new people. These new connections can be instrumental in elevating your side hustle into a full-fledged business.

If you offer a service like cleaning or customization, or anything else, I highly recommend starting with family and friends. It's an excellent way to begin and gain practice, and if any mistakes occur, it's easier to make amends within this circle. Here's a valuable tip I've learned: If you make a mistake for a customer, take responsibility and compensate them. Investing in rectifying errors is worth it as it can safeguard your reputation, which is crucial in business ownership.

Think about it: Why would someone choose your company over another? The answer lies in standing out. Your company needs to offer something unique or exceptional to attract clients and a stellar reputation is key to achieving this. Once you've perfected your skills, have references, and are confident in your service delivery, it's time to start promoting yourself and leveraging the power of word-of-mouth marketing.

In conclusion, starting a side hustle or even a full-fledged business has never been more accessible. All you need is the determination to work hard and the necessary skills. There are so many hustles one can pursue, and even if you're not well versed in a particular field, you can always seek online assistance or guidance from someone experienced.

By staying committed, scaling your efforts strategically, and being open to feedback and criticism, your venture is bound to grow significantly. It's all about perseverance, continuous learning and adapting to the evolving landscape of entrepreneurship.

Keep striving and achieve your dreams!

Akiva Mensh is a junior at MTA and is the CEO of four businesses, if you're looking to start a business/side hustle please feel free to reach out to him at akivamensh@gmail.com.

Steven Aiello

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

respectfully discuss their differences, no matter how passionate they may be about their own beliefs—will be valuable to these future leaders in years ahead. While the conversations are often contentious, and tensions are high especially after the October 7 Hamas massacres and the ongoing war, there have also been moments of understanding, humanity and respect from all sides.

Aiello hopes to see one day the Israeli and Palestinian Ministries of Education making this program a mandatory part of their respective curricula. In the meantime, he is focused on the hundreds of young people that come through his program each year, and is ensuring that these future leaders have the proper tools to build bridges of peace.

For more information on Debate for Peace visit https://debateforpeace.org/blog/

Alisa Bodner is a Fair Lawn native who immigrated to Israel over a decade ago. She is a nonprofit management professional who enjoys writing in her free time.

Letters to the Editor

CONTINUED FROM P. 18

He approached the second artisan and asked, "Do you need any funding?" The artisan answered, "Yes, I need $800 to cover the cost of my supplies."

The third artisan was asked the same question, but answered that he did not need any funding. The king looked at the third artisan's board and was dismayed by seeing a big x on his panel. The king was shocked and warned him that he must have his design ready by the time 30 days were up.

The date arrived for the king to view the designs.The first one was presented, and he was very impressed. The second board was presented and, again, the king was impressed. Finally, the third design was presented. All the king saw was a panel of mirrors. "What's this?" he asked. "Mirrors?" The artisan explained, "Honorable King," he said. "You are the most important figure in the kingdom. With this panel of mirrors, everyone will be able to see you and, in turn, you will be able to see your subjects."

The king thought for a while and then said, "Yes. Yours is the design that I want."

Rav Wallerstein explained this story as a lesson for our lives. This is the way our relationship is with Hashem. We should strive to act as Hashem's reflection. When Hashem looks at us, He should see His reflection in us, in the way we act, think, speak, dress and carry ourselves.

Rav Wallerstein cited a midrash where a king had three daughters. He promised them that when they would get married he would let them each choose one thing for him to give them. The first daughter said, "When I get married, please design a castle in my new city like the original one." The second daughter said, "Build me a crown like yours, dear father, so I can remember you always." The third daughter didn't ask for anything. So the king asked why. She responded, "All I want is you. So in my castle I'll build a room for you."

So too, mitzvot that we do are a constant *zecher* (reminder) for bringing Hashem into our lives.

The lesson is that first we have to build a room for Hashem in our hearts by doing mitzvot. This will ultimately lead to a closer relationship with, and constant remembrance of, Hashem.

Another lesson that Rabbi Wallerstein taught was that we should view our lives as if everything happens for the best, even if we can't understand how. This timely lesson applies always, but especially now, after the events of October 7.

The yahrzeit of Rabbi Wallerstein is on Rosh Chodesh Iyar. L'zecher nishmas R' Zechariah Shimon Ben R' Yitzchak HaCohen z"l.

Chaim Bruder
Passaic

Pivotal Need for Better Pro-Israel Chants

With the rampant rise in antisemitism, I can't help but feel an overwhelming sense of distress as I see many top universities in America falling prey to the cult-like movement of "Free Palestine." Students at Ivy League schools are supposed to be the nation's "best and brightest," with the intelligence to discern right from wrong. Yet, they are openly calling for the destruction of Jews, and Israel, and Zionism as a whole, and supporting a terrorist organization, Hamas.

Why this is happening is in large part due to these students following the trend and rooting for whichever group is the hottest "marginalized group" to support. These college students just care about the "underdog" without bothering to understand the facts behind what and why is really happening.

So, what can we, as one of America's most pro-Israel communities, do to combat this? I believe it starts with simply being better organized and unified.

Over Pesach, my favorite question to ask fellow Jewish Bergen County members was this: "What is your favorite pro-Israel chant?" I want you, dear reader, to think about this long and hard. Do we have any good ones? Is there even one that's catchy and sticks?

The best ones I've heard are "Bring Them Home" and "Am Yisrael Chai." While "Bring Them Home" resonates deeply with us as Jews due to our concern for the hostages, it requires an understanding of the context and isn't particularly memorable. That is a significant drawback when attempting to appeal to the "TikTok" generation, which prefers simple, rhyming chants. "Am Yisrael Chai," to me, is also not good since the chant is in Hebrew and onlookers have no clue as to what it means and so it has no effect whatsoever; if anything, it may be harmful since it'll cause more subconscious disconnect between us and the non-Jews who will now feel even less connection to the Israel situation since they don't even know what our chants mean.

I think as a community we need to come up with chants that are in English, short, flow well and are easy for onlookers to understand and process while effectively conveying our side. The pro-Palestinian side has mastered the art of deception, crafting chants that equate Israel with horrendous accusations such as "apartheid" and "genocide," while portraying themselves as victims oppressed and seeking freedom.

Here are a few examples of what I came up with over chag: "Hamas Is a Liar, They Broke the Cease-fire"; "Gaza Declined a Two-State Solution, How Do They Expect a Peaceful Resolution"; Free Each Hostage From Hamas's Bondage."

Hopefully, together we can come up with dozens more of these powerful chants, distribute them throughout the community, and be better prepared in the event of future rallies.

Zachary Greenberg
Teaneck

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Haas & Zaltz, LLP: To Help You Plan Your Legacy and Protect Your Family

By Jewish Link Staff

It's an uncomfortable conversation for many, yet it might just be the single most important conversation people will ever have in their lives: estate and legacy planning. Emanuel Haas and Ari Zaltz of the law firm Haas & Zaltz, LLP are there to help their clients navigate the highly complex and sensitive issues that arise when making decisions that range from long-term care to inheritance distribution.

One of the biggest concerns Haas and Zaltz work to address with their clients is the prospect of needing long-term care as they get older. In fact, they caution that *not* making appropriate provisions for long-term care is one of the biggest and costliest mistakes families can make, even though it is one that can be easily avoided.

Haas explained that very often an individual receives a diagnosis or experiences a trauma or other type of debilitating incident that creates the need for long-term care. If a plan is not in place, issues can crop up that make navigating this significant life change much more challenging for everyone. But when a plan for long-term care is already in place, it's much easier for all involved to react with confidence.

"If you ask a random person who they think covers care as they get older, many people will tell you it's their health insurance. Other people will tell you Medicare. Unfortunately, neither of those answers are true," explained Zaltz.

"Sometimes a parent needs money and care immediately. If it's not done properly and you don't avail yourself of an elder law attorney, you can really get wiped out. A nursing home today is just an unbelievable amount of money," he cautioned.

Haas and Zaltz advise clients to plan early, as young as 55, and when everyone is still well. "We try to do traditional estate planning but with an added level to make sure that our clients' assets are protected for themselves, first and foremost, and subsequently for the next generation," Zaltz said.

Otherwise, chaos can and will surely ensue. Not only will adult children be faced with how to provide long-term care for a parent, but also with the difficult prospect of how to pay for it. If a parent's care is not being covered by Medicaid, the cost is nothing short of astronomical.



Ari Zaltz



Emanuel Haas

Many people don't realize that a person only qualifies for Medicaid once his or her wealth has been depleted. Medicare is only available to those 65 and older (and with certain disabilities) and offers very limited benefits for long-term care.

Haas explained that when a person opts to become dependent on Medicaid for long-term care, a lien will be placed on his or her property and possibly any other assets.

"At least in New York, Medicaid cannot force a sale of a home because even if somebody is in a nursing home and will never come back, there is always an 'intent to return home' for that individual," Haas said. Upon that person's passing, however, Medicaid will recover what it spent on the decedent's care, typically by selling the property.

Haas and Zaltz explain that in fact, Medicaid can go after any asset someone owns, but by setting up a trust, the home and any other assets placed in the trust will be protected. "Very often the home is the most valuable asset, and in some sense, creating a trust is a really straightforward way of addressing that problem," Haas said.

Haas and Zaltz advise their clients that if they have assets in their name, which could be as simple as a home, they should place them in certain kinds of asset-protection trusts. That way, if a parent should require care as they get older, they will still immediately qualify for Medicaid and be entitled to government benefits. Upon their passing, the government won't be able to claw back those assets which the parents may have intended to leave to their children.

A trust allows a person to say they no longer own the home and instead, the home is "owned" by a trust. Although a "trustee" is a nominal owner, it doesn't actually belong to them, nor are they necessarily the beneficiary of the trust. In a trust, it can be stipulated that the parents maintain the right to live in the home until their passing. If the trust sells the home, possibly because the parents living in the home wish to downsize, the parents can still maintain the right to reside in any residential property owned by the trust.

It is extremely important to note, however, that the person(s) creating the trust must wait a period of 60 months from the time of the transfer in order to become eligible to receive Medicaid.

"The reality is that the seniors who transferred their home to a trust won't even notice a difference," Haas said. "They'll live in a home just the way they always lived. They can move. They can sell the property and buy a different property and have the same right to live there, and nobody will know the difference. The only difference is that the asset will be protected."

To learn more about what you can do to protect your assets for yourself and your children visit www.haaszaltz.com or email them at info@haaszaltz.com. To make an appointment call 845-425-3900.

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WORLD NEWSBRIEFS

CONTINUED FROM P. 15

of power, which are mostly in northern Gaza and Khan Yunis. Gaza is perhaps one of the most difficult battlefields in the world, in terms of its population density and the tunnels which Hamas dug underground."

Asked why the Rafah operation was delayed, with a targeted operation only starting in the past few days, Hagari said, "The operational conditions necessary to carry it out did not exist."

Hagari also downplayed the confirmation by the Biden administration on Tuesday that it had held up a munitions shipment to Israel.

Hagari said that the two countries resolve their differences "behind closed doors," adding that the coordination between the United States and Israel since Oct. 7 has been of "a scope without precedent, I think, in Israel's history."

Pressed about the stalled delivery, Hagari said, "We are responsible for the security interests of Israel, and we pay attention to the U.S. interests in the arena."

He also praised the level of coordination between Israel and the U.S. military's Central Command (CENTCOM) since the start of the war, emphasizing that operational cooperation was more important than security assistance.

PUBLIC NOTICE

TOWNSHIP OF TEANECK, BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

TOWNSHIP COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULED FOR MAY 21, 2024 NOW STARTING AT 5 PM

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Township Council Meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Teaneck, Bergen County, New Jersey scheduled for Tuesday, May 21, 2024 at 6:30 PM has been re-scheduled to being at 5 PM.

Doug Ruccione
Township Clerk

New in the Neighborhood

Saying Goodbye—Shalom—L'Hitraot—A Bientot



By Nina Glick

This morning as I wished one of my grandsons tzetzchem l'shalom as he returned to finish out his year of learning in Israel, I thought about the number of times we say goodbye to people throughout the day. Most are in passing without much thought going into the phrase. It reminded me of the many times we would drive away from my parents' home in Jericho with our five kids hatched down for the long road back to Montreal, and every time, for a very short moment, I would wonder if and when I would see them next.

I do not think many of us have minds that work that way. Perhaps it is my age or my involvement in the world that makes me realize more and more that one never knows if they will really see the other again. How many times recently have I heard of young people 20 - 40 who suddenly either face a tragic illness or a fatal accident? Just last week I met a woman whose husband fell on the ice. It would normally sound like a pretty innocuous occurrence but because he hit his head, in a short period of time he passed away. We have all read of the young chatan and kallah excitedly planning their wedding when a drunk driver hit them on Rockaway Turnpike and they were both instantly killed. You can be certain their parents never dreamed of saying goodbye to them when they left their respective houses that day.

What more can be said of the thousands of chayalim who are off to Northern Israel or Gaza, calling and wishing their families a Shabbat shalom on the phone (if they are lucky enough to have access to one) and just a few short hours later a powerful knock on the door informs their families of their demise?

My point is to never say goodbye to someone without realizing how fortunate you are to have them in your life. It's hard to do while all of us spend most of our days rushing around. Getting children off to school, a stressful act especially if they are youngsters; watching spouses go off to work; speaking to friends, acquaintances and family members on the telephone all fall into this category. I think about it as I hang up the phone the many times I speak with my children—always ending with the same "speak to you tomorrow."

What I have learned from this way of thinking is that I prefer to say nice things and compliment people each day because that is the way I would prefer to be remembered. If I really do not like an outfit someone is wearing, I will not tell them how gorgeous it is. However, if they ask me and I see how important it is to them to be complimented I will unenthusiastically tell them how lovely it is (unless it is amazingly distasteful).

I make an effort each day to be extra friendly with sales people. How many of you know that Mary is the manager of Patis, greet Rudy and Kenneth each day at Dunkin Donuts, tell the chef at Rock n Roll how good his sushi is or enthusiastically thank the man putting gas into your car? After freezing for years filling up my tank I find having service at gas stations to be one of the best perks of living in New Jersey. I know, they are thinking of abandoning it.

When was the last time you offered your mailman a cold drink or a hot coffee (if you are home)? When it is hot in the summer I will leave a frozen bottle of water in my mailbox.

I guess what this is all about is that I realized after my Mordechai passed that I had not one regret about things which I did not tell him. However, I did realize that disturbing occurrences which may have bothered me at any point in my life no longer take up space in my mind. I have no room for anger or misunderstanding. Now that I have no one to confide in, I have chosen to lean in the direction of only allowing myself to find the good in everyone as best as I can. I want to aim at never regretting something I may have said to offend someone and at the same time try as much as possible to only see the good in people. Being thankful to everyone who plays a role in our lives is the way to go.

Fun & Games

A New Twist for Your Next Party



By Daniel Stroock

(Note from Jewish Link Contributing Editor Nina Glick: Daniel Stroock is my nephew, a very devoted son and father and an all around great guy. He loves teaching American history to his students in HAFTR and Mesivta Ateres Yaakov. He is also the director of HALB's Avnet Country Day School. In his free time, he produces trivia-based game shows for parties and special events.)

If you were to take a piece of paper and write out every number in English, beginning with "o-n-e," "t-w-o," "t-h-r-e-e," and so on, at what point would you get to a number whose letters appear in alphabetical order? I shot a video of myself asking this and that was the first "Question of the Day." I posted it on my linked Facebook and Instagram accounts. The reaction was positive and immediate.

I had actually been thinking about doing this for some time. But like many of us, before jumping into a creative endeavor and "putting myself out there," I had to deal with some trepidation. OK, maybe more than 'some.'

Much of my time is spent as a teacher of American history, in two of our local schools. And in addition to relishing the opportunity to share the important story of our great nation's founding and its first 250 years, I love to find and share interesting facts of all sorts. I guess those two things go together.

And there is no shortage of fascinating factoids. In the first month, I have posted approximately 25 videos. They are generally less than 60 seconds in length and they invite the viewer to think about something from an angle they have never noticed. Or, to simply learn something unbelievable and amazing.

For example, there's the story of the two brothers who built a fast food empire that today is worth billions of dollars. They began with a loan of $400 from their mother. At the start, while money was in super-short supply, to advertise their establishment, they were forced to use the free Coca Cola-sponsored sign, which only had room for eight letters. And thus, one of the world's most well-known franchises was branded, and today still uses that same eight-letter name.

Since beginning this new journey, I've been stopped in shuls, local supermarkets, eateries and once even by someone who was crossing Cedarhurst's Central Avenue as I drove by, to comment on the Question of the Day. I have been thanked and encouraged by fellow teachers who have introduced the "Q of D" into their classrooms.

The most common feedback I get is about the answers. That is where our "community" is most divided. Some requested that I include the answers with the question; I acquiesced and tried that once. It didn't go well. After asking the question, I waited to the count of three before stating the answer. A number of people reached out and told me they were frustrated because the nature of Instagram is such that the "reel" will replay again and again, until it is stopped. That gives viewers an opportunity to automatically hear the question several times by simply leaving their phones untouched. When the answer was given, they were frustrated at having lost the opportunity to think about it on their own.

And sometimes people like to argue. I asked a question one day about a body part that every human has, but no other creature in the animal kingdom can boast. I even included in the video a gratuitously cute picture of my dog Oakley, from the neck up. I pointed out that if Oakley had this particular body part, it would have been visible in the photo. When the answer was shared in the comments, a number of people told me why I was wrong. But I can live with that.

So far, our questions have covered math, animals, astronomy, geography, business, politics, history and sometimes, things that are just downright wacky. Take this question about the FBI for example. When the FBI surreptitiously enters a suspected criminal's home with the intent of planting a hidden eavesdropping device, they bring with them a vial of this particular substance to make sure they can cover their tracks. I pointed out that my mom would be horrified to hear about this since she has spent much of her life trying to obliterate every last vestige of this from her home. Can you guess what it is?

One of the joys of the process has been discussing it with my 11th-grade classes. They in particular encouraged me to begin, and have even helped by "staying quiet" at the very beginning of our period so we can quickly film the questions before moving back to our history topic at hand. And as a matter of routine, their daily greeting to me has generally become, "Hi, did you make a 'Q of D' video yet?" They have suggested that I aim to go viral by including topics and therefore hashtags that include Taylor Swift. So far, I have declined to do so. They did, however, inspire the following question: What incredible distinction does the song "O Holy Night" enjoy in the annals of musical history?

While I am not quite ready to piggyback on Taylor Swift's fame, I sure would appreciate your support! So if inclined, please feel free to follow StreetSmartGameShows on Instagram or YouTube. As for the answers, you can generally find someone intelligent (or proficient at Googling) who has written them in the comments. (I will usually 'pin' the correct answer. But until then) ... Forty, Pizza Hut, a vial of dust and it was the first song EVER played on radio!

For more information, please reach out to Stroock at danielstroock@gmail.com.



Take a Hike in Tourne County Park



By Daniel Chazin

This four-mile, easy-to-moderate hike loops around Tourne Park in Morris County, New Jersey. It climbs to the top of the Tourne and follows an old railroad grade, passing an interesting wetland. The hike should take about two-and-a-half hours. A map is available online at www.morrisparks.net. Dogs are permitted on leash.

To get there, take I-80 to Exit 43 (Mahwah/Morristown/I-287), then take Exit 43B onto I-287 North. Take the first exit, Exit 43 (Intervale Road), and turn left at the top of the ramp. Cross over I-287 and turn right at the traffic light onto Fanny Road. At the second stop sign, reached in 0.9 mile, continue ahead, following the sign to "West Main Street," then bear left at the next fork onto County Route 618. In 0.2 mile, at a sign for "Tourne County Park," turn left onto McCaffrey Lane and proceed for 0.5 mile to a parking area at the end of the road. GPS address: 48 McCaffrey Lane, Boonton, NJ 07005. The trailhead is about 30 miles from Teaneck, and it should take about 40 minutes to get there.

From the parking area, walk back along the entrance road until, at a curve to the right in the entrance road, a paved road blocked by a gate continues ahead. (There is a sign here for the Wildflower Area.) Follow this road past the gate and you'll soon reach a four-way junction. Continue ahead on a wide, yellow-blazed gravel road that climbs on a moderate grade to the top of the Tourne. Along the way, you'll cross the Orange Trail. Near the top, you'll notice a special flag, placed as a memorial to the tragic 9/11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. In 2001, the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center were visible from here, but unfortunately, the view has grown in, and you can no longer see the New York City skyline from this point.

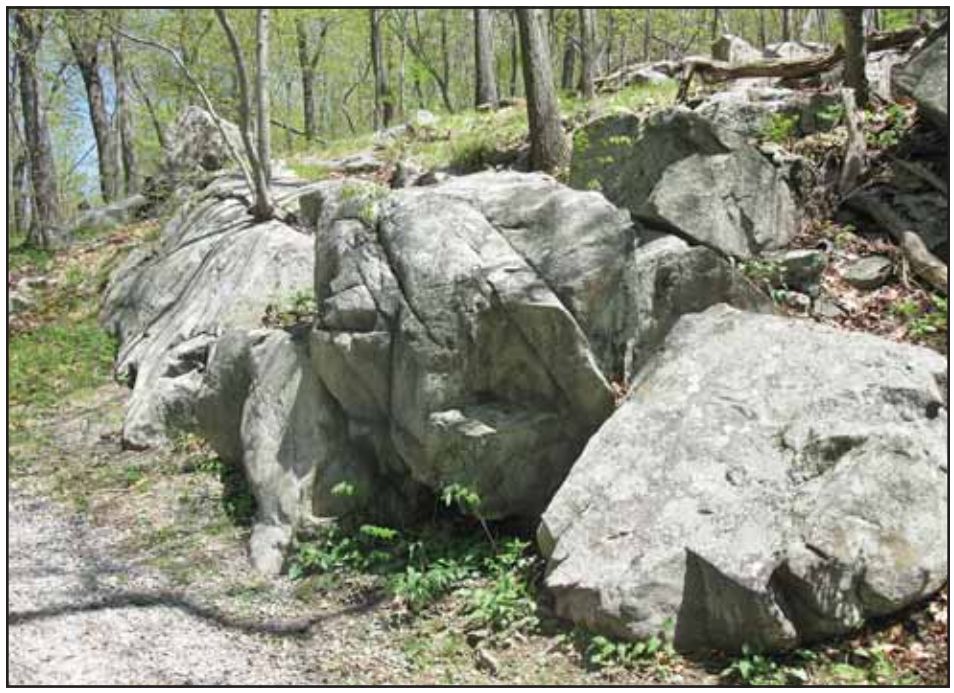
Just ahead, a grassy clearing on the left with picnic tables, marks the high point of the Tourne (897 feet), with a limited west-facing view. Continue ahead on the gravel road, which descends steadily, passing interesting rock formations on the hillside to the left, and once again crossing the Orange Trail.



Special flag memorializing the victims of 9/11/01.

As the road curves to the left near the base of the descent, look carefully for a footpath that goes off sharply to the right. Although (at this writing) no blazes are visible at this junction, you should turn sharply right onto the footpath, the route of the Orange Dot Trail (black dot on orange). The first part of this trail is very sparsely blazed, but the footpath is clear and obvious. Follow the Orange Dot Trail as it continues to descend gradually on switchbacks, soon passing a playground on the left.

With the park maintenance center visible ahead, the trail turns right onto a gravel road. As of this writing, there are purple (rather than orange dot) blazes here, and you should follow the purple blazes, which continue ahead on a footpath at the turnaround of the gravel road. Then, with Norris Road visible ahead, the trail curves to the left and soon begins to climb. In half a mile, the trail crosses the park entrance road and follows a trail section built by an AmeriCorps trail crew of the Trail Conference in 2021. Soon, the purple blazes end, and the orange dot blazes resume. In another 500 feet, the Pink Trail begins on the left, but you should continue to follow the Orange Dot Trail, which climbs gently. After curving to the left, the Orange Dot Trail crosses the Red Trail and begins a gradual descent.



Rock formations along the road from the Top of the Tourne.

The Orange Dot Trail again curves to the left and ends at a junction with the Purple Trail. Turn right onto the Purple Trail, which passes under a canopy of winged euonymus (also known as "burning bush"). In a quarter mile, after climbing a little, the Purple Trail ends at a junction with the Red Trail near a vernal pond.



Along the White Trail.



The Purple Trail passes under a canopy of "burning bush."



The gravel road to the Top of the Tourne.

Turn left onto the Red Trail, and in 100 feet, turn right to continue on the Red Trail as the Purple Dot Trail (black dot on purple) proceeds straight ahead. The Red Trail now climbs slightly to a ridge that overlooks a ravine below on the left.

After descending once more, you'll come to a junction (marked by a sign for the Tourne), where you should turn left. Once again, the trail runs along the edge of a ridge, overlooking the opposite side of the ravine. It then descends, bears left at a fork, and reaches a five-way intersection, where you should turn left onto the White Trail (following a sign for "Tourne Access").

Built in 1899 by Clarence DeCamp as part of a planned railroad between Boonton and Denville and 10 years later proposed as the route of a trolley line to connect these two municipalities, the route of the present-day White Trail was graded but never completed as a railroad (or trolley line). The White Trail soon passes a small concrete building on the right and crosses a wetland. Here, the graded trail is only a few inches above the wetland, so it can be wet after heavy rains. After a while, the trail follows a strip of land that is raised a few feet above the surrounding terrain, paralleling Rigby's Brook on the right and crossing several tributary streams on wooden bridges.

In half a mile, you'll pass a viewpoint over Rattlesnake Meadow on the right. A short distance beyond, a wooden post on the right indicates the start of an unmarked trail that leads down to Rattlesnake Meadow and crosses it. (This trail may be flooded during wet periods.) Just beyond, the Pink Trail begins on the left. After curving to the right, the White Trail ends, one mile from its start, on a gated section of the park entrance road. Turn right and follow the park entrance road back to the parking lot where the hike began.

This hiking article is provided by Daniel Chazin of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference. The Trail Conference is a volunteer organization that builds and maintains over 2,000 miles of hiking trails and publishes a library of hiking maps and books. The Trail Conference's office is at 600 Ramapo Valley Road (Route 202), Mahwah; (201) 512-9348; www.nynjtc.org. Daniel Chazin can be reached at DChazin@aol.com.

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The Essex, Middlesex, Morris, Passaic & Union Counties Minyan Directory

Info Provided by GoDaven.com and Dr. Yosi Fishkin

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ADAS ISRAEL	565 Broadway 973-773-7272	Rabbi Dr. Solomon Rybak	Sun: 7:45 AM, 8:30 AM, 9:15 AM. Mon/Thurs: 6:45 AM, 8:00 AM Tues/Wed/Fri: 6:50 AM, 8:00 AM.	1:45 PM and Bzman	8:45 PM and bzman following mincha
AGUDAS YISROEL BIRCAS YAAKOV OF PASSAIC PARK	262 Terhune Ave.	Rav Yonason Sacks	Sun: 7 am, 7:50 AM, 8:50 AM. Mon/ Thurs: 6:20 AM, 7:10 AM. Tues/ Wed/ Fri: 6:25 AM, 7:10 AM	Bizman	9:15 PM 10:00 PM. and 10:45 PM (additional 8:15 PM in winter)
AHAVAS ISRAEL	181 Van Houten Ave. 973-777-5929	Rabbi Ron Eisenman	Sun: 6:10 AM, 7:10 AM, 8:00 AM, 8:30 AM. Mon/Thurs: 6:00 AM, 6:30 AM, 7:00 AM, 7:30 AM, 8:00 AM, 8:30 AM, 9:00 AM, 9:30 AM. Tues/ Wed/ Fri: 6:10 AM, 6:30 AM, 7:10 AM, 8:00 AM, 9:00 AM, 9:30 AM	1:30 PM and every 20 min approximately from 4:00 PM to sunset	8:00 PM 8:30 PM. Shkiah, 9:00 PM, 9:15 PM, 9:30 PM, 9:45 PM, 10:00 PM, 10:30 PM, 11:00 PM and 11:45 PM
ALUMNI	280 Main Ave. Fax: 413-714-1717	Rabbi Y Celnick	Sun: 8:00 AM. Mon/Thurs: 6:50 AM. Tues/ Wed/ Fri: 7:00 AM		9:15 PM
BAIS MEDRASH ZICHRON ELIEZER	170 Main Ave. 973-685-4908	Rabbi Menachem Spira	Sun: 8:30 AM, Mon/Thurs: 6:55 AM, Tues/ Wed/ Fri: 7:00 AM	15 min before shkiah on Sunday only	10:00 PM. Mon-Thurs
BAIS MEDRASH L'TORAH	181 Lafayette Ave. 973-473-3666	Rabbi Chaim Davis	Sun-Fri: 7:15 AM and 25 min before sunrise	1:30 PM	10:00 PM
BAIS TORAH U'TEFILAH	218 Aycrigg Ave. 973-470-8888	Rabbi Menachem Zupnik	Sun: 7:15 AM, 8:00 AM. Mon/Thurs: 6:25 AM, 7:00 AM. Tues/ Wed/ Fri: 6:30 AM, 7:00 AM.	Bizman	8:00 PM 8:30 PM. 9:45 PM. 10:15 PM
BAIS DOVID	72 Ascension	Rabbi Shloima Isaacson			
BAIS YOSEF	580 Broadway	Rabbi Dovid Hirsch	Sun: 7:15 AM. Mon/Thurs: 6:10 AM, 7:15 Am. Tues/ Wed/ Fri: 6:15 AM, 7:20 AM	Pesach-Sukkos 15 min before shkiah	Pesach-Sukkos @ shkiah; Sukkos-Pesach on Mon-Thurs @ 8:30 PM
BEIS CHABAD OF PASSAIC-CLIFTON	170 Main Ave. 973-594-6897 admin@beischabad.org	Rabbi Sebbag			
CARLEBACH MINYAN OF PASSAIC/CLIFTON	226 Van Houten Ave. 917-518-5353	Rabbi Reuven Sarett			
EITZ CHAIM	371 Brook Ave. 973-779-1994	Rabbi Yonah Lazar			
GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY INC	90 Dayton Ave. Unit 12 973-778-6722			Mon-Thurs: 2:00 PM	
K'HAL TIFERES BORUCH	232 Terhune Ave. 973-472-4247	Rabbi Schachne Weinberger	Sun: 7:45 AM, Mon/Thurs: 6:35 AM, Tues/ Wed/ Fri: 6:45 AM	Sun: Bizman	Sun: Bizman, Mon-Thurs: 9:00 PM
KHAL SHOMREI TORAH	1 Main Ave.				
KOL YESHURUN	540 Broadway	Rabbi Aharon Cohen	Sun: 7:40 AM, Mon/Thurs: 6:55 AM, Tues/ Wed/ Fri: 7:00 AM		
KOSHER KONNECTION	200 Main Ave.			04:00 PM	
MINCHA AT THE MARK ROKOWSKY CAPITAL GROUP	145 Main Ave - 4th Floor 973-574-1144			Mon-Thurs: 1:40 PM	
SHAAREI TEFILLA	24 Crescent St.		Sun: 8:30 AM followed by hot breakfast		
TIFERETH ISRAEL	180 Passaic Ave. 973-773-2552	Rabbi Aaron Cohen	Sun: 7:45 AM, 8:30 AM. Mon/Thurs: 6:20 AM, 7:20 AM. Tues/ Wed/Thurs: 6:25 AM, 7:30 AM	Bzman	8:45 PM 10:15 PM. Also Following Mincha
YESHIVA GEDOLAH OF PASSAIC	55 Ascension St. 973-472-6100		Sun-Fri: 7:30 AM	3:15 PM	9:55 PM
YESHIVA NER BORUCH (PTI)	441 Passaic Ave. 973-594-4774	Rosh Yeshiva: Rabbi Shlomo Singer, Asst RY: Rabbi Boruch Bodenheim	Sun: 7:15 AM, 8:30 AM. Mon-Fri: 6:40 AM, 8:30 AM	12:45 PM	8:00 PM 9:45 PM. On Sundays, at 8:00 PM only
YESHIVAT BEIT HILLEL	270 Passaic Ave. 973-777-0735		Sun: 8:00 AM, Mon-Fri: 7:45 AM	12:30:00 PM. Wed: Mincha @ 12:45 PM	
YOUNG ISRAEL OF PASSAIC-CLIFTON	200 Brook Ave. 973-778-7117	Rabbi Yaakov Glasser	Sun: 8:15 AM, Mon/Thurs: 6:10 AM, Tues/Wed/Fri: 6:15 AM	B'zman	B'zman
			CLIFTON		
CONGREGATION BNEI TORAH OF CLIFTON	614 Passaic Ave 973-777-4885	Rabbi Daniel Schwab	Sun: 8:00 AM, M-F: 6:45 AM	B'zman	B'zman and 9:15 PM
DAUGHTERS OF MIRIAM	155 Hazel St. 973-772-3700	Rabbi Moshe Mirsky	8:45 AM		
KEHILLAS BEIS SHOLOM	733 Passaic Ave. 973-850-9619	Rabbi Avraham Shulman	Sun: 8:15 AM, Mon/Thurs: 6:55 AM, Tues/ Wed/ Fri: 7:00 AM	B'zman	8:45 PM. Follows Mincha on Sunday
KOLLEL AVREICHIM OF PASSAIC	270 Rutherford Ave.	Rabbi Eliezer Breslauer		2:45 PM	10:00 PM
			PATERSON		
MS APPLIANCES	126 3rd Ave 973-778-6722 EX 117			Mon-Thurs: 2:00 PM (Sefard)	
PATERSON SHUL @ SENIOR TOWERS OF PATERSON	Federation Apartments 510 E. 27th Street (basement level) 908.581.2972	Lay leadership	9a.m. / Call/ Email JerrySchranz@gmail.com for Shabbos and Yom Tov Schedule		
			TOTOWA		
SPADINA	50 Furler Street Tzipi: 917-584-4676 Yisrael: 973-392-8489			Mon-Thurs: 1:45PM. No legal holidays.	
			WAYNE		
ALM CORP.	55 Haul Road 973-694-12232			3:00 PM. Winter Only. No Sundays.	
CHABAD OF PASSAIC COUNTY	194 Ratzer Road 973-694-6274 –W 201-454-8857-C	Rabbi Michel Gurkov	Sun: 8:00 AM. Mon/Thurs: 7:15 AM. Shabbos: 10:00 AM	Friday: Winter: 6:00 PM. Summer: 7:30 PM	
Essex County			**CEDAR GROVE**		
NOBLE PACKAGING OFFICES	20 Sand Park Rd.			Mon-Thurs, 2:00 PM	
			IRVINGTON		
UNIPRO UNIFORMS	84 Coit St. 973-577-1300			Mon-Thurs: 1:45PM	
			LIVINGSTON		
ETZ CHAIM	1 Lafayette Dr. 973-597-1655	Rabbi E. Samuel Klibanoff	Sun: 8:30 AM, Mon-Fri: 6:45 AM		8:00 PM 8:15 PM (Wed)
SYNAGOGUE OF THE SUBURBAN TORAH	85 W. Mount Pleasant Ave. 973-994-0122/2620	Rabbi James Proops	Sun: 8:30 AM. Mon/Thurs: 6:35 AM, Tues/ Wed/Thurs: 6:45 AM	Bizman	
			MAPLEWOOD		
CHABAD CENTER – AHAVATH ZION	421 Boyden Ave. 973-432-1891	Rabbi Yitzy Bogomilsky	Shabbos: 9:30 AM	Weekday: Please call for time. Friday and Shabbos: Bizman	
MAPLEWOOD JEWISH CENTER	520 Prospect Street (973) 762-5722	Rabbi Sholom Bogomilsky	Shabbat: 10:00 AM		
			NEWARK		
CHABAD CENTER – MT. SINAI CONGREGATION	250 Mount Vernon Place, Ground Floor 973-432-1891	Rabbi Shmuel P. Bogomilsky	Mon/Thurs: 8:30 AM	Please call for time	
IDT	520 Broad St 973-438-3447		Mon-Fri: 8:15 AM	Mon-Thurs: 1:40 PM, 4:00 PM, Fri: 12:40 PM (winter), 1:40 PM (Summer)	5:00 and 6:05 PM (winter only)
			WEST ORANGE		
CONGREGATION AHAWAS ACHIM BNAI JACOB & DAVID	700 Pleasant Valley Way 973-736-1407	Rabbi Eliezer Zwickler	Sun: 7:00 AM, 8:00 AM, 9:00 AM Mon-Fri: 6:15 AM, 6:50 AM, 7:30 AM	Sun DST: 1:45 PM; EST: 12:45 PM. Mon-Thurs DST: 1:40 PM; EST: 12:40 PM. Sun-Thurs DST and EST: 10 minutes before shkiah	Sun-Thurs DST and EST: 10 minutes after mincha. Mon-Thurs EST: 7:45 PM. Sun-Thurs DST and EST: 9:50 PM
BETH ISRAEL	567 Pleasant Valley Way 973-731-3383		Sun: 8:00 AM, Mon/Thurs: 6:05 AM. Tues/ Wed/ Fri: 6:10 AM		

Name	Address / Contact	Rabbi	Sha charit	Min cha	Maa riv
BNEI TORAH	395 Pleasant Valley Way 973-943-2150	Rabbi Avrohom Stone			
CHABAD OF WEST ORANGE	401 Pleasant Valley Way 973-325-6311 Wheelchair accessible Directly across from the Wilshire Grand Hotel	Rabbi Mendy Kasowitz	Sun: 8:00 AM, Mon-Fri: 8 AM, Shabbos: 9:30 AM	Sun-Thurs: 15 minutes before Shkia. Fri: Spring/Summer 7:00 PM, Fall/Winter B'zman	Following mincha
CONG. ZICHRON DOVID BEIT KNESSET/ ZICHRON DOVID KOLLEL	37 Buckingham Rd. 973-941-5304		Vatikin minyan 25 min before naitz	Mincha with Kollel: 1:30PM Mincha / Arvit: 15 mins. before Shekiah	
OHR TORAH	270 Pleasant Valley Way 973-669-7320	Rabbi Marc Spivak	Sun: 8:15 AM, Mon/Thurs: 7:20 AM, Tues/ Wed/ Fri: 7:30 AM	Bzman during DST	10 minutes after Mincha during DST; 7:30 during Standard Time
WEST ORANGE SEPHARDIC COMMUNITY AT AABJD	700 Pleasant Valley Way 973-736-1407	Rabbi Yosef Sharbat	Sun: 8:00 AM. Mon-Fri: 6:15 AM, Shabbat: 9:00 AM		7:45 PM
Union County			**CLARK**		
OUTERSTUFF COMPANY	60 Walnut Ave Eli Daum: 908-216-4099			1:35 PM	
			ELIZABETH		
ADATH JESHURUN	200 Murray St.	Rabbi E. M. Teitz and Rabbi Yitzchok Burnstein	Shabbos: 9:00 AM, Sunday: 8:30 AM		
BAIS YITZCHOK	153 Bellevue St.		Sun: 8:00 AM, Mon/Thurs: 6:25 AM, Tues/ Wed/ Fri: 6:30 AM		
Congregation Beis Hillel	961 Magie Avenue, Union, NJ 917-478-7813	Rabbi Shaya Winiarz	Sun: 8:00 AM, Mon/Thurs: 5:45 AM, 8:00 AM, Tues/Wed/Fri: 5:50 AM, 8:00 AM	15 minutes before shkia	Following Mincha
JEC ELMORA	330 Elmora Ave. 908-355-4850/ 908-353-4446	Rabbi Avrohom Herman	Sunday: 7:30 AM, Mon-Fri: 6:35/6:45 AM.	About 10 minutes before shkiah	Following Mincha
KOLLEL OF ELIZABETH / YESHIVA BEER YIZCHOK	1391 North Ave. 908-354-6057	Rabbi Avrohom Schulman	Sun-Fri: 8:05 AM	Sun-Thurs: 2:50 PM	Sun-Thurs: 9:20 PM
			HILLSIDE		
BRIS AVROHOM	910 Salem Ave. 908-289-0770	Rabbi Kanelsky	Sun: 8:00 AM, 9:30 AM, Mon-Fri: 6:25 AM Mon-Thurs: 8:50 AM	10 minutes before sunset	Following Mincha
JEC ADATH ISRAEL	1391 North Ave. 908-354-7318	Rabbi Jonathan Schwartz	Sun: 6:45 AM, 8:00 AM. Mon/Thurs: 6:20 AM, 7:10 AM. Tues/ Wed/ Fri: 6:25 AM, 7:15 AM	1:10 PM and at 'mincha time' when after 6:00	8:00 PM when no 'mincha time' minyan
LALLYPAK	1209 Central Ave. 908-351-4141 Ext. 27			Mon-Thurs: 2:00 PM	
YESHIVA GEDOLAH EITZ CHAIM OF HILLSIDE	1531 Maple Ave. 973-926-5138/ 973-750-8699	Harav Shmuel Abba Olshin Shlita	Sun-Fri: 7:40 AM	3:15 PM	9:30 PM
			LINDEN		
ANSHE CHESED	1000 Orchard Terr. 908-486-8616	Rabbi Yossi Katz	Sun: 6:30 AM, 8:00 AM, Mon-Fri: 6:30 AM	10 minutes before shkiah	8:00 PM in winter months. Follows Mincha during summer months
QUALMAXX	2500 Brunswick 718-305-6766			2:00 PM	
			RAHWAY		
ARTSCROLL MESORAH	313 Regina Avenue 718-921-9000	Rabbi Yitzchak Hisiger		Mon-Thurs: 1:45 PM	
			SPRINGFIELD		
CONGREGATION ISRAEL	339 Mountain Ave. 973-467-9666	Rabbi Chaim Marcus	Sun: 8:00 AM, Mon-Fri: 6:15 AM, 7:00 AM	10-15 minutes before shkiah	Mon-Thurs: 9:30 PM (winter). Also following Mincha
Middlesex County			**CARTERET**		
YESHIVA GEDOLA OF CARTERET	42 Noe St. 732-969-2497	Rabbi Azriel Brown and Rabbi Yaakov Meyer	7:30 AM	3:00 PM	10:20 PM
			CRANBURY		
CRANBURY KOLLEL	4A Cedarbroook Dr (609) 860-5620			2:10 every day except Friday	
			EAST BRUNSWICK		
YOUNG ISRAEL OF EAST BRUNSWICK	193 Dunhams Corner Rd. 732-254-1860	Rabbi Joshua Hess	Sun: 7:30 AM, 8:30 AM. Mon/Thurs: 6:20 AM, 8:00 AM. Tues/ Wed/ Fri: 6:30 AM, 8:00 AM	Bzman	M-W: 9:00 PM, Th: 8:45 PM (Winter). Following Mincha at Zman
			EDISON		
AHAVAS YISRAEL	1587 Route 27 732-287-1230	Rabbi Gedaliah Jaffe	Sun: 8:15 AM, Mon/Thurs: 6:10 AM, Tues/ Wed/ Fri: 6:15 AM	Bizman on Sundays in winter, every day in summer	8:30 PM. Follows Mincha
APCO EXTRUDERS	180 National Rd. 732-287-3000			Mon-Thurs: 3:45 PM	
BEACH CAMERA	80 Carter Dr. 732-424-100 x 243 SIMCHA			2:00 PM	
CROSSWAYS MINYAN	5 Price Dr. 732-572-9138				
DEPENDABLE FOODS	29 Executive Ave. 732-257-4500			Mon-Thurs: 2:00 PM	
DGL GROUP	195 Raritan Center Pkwy 732-692-5116	Rabbi Haber		4:30 PM summer/ DST and 4:00 PM winter	Follows Mincha during the winter
OHR TORAH	48 Edgemount Rd. 732-777-6840	Rabbi Sariel Malitzky	Sun: 7:15 AM, 8:00 AM, 9:00 AM. Mon/Thurs: 6:20 AM, 7:05 AM, 8:00 AM. Tues/ Wed/ Fri: 6:30 AM, 7:10 AM, 8:00 AM.	10-15 minutes before sunset	10:10 PM and follows Mincha
RABBI JACOB JOSEPH SCHOOL	1 Plainfield Ave. 732-985-6533		Mon-Thurs: 7:40 AM	3:00 PM	9:40 PM 10:40 PM
RABBI PESACH RAYMON YESHIVA	2 Harrison St. 732-572-5052		Mon-Fri: 7:40 AM	2:15 PM (except Sunday)	
SAKAR INTERNATIONAL	195 Carter Dr. 732-248-1306			5:00 PM	
TECHNICAL PRO INC./ VICMARR AUDIO INC.	9 Kilmer Ct. 718-567-7754 x102 (David)			Mon-Thurs: 1:45 PM	
			HIGHLAND PARK		
AGUDATH ISRAEL OF EDISON/ HIGHLAND	1131 Raritan Ave.	Rabbi Reuven Drucker	Sun: 6:30 AM, 8:00 AM, 8:35 AM. Mon-Fri: 6:00 AM, 7:35 AM	12:45 PM EST, 1:45 DST, and about 15 minutes before shkiah	9:15 PM 8:00 PM EST and Shkiah
AHAVAS ACHIM	216 South First Ave. 732-247-0532	Rabbi Steven Miodownik	Sun: 8:00 AM, 9:00 AM. Mon/Thurs: 6:25 AM, 7:45 AM. Tues/ Wed/ Fri: 6:35 AM, 7:45 AM	10 minutes before sunset	9:30 PM and following Mincha
ETZ AHAIM	230 Denison St. 732-247-3839	Rabbi Eliyahu Tal	Sun: 8:30 AM, Mon-Fri: 6:30 AM	Zman	Zman
KHAL CHASIDIM OF HIGHLAND PARK	46 North 8th Ave. (entrance on Abbott) 917-886-2098	Rabbi Mechel Horowitz	Sun-Fri: 25 minutes before sunrise, Sun: 8:15 AM		9:30 PM
OHAV EMETH	415 Raritan Ave. 732-247-3038	Rabbi Eliyahu Kaufman	Sun: 6:30 AM, 8:00 AM. Mon/Thurs: 5:50 AM, 6:30 AM, 7:20 AM. Tues/ Wed/ Fri: 5:55 AM, 6:40 AM, 7:20 AM.	Bizman	Follows Mincha
			ISELIN		
EISNER AMPER	111 Wood Avenue South 732-690-0626			1:35 PM	
MERIDIAN CAPITAL	517 Route 1 South 732-301-3200			2:30 PM	
			MONROE TWP.		
CHABAD HOUSE OF MONROE	324 Applegarth Rd. 609-409-1000	Rabbi Yehuda Spritzer	Sun: 8:00 AM. Mon-Fri: 7:30 AM. Shabbos: 10:00 AM	Winter: 4:30 PM.- Summer: 7:30 PM. (moves in half hour increments as Shkia moves)	Sun- Fri: Following Mincha. Shabbos: At Tzeis (42 minutes)
			NEW BRUNSWICK		
RUTGERS CHABAD	170 College Avenue 732-296-1800	Rabbi Shaya Shagalow	8:30am - school year only	1:30pm - school year only	9:00 pm - school year only
RUTGERS HILLEL	70 College Avenue 973-715-2297	Avi Schwartz	Sun: 9:00 AM. Mon-Fri: 8:00 AM, Shabbos: 9:15 AM	15 minutes before Shkiya	Following Mincha
Morris County			**CEDAR KNOLLS**		
CENTER LABS (MED-LABS)	85 Horsehill Road Moshe Linksy (646) 334-2748			Mon-Thurs: 2:00 PM	
			PARSIPPANY		
SHAYA AHAVAT TORAH	113 Hawkins Ave.	Rabbi Shalom Lubin	Sundays 8:00 AM, Shabbos: 9:30 AM		
			PINE BROOK		
BBM CHOCOLATE	16 Old Bloomfield Ave. Moshe Basch: (718) 522-0689 ext 105 mbasch@bbmchocolate.com			Mon-Thurs: 12:45 PM	
			RANDOLPH		
MT FREEDOM JEWISH CENTER	Randolph O: 973-895-2103, C: 201-923-1107	Rabbi Menashe East, LCSW	Mon-Fri: 6:45AM, Sun & National Holidays: 8:00 AM		

To update or correct or add minyanim to this chart, please call: 201-366-9102 or email: editor@jewishlinknj.com

The Bergen County Minyan Directory

Info Provided by GoDaven.com and Dr. Yosi Fishkin

Sponsored by BSYD Corp.

Name	Address/Contact	Rabbi	Shacharit	Mincha	Maariv
BERGENFIELD					
BAIS MEDRASH OF BERGENFIELD	385 South Prospect Ave.	Rabbi Zev Goldberg	Sun: 7:30 AM, 8:30 AM, 9:30 AM (Nusach Sefard). Mon/Thurs: 6:20 AM, 8:10 AM. Tues/Wed/Fri: 6:30 AM, 8:10 AM	Bzman	Following Mincha
BETH ABRAHAM	396 New Bridge Road 201-384-0434	Rabbi Yaakov Neuburger	Sun: 6:50 AM, 8:00 AM, 8:45 AM. Mon/Thurs: 6:20 AM, 7:10 AM. Tues/Wed/ Fri: 6:30 AM, 7:10 AM	Bzman	9:05PM 10PM
OHR HATORAH	36 Rector Ct. 201-244-5905	Rabbi Sobolofsky	Sunday: 7:20 AM, 8:00 AM, 8:45 AM. Mon/Thurs: 6:20 AM, 7:05 AM, 8:00 AM. Tues/Wed/Fri: 6:30 AM, 7:15 AM, 8:00 AM.	Sun: 1PM, Bzman Mon-Thurs: Bzman	Sun-Thurs: Bzman, 8:45 PM,10:00 PM
E. RUTHERFORD					
GIANTS STADIUM MINCHA MINYAN	50 Route 120			At halftime during all Giants and Jets games	
ENGLEWOOD					
AHAVATH TORAH	240 Broad Avenue 201-568-1315	Rabbi Chaim Poupko / Rabbi Mordy Kuessous	Sun: 7:00 AM, 8:00 AM, 9:00 AM and 34 min before sunrise. Mon/Thurs: 6:15 AM, 7:15 AM, 8:00 AM, and 34 min before sunrise. Tues/Wed/ Fri: 6:30 AM, 7:30 AM, 8:00 AM and 34 minutes before sunrise	Early mincha on weekdays - approx. 15 min before Plag Mincha and 10 minutes before shkiah	Following Mincha
ARTUS CORPORATION	201 South Dean Street 201-568-1000			2:15 PM	
EAST HILL SYNAGOGUE	255 Walnut Street 201-569-4008	Rabbi Zev Reichman	Sun: 6:50 AM, 8:30 AM. Mon-Thurs:: 6:15 AM, 7:50 AM	Bzman	Following Mincha
KESHER: COMMUNITY SYNAGOGUE OF TENAFLY & ENGLEWOOD	509 Engle Street 201-227-1117	Rabbi Akiva Block	Sun: 8:30 AM, Mon-Fri: 6:30 AM		
PCS REVENUE CONTROL	560 Sylvan Avenue 800-247-3061 x1196			Mon-Thurs: 3:00 PM	
SHOMREI EMUNAH	89 Huguenot Ave 201-567-9420	Rabbi Menachem Genack	Sun: 8:00 AM, Mon-Fri: 6:45 AM Rosh Chodesh- 6:30 AM		**9:00 PM**
YESHIVA OHR SIMCHA OF ENGLEWOOD	101 W. Forest Ave 201-816-1800	Rabbi Strassfeld	Sun-Fri: 8:00 AM	2:50 PM	9PM
FAIR LAWN					
AHAVAT ACHIM	18-25 Saddle River Rd. 201-797-0502	Rabbi Ely Shestack	Sun: 8:00 AM, Mon/Thurs: 6:15 AM, Tues/Wed/Fri: 6:25 AM, Rosh Chodesh: 6:00 AM	12 minutes before Shkia	Follows Mincha
ANSHEI LUBAVITCH CONGREGATION	10-10 Plaza Rd 201-797-4770	Rabbi Levi Neubort	Sun: 9:00 AM, Mon-Fri: 6:15 AM	Sun - Thurs: 1:45 PM	Sun-Thurs: 9:15 PM
BRIS AVROHOM	3002 Fair Lawn Avenue 201-791-7200	Rabbi Berel Zaltzman	Sun/National Holidays: 8:00 AM Mon-Fri: 6:30 AM	Sun-Thurs: 10 min before shkia Fri: 15 min before shkia	Follows Mincha
CONGREGATION DARCHEI NOAM	10-04 Alexander Avenue 201-773-4080	Rabbi Jeremy Donath	Sun: 8:00 AM Mon/Thurs: 6:45 AM Tues/Wed/Fri: 6:50 AM	Winter: 12:40 PM Summer: 15 min before shkia appprox	Winter: 8:15 PM Summer: following Mincha
SEPHARDIC CENTER OF FAIR LAWN	40-34 Terhune Place cell 201-835-5170		Sun: 8:00 AM followed by breakfast in the synagogue, Mon-Fri: 6:15 AM followed by breakfast in the synagogue	Bzman	Fall and Winter 8:00PM; Spring and Summer immediately after Mincha
SHOMREI TORAH	19-10 Morlot ave 201 791 7910	Rabbi Andrew Markowitz	Sun: 7:30 AM, 8:30 AM. Mon/Thurs: 6:20 AM, 7:45 AM. Tues/Wed/Fri: 6:30 AM, 7:45 AM. Rosh Chodesh: 6:10 AM, 7:45 AM.	Bzman Sun: 2:00 PM	About 22 minutes after mincha. Late Maariv: 9:00 PM or 9:30 PM, depending on time of year.
YOUNG ISRAEL OF FAIR LAWN	11-05 Saddle River Rd. 201-797-1800	Rabbi Eli Belizon	Sun: 7:30 AM, Mon/Thurs: 6:40 AM, Tues/Wed/Fri: 6:50 AM		Mon-Thurs: 9:00 PM
FORT LEE					
CHABAD OF FORT LEE	808 Abbott Blvd (201) 886-1238	Rabbi Meir Konikov	Sunday: 9:00 AM, Mon-Fri: 8:00 AM, Shabbos: 10:00 AM	Daily Bzman	
CROSS RIVER BANK	2115 Linwood Ave 201-808-6376			Mon-Thurs: 2:30 PM	Time is sent weekly to our email list
SCFL BET YOSEF	313 Tom Hunter Road 845-826 2006 (N.J)	Rabbi Ilan Acoca	Sun: 8:00 AM, Mon-Fri: 7:00 AM	Sun: 15 minutes before Shkia	Weekdays: 5:45 PM
YOUNG ISRAEL OF FORT LEE	1610 Parker Avenue 201-592-1518	Rabbi Sammy Bergman	Sun: 8:00 AM, Mon-Fri: 7:30 AM	Weekdays 15 minutes before shkia	Right after Shkiah
FRANKLIN LAKES					
CHABAD OF NW BERGEN COUNTY	375 Pulis Ave. 201-848-0449	Rabbi Chanoch Kaplan	Sun: 8:25 AM, Tues & Thurs: 7:00 AM, Shabbos: 9:30 AM	Shabbos: 1:15 PM	Sun-Thurs: 8:45 PM
HACKENSACK					
CHABAD OF HACKENSACK	180 Summit Ave (201) 503-3770	Rabbi Mendy Kaminker	Shabbos: 10:00 AM		
HACKENSACK UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER	201-519-0321 Henry Netzer			1:35 PM	
UNIVERSITY PLAZA	1 University Plaza - Suite 120 201-742-5161			Mon-Thurs: 1:45 PM	5:45PM. Winter only
LYNDHURST					
NJ MANAGEMENT	1050 Wall St West, Suite 230 201-531-9100			Mon-Thurs: 1:45 PM, excluding national holidays	
PARAMUS					
BETH TEFILLAH	452 Forest Ave 201-262-0356	Rabbi Daniel Wolff	Sun: 8:00 AM, Mon/Thurs: 6:30 AM, Tues/Wed/Fri: 6:30 AM	15 minutes before shkiah	Follows Mincha
SEPHARDIC CONGREGATION OF PARAMUS	140 Arnot Place 201-362-8493		Sun: 7:30 AM, Mon-Fri: 6:30 AM	20 minutes before shkiah	Following Mincha

Name	Address/Contact	Rabbi	Shacharit	Mincha	Maariv
RIDGEFIELD PARK					
SPECIALTY RX	2 Bergen Turnpike Ari- 917-734-3877		8:30AM	2:00 PM and 4:00 PM	
WALNUT COURT CAPITAL	100 Challenger Rd, Suite 105			Mon-Thurs: 2:00 PM	Mon-Thurs: Following Mincha
RUTHERFORD					
CONGREGATION BETH EL	185 Montross Ave. 201-438-4931	Rabbi Yitzchok Lerman	Shabbos morning at 9 am, and Sunday at 8 am.		
HAIN CAPITAL GROUP	301 NJ-17			Mon-Thurs: 2:00 PM	
TEANECK					
AHAVAT SHALOM		Rabbi Yehuda Halpert		check the newsletter for time and location www.teaneckapartments.com/ThisWeek.PDF	
AMBRA	1415 Queen Anne Road 201-837-0080			2:15 PM	
ANSHEI CHESED OF TEANECK	931 Queen Anne road - 1st Floor				
ARZEI DAROM	725 Queen Anne Road 201 416-9829	Rabbi Aharon Ciment	Mon-Fri: 8:15 AM Sun: 8:30 AM, Mon/Thurs: 6:35 AM, Tues/Wed/ Fri: 6:45 AM	Sun-Thurs: Bzman	Bzman
BAIS MENACHEM	1370 Windsor Rd Yosef Levine 917-622-6192		Sun: 8:30 AM, Mon-Fri: 7:00 AM, Shabbat: 10:00 AM	Fri Night & Shabbat: Bzman	
BETH AARON	950 Queen Anne Road 201-836-6210	Rabbi Laurence E. Rothwachs	Sun: 6:30 AM, 7:15 AM, 8:00 AM, 8:45 AM. Mon/Thurs: 5:40 AM, 6:20 AM, 7:10 AM, 8:00 AM. Tues/Wed/ Fri: 5:55 AM, 6:30 AM, 7:15 AM, 8:00 AM	Bzman	8PM 9:30PM (from March DST through September, the 8:00 PM Maariv is discontinued)
BNAI YESHURUN	641 West Englewood Ave. 201-836-8916	Rabbi Elliot Schrier	Sun: 6:25 AM, 7:00 AM, 7:30 AM, 8:00 AM, 8:50 AM, 9:15 AM. Mon/Thurs: 6:00 AM, 6:05 AM, 6:20 AM, 7:00 AM, 7:20 AM, 8:00 AM, 8:50 AM. Tues/Wed/ Fri: 6:00 AM, 6:15 AM, 6:30 AM, 7:00 AM, 7:30 AM, 8:00 AM, 8:50 AM	Sun: 12:45 PM, 1:45 PM and Bzman. Mon-Thurs: 1:45 PM and Bzman, and 6:00 PM in the summer	Following Mincha, 6:00 PM, 7:00 PM, 8:00 PM, 9:00 PM, 10:01 PM, 11:00 PM
CARE ONE AT TEANECK	544 Teaneck Road		Sun: 8:30 AM	15 minutes before shkiah during DST only	Follows Mincha during DST (Otherwise 7:45 PM M-Th)
THE THE HAPPY MINYAN LISTING	95 Edgemont Place			Friday night only	Friday night only
CHABAD HOUSE	513 Kenwood Place 201 907-0686	Rabbi Ephraim Simon	Sun: 8:00 AM, Mon/Thurs: 6:40 AM, Tues/Wed/ Fri: 6:45 AM		
GREENBACK CAPITAL	1086 Teaneck Road -Suite 4E 201-837-6400			Mon-Thurs: 1:45 PM	
JEWISH CENTER OF TEANECK	70 Sterling Place 201-833-0515	Rabbi Daniel Fridman	Sunday: 8:00 AM Mon- Fri 7:15 AM	Sun: Mincha /Maariv 15 minutes before zman	Mon- Thurs: 7:30 PM
KETER TORAH (ROEMER)	600 Roemer Ave. 201-907-0180	Rabbi Shalom Baum	Sun: 6:40 AM, 8:00 AM, 9:00 AM. Mon/Thurs: 5:50 AM, 7:15 AM, 8:10 AM. Tues/Wed/ Fri: 6:00 AM, 7:15 AM, 8:10 AM	Bzman	following Mincha
KOF-K	201 The Plaza 201 837 0500 ext7			Mon-Fri: DST (March-Nov): 2:00 PM EST (Nov-March): 1:45 PM	
NETIVOT SHALOM	811 Palisade Ave. 201-801-0707	Rabbi Nathaniel Helfgot	Sun: 8:00 AM		
NOAH'S ARK RESTAURANT	493 Cedar Lane 201.692.1200			Mon-Thurs: 5 minutes before Plag	Following mincha
OHR SAADYA	554 Queen Anne Road 201-801-0637	Rabbi Daniel Feldman	Mon-Fri: 6:30 AM. Mon & Thurs: 7:50 AM, Tues, Wed & Friday: 8:00 AM	15 minutes before Shekiah	Shekiah
QUEEN ANNE RD	1345 Queen Anne Rd (across the street from Chubbies)			Mon-Thurs: 4PM	
RINAT YISRAEL	389 West Englewood Ave. 201-837-2795	Rabbi Chaim Strauchler	Sun: 7:00 AM, 8:00 AM, 9:00 AM. Mon/Thurs: 6:20 AM, 7:00 AM, 7:20 AM, 8:00AM.Tues/Wed/Fri: 6:30 AM, 7:05 AM, 7:30 AM, 8:00 AM	Bzman throughout the winter	7:30PM 9:15PM and following Mincha
SHAARE TEFILLAH OF TEANECK	510 Claremont Ave. (201) 357-0613	Rabbi Kenneth Schiowitz	Sun: 7:00 AM, 8:30 AM, Mon/Thurs: 6:20 AM, Tues/Wed/ Fri: 6:30 AM	Bzman No Mincha in winter	Following Mincha Winter: 7:45 PM
SHAAREI ORAH, THE SEPHARDIC CONG. OF TEANECK	1425 Essex Rd. 201-833-0800	Rabbi Chaim Jachter	Sun: 8:00 AM, Mon.& Thurs.: 6:00 AM Tues, Wed., Fri.: 6:05 AM Note Shaharit times are for Karbanot. Hodu to start around 12-15 minutes after posted times.		Mon/Thurs - 8:30 PM
TEANECK SEPHARDIC CENTER/ CONG. LEV HAIM	407 Warwick Ave. 201 357 0607	R Doniel Hakimi		7:00 PM (summer)	
YESHIVAS BAIS MORDECHAI OF TEANECK	1443 Palisade Ave. 201-833-5920	Rosh Hayeshiva, Rabbi Eliyahu Roberts	Sun-Fri: 6:15 AM, 7:35 AM	1:35 PM	9:35PM
YISMACH MOSHE	Varies each month				
YOUNG ISRAEL OF TEANECK	868 Perry Lane 201-837-1710	Rabbi Binyomin Krohn	Sun: 7:00 AM, 8:00 AM, 9:00 AM Mon/Thurs: 6:20 AM, 7:05 AM, 8:00 AM Tues/Wed: 6:30 AM, 7:05 AM, 8:00 AM Fri: 6:30 AM, 7:05 AM, 8:00 AM	15 minutes before sunset (all year)	
ZICHRON MORDECHAI	268 West Englewood Ave. 201-837-7696	Rabbi Michael Taubes			
TENAFLY					
LUBAVITCH ON THE PALISADES	11 Harold St. 201-871-1152	Rabbi Mordechai Shain	Sun: 8:30 AM. Mon/Thurs: 6:55 AM. Tues/Wed/ Fri: 7:00 AM	10 minutes before sunset	Following Mincha
WOODCLIFF LAKE					
WOODCLIFF LAKE CHABAD/PASCACK VALLEY CHABAD	100 Overlook Dr. Rabbi Dov Drizin 201-476-0157		Mon/Thurs: 7:00 AM		

To update or correct or add minyanim to this chart, please call: 201-366-9102 or email: editor@jewishlinknj.com

We Need the Bracha and Shemira of Shabbos

Uplifting maamad of kavod HaTorah at Prudential Center as Klal Yisrael set to undertake the learning of Hilchos Shabbos.

By Chaim Gold

Klal Yisrael needs *shemirah*... desperately! The last few weeks have sadly and tragically been the embodiment of the words that we recently read in the Haggadah, *"Ela she'bichol dor v'dor omdim aleinu l'chaloseinu,* in every generation they seek to stand up against us and destroy us."

What we have seen transpiring in university campuses where calls for "Kill the Jews" have become de rigueur have made even Jews who were once complacent in the "melting pot" of America fearful for their future in this country, actually in any country in the world.

Jews the world over are surrounded by enemies who seek nothing less than our destruction. Even our "friends" have proven untrustworthy at best.

We Need the *Koach* of Torah and the *Koach* of Shabbos

There is no question that the ultimate response to this must be a spiritual response. Hashem is talking to US! The leading Gedolei Yisrael of our time are telling us that we need the *koach* of Torah and the *koach* of Shabbos. The *zechus* of Torah saves the world, and the *zechus* of *shmiras Shabbos* and limud about Shabbos, is the ultimate *shemirah*.

That is why Dirshu is investing a colossal effort into trying to unite all of Klal Yisrael through limud Hilchos Shabbos. This initiative can save us from the forces that seek to destroy us, by encouraging Jews in all four corners of the world to start learning *hilchos Shabbos*. The fact that the Dirshu Daf HaYomi B'Halacha will begin learning *hilchos Shabbos* this coming 3 *Sivan*/ June 9 is the most opportune time to join and see how learning *hilchos Shabbos* can not only transform your life and your Shabbos, but it can also transform the world and protect Klal Yisrael from harm. That is the *koach* of *hilchos Shabbos*.

It is for this purpose that Dirshu, with the *bracha* and encouragement of Gedolei Yisrael from both Eretz Yisrael and *chutz l'aretz*, will be holding a massive gathering entitled "Kinnus Olam HaTorah, Kabbolas Shabbos Event," to mark the *haschala* of *hilchos Shabbos* in the Daf HaYomi B'Halacha program. The event will be held on Sunday, 3 *Sivan*/ June 9, at the Prudential Center Arena in Newark, NJ. Leading Gedolei Yisrael will address the *maamad* of *chizuk* and *tefillah* and most importantly, encourage the undertaking of a *kabbalah* to learn and upgrade our *hilchos Shabbos*.



Harav Gershon Edelstein meeting with Rav Dovid Hofstedter.

The Kinnus Olam HaTorah at the Prudential Center: A Deeply Inspiring Program Graced by Leading Gedolei Yisrael

The Daf HaYomi B'Halacha program is an excellent vehicle to accomplish this goal. It involves a relatively small daily investment of time to learn an *amud* of *Mishnah Berurah* along with Dirshu's *Biurim* and *Musafim* on the adjacent page that elucidates the *piskei halacha* of many Gedolei Haposkim on modern day questions and scenarios as *paskend* by the Poskei Hador since the publishing of the *Mishnah Berurah*. Simultaneously, *lomdei Dirshu* are now in the middle of learning *Masechta Shabbos* in *Talmud Bavli*, availing themselves of the ideal opportunity to learn the foundational underpinnings of the *halacha* from the *Gemara* and then follow up with the practical *halacha*.

The massive Kinnus Olam HaTorah at the Prudential Center will feature a deeply inspiring program graced by leading Gedolei Yisrael and promises to be a tremendously uplifting *maamad* of Torah, *tefillah* and *kavod haTorah*.

Daf HaYomi B'Halacha: A Program For Our Time Established by the Gedolei Hador

Dirshu's Daf HaYomi B'Halacha program was established at the behest of the Gedolei Hador, Hagaon Harav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, *zt"l*, and Hagaon Harav Shmuel Wosner, *zt"l*. These Torah giants encouraged Rav Dovid Hofstedter, *Nasi* of Dirshu, to launch a Dirshu program that would facilitate daily learning of *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* featuring the common *halachos* that people encounter each day.

Daf HaYomi B'Halacha is a daily, multiple-track learning program of *halachah* and *mussar*. The first track focuses on an *amud* of *Mishnah Berurah* together with Dirshu's *Biurim U'Musafim* found on the corresponding page in the Dirshu *Mishnah Berurah*. The most advanced track consists of learning approximately an *amud* of *Mishnah Berurah* with *Biur Halachah* and *Shaar Hatzion* as well as Dirshu's *Biurim U'Musafim*.

What is the *Biurim U'Musafim* section in the Dirshu *Mishnah Berurah*?

Firstly the *"Musafim"* component adds the *Mishnah Berurah's* own additional words and rulings culled from other areas on the subject at hand. For example, if the *Mishnha Berurah,* when expounding on the laws of *bishul*—cooking on Shabbos, discusses one topic at length and in a different section discusses the same topic in a shorter, less elaborate way, the Dirshu edition includes the *Mishnah Berurah's* words from the other location on the opposite pages to where the *halachos* are discussed. This frequently sheds light on the *halachic* ruling and enables the learner to see how the Chofetz Chaim himself ruled on the same matter in a different place.

The second component is that of the *Biurim*. Often, in the main body of the *Mishnah Berurah* the Chofetz Chaim only writes the actual *psak halachah—halachic* ruling, without giving the reasons for that ruling. It is not uncommon, however, for the Chofetz Chaim to elaborate on the reasons in his commentaries, *Shaar Hatzion* and *Biur Halachah*. Additionally, these commentaries present *halachic* rulings not contained in the *Mishnah Berurah* which shed insight on the topic at hand. In a wonderfully cogent, concise manner, the *Biurim* part of the Dirshu *Mishnah Berurah* cites these rulings, thereby affording the learner a quick, comprehensive listing of related *halachic* rulings and explanations as ruled by the Chofetz Chaim himself in his other *sefarim*.

Perhaps the most exciting component of the new Dirshu *Mishnah Berurah* is the *"Likutei Teshuvos"* part of the *Biurim U'Musafim* section. The Chofetz Chaim completed the *Mishnah Berurah* in 1907. Over the past century plus, umpteen technological advances and countless questions relevant to today's lifestyles have arisen. This is especially true regarding the *halachos* of Shabbos, where the constantly evolving technology has engendered thousands of new *halachic* questions and rulings. Of course, all these rulings are rooted in the original words of the *Shulchan Aruch* and *poskim*. The Dirshu edition of the *Mishnah Berurah* brings literally thousands of rulings from the Gedolei Haposkim of the last generation as well as from contemporary *poskim*, each in its proper place in the *Mishnah Berurah*. The learner is therefore not only able to learn the words of the *Mishnah Berurah* but to know and understand the rulings of the great *poskim* on thousands of modern, practical questions while simultaneously understanding how these modern-day rulings have their source in the original words of the *Shulchan Aruch* and *Mishnah Berurah*!

Learning *Mishnah Berurah* is *Mamesh* a Spiritual *Hatzalos Nefashos*!

Seven years ago, HaGaon HaRav Gershon Edelstein spoke at a Daf HaYomi B'Halacha event devoted to *Chelek Gimmel, hilchos Shabbos*. He said, "The *Mishnah Berurah* contains within it many practical *halachos* that are incumbent on every Jew to keep. [If one does not learn these *halachos*] it is very easy to inadvertently transgress. This is particularly true with regard to *hilchos* Shabbos. A person who does not learn these *halachos* can easily transgress Torah-mandated prohibitions. That is why it is so important to learn *Mishnah Berurah* every day. Learning *Mishnah Berurah* is *mamesh* spiritual *hatzalos nefashos*!"



יוסף שלו' אלישיב
ירושלים

בס"ד, ט"ו טבת התשס"ח

כבר נודעו ברבים – מפעלי ארגון דרשו להרבות לימוד התוה"ק ולחזק לומדי' – ועתה רחש לבם, לחבין תוכנית לסייע ללימוד הלכה באופן קבוע בספר "משנה ברורה" – כמו שכתב החפץ חיים זצוק"ל בהקדמתו "ועיקר לימוד האדם צריך לחיות בלימוד המביא לידי מעשה".

והנני לברכם כי יראו ברכה בעמלם.

בברכת התורה

Hamlatza for the Daf HaYomi B'Halacha Program from Harav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv.

Indeed, HaGaon HaRav Yitzchok Zilberstein, *shlita*, recently said, "We all know that *shemiras Shabbos* serves as the ultimate *shemirah*, the ultimate protection from our enemies. How much more so is learning Torah and learning about Shabbos a protection in these times when Klal Yisrael needs so much *shemirah*. Thus, it is important to tap into that *shemirah* to invoke *rachmei shomayim* on behalf of Klal Yisrael and enhance our *limud haTorah*, especially in areas of Shabbos, which is the *mekor habracha*, the source of all blessing."

Now is the time to undertake to accept upon ourselves, with a true *kabbalah,*to learn *hilchos Shabbos,* and to enhance and upgrade our *shemiras Shabbos*. The only way to do that is by learning *hilchos Shabbos*.

This 3 *Sivan*/June 9 let us all join Klal Yisrael led by Gedolei Yisrael at the Prudential Center and begin learning *hilchos Shabbos*. There is nothing better that you can do for Klal Yisrael! There is nothing better that you can do for yourself!



Ashamed at My Husband's Hints About My Weight



By Dr. Chani Maybruch

Dear Dr. Chani,

It's been a long vacation. It was fun to go to a hotel and enjoy plenty of exotic, delicious dishes, but my waistline has definitely come along for the ride. I have always struggled to reduce my weight, and I thought that my husband didn't care much about it. I was, therefore, totally caught off guard when he recently began to make hints about my weight. Now I'm not sure what to do.

I am really self-conscious about my body so when I began to have trouble fitting into my clothing over the past week, I was really disappointed in myself. I told my husband that I feel so fat and I wish that I didn't have to worry that everything I eat would affect my shape. At first, he was really sweet and he told me, "Don't worry about it. It's no big deal." I was so happy that my husband was so understanding and not superficial.

But after a few days, he changed his tune. He began to encourage me to lose weight. He keeps giving me suggestions about how to slim down. For example, he sent me links to exercise videos with Pilates routines and he selected articles for me about healthy meal planning.

I am so confused about why he is suddenly taking such an interest in my losing weight. I feel heartbroken that he is bothered by my appearance. When I think that he would like me to lose weight, it makes me feel terrible about myself and adds to the pressure I already feel to lose weight. What should I do?

Sincerely,

Ashamed

Dear Ashamed,

It is very challenging to feel an ongoing struggle to lose weight. As much as you make efforts to reach your goal, it is difficult to feel like you need to constantly be vigilant or you will lose the battle. I suspect that you were able to enjoy the creative cuisine on your vacation because you thought that you would only have your own standards to judge yourself by. Now that you sense that your husband cares about your appearance, you will feel an added burden in your already arduous journey to your ideal body.

I share your amazement about how your husband suddenly began involving himself in your efforts to lose weight. He seems to be intent on helping you achieve your goals by giving you practical tools and advice. Let's consider what might have contributed to his new approach.

You described how after your vacation, you complained to your husband about how you put on weight. It is unclear if this was a one-off comment to him or if you repeatedly vented your frustration about your body to your husband. At first glance, it makes sense that you felt comfortable sharing your concerns about your weight with him. It sounds like he had never indicated to you that he is bothered by it. Now you feel ashamed that your husband seems to care more about your weight than you do.

It is possible that your husband is treating the issue of your weight similarly to any other problem that you would present to him. He may be trying to help you solve your problem. Recognizing that this is important to you, he may be good-naturedly offering you suggestions to make it easier for you to achieve your goal. Based on this perspective, the reason your husband may be researching effective methods and sharing advice with you is because he is taking an interest in your interests.

If so, you need not worry that you have an added pressure of losing weight in order to please your husband. He, himself, might not care much one way or the other. Keeping this in mind can help you feel more secure and even appreciate his gestures to help you.

At the same time, your husband might genuinely have his own interest in you losing weight. If so, it is unclear whether he felt this way before or only recently. Yet it is possible that he was influenced by your self-deprecating comments about your body. Even if he did not care about it previously, he may have become sensitized to the issue and begun to see your weight as a problem as a result of your sharing your concerns with him.

At this point, you are not only struggling with a low self-image, you are stressed out about your relationship with your husband. Your husband's actions have caused you to feel distant and alone.

There seems to be another aspect of what happened that is upsetting you as well. When you had mentioned your insecurities to your husband, you trusted him to know how to handle your vulnerable and personal concerns. You were relying on him as your confidant. When he now brings it up to you in an unexpected way, you feel like he is taking that confidence that you had in him and turning the tables. He is using the secret you shared with him back at you. You mentioned it to him for support and strength, not to turn the tables and constantly bring it up to you. Although your husband probably does not mean to be doing this, that might be part of what is bothering you.

Based on your husband's actions alone it is difficult to discern his motivations. He may merely be trying to be supportive. It is also possible that he is bothered by your weight. Your uncertainty about how your husband feels points to the fact that you have not yet had a direct discussion with him. You are left guessing about your husband's thoughts, but you don't really know what he thinks and why. In addition, you have not yet been able to tell your husband how you interpret what he is doing and how you feel about it.

It is important to restore the trust you had so that you can deal with this and other challenges as a united team. Share with your husband both how you feel about what he is doing and how he can be most helpful to you. Explain to him that although he might have your best intentions in mind when he brings up things pertaining to your fitness and diet, it makes you self-conscious about your weight. It is not only emotionally difficult, it puts pressure on you and makes it harder for you to lose weight. What you need most from your husband is the support and acceptance of yourself and your body the way it is. That will help you feel better about yourself and help you on your journey.

As you discuss your perspectives and discover more about how you each think and feel about this sensitive topic, you may be able to create a mutually satisfying approach to this issue going forward. Using this as an opportunity to make your relationship even stronger than before is a positive gain you can take away from this experience, even as you seek to lose (the weight).

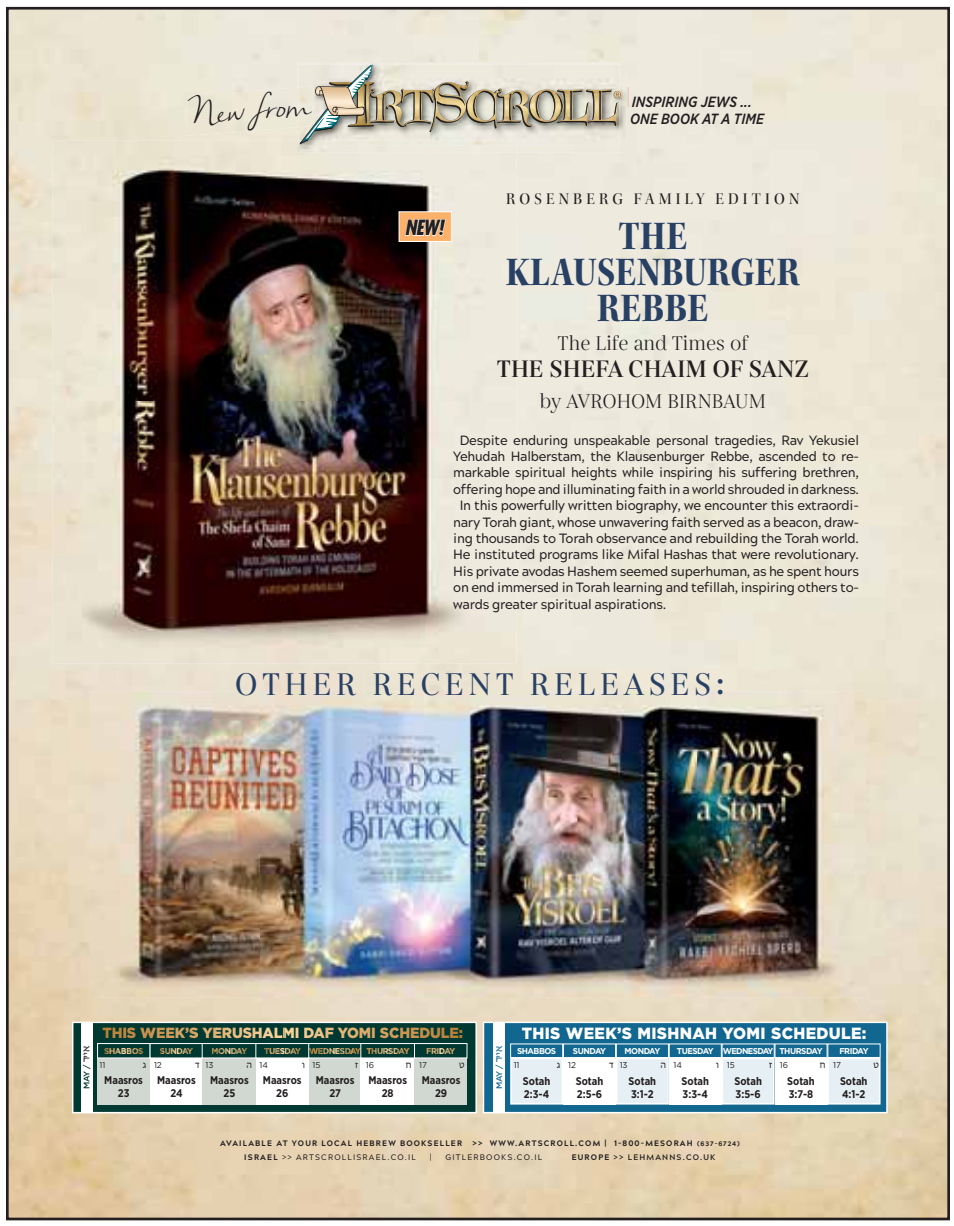
Wishing you much success,

Chani

New—Get clarity about dating. Free Dating Clarity E-course. Sign up at chanimaybruch.com.

Dr. Chani Maybruch is a social psychologist who has specialized in helping people build and enhance their relationships for over two decades. If you would like to improve your relationship with yourself, your loved ones, or others in your life, reach out to her at chanimaybruch.com.





Check Your Elbows



By Mordechai Schmutter

It's time for an *airline travel update*, which I run every few years or so (which is about how often I travel through the air) to let you know if things have changed in case you are one of the three or four people who fly less often than I do. This way, you know what to expect.

Don't expect a seat, for example. When I bought tickets for my most recent flight to accompany my wife to a kitchen-design convention, seats weren't included.

I mean seats were included, but not specific seats. You had to pay extra if you wanted to pick your seats, and I didn't really care which seats we would get as long as I would sit next to my wife, and I figured, based on past experience, that they would put us together. They did not. Apparently, other people paid extra so they could sit next to my wife. Yet they were nowhere to be found when it was time to schlep her stuff around the convention floor.

But when I got on the plane, someone was in my seat. I was going down the aisle, holding a ticket that said 29B, and I said, to a row full of passengers, "Is this 29?" And they said, "Yes." With no remorse. Like I'm asking a full row of people if they were a randomly specific number just so I could get my bearings and know if my row was coming up. They did not get the hint. I was kind of hoping the woman in my seat would say, "Oh, it's 29?" and then get up.

So what do I do? I could stand there and try to talk them out of their seat until the flight attendant comes over to find out why I'm having a fight with some people on an airplane, and meanwhile everyone coming down the aisle behind me would not be on the side of the person who's blocking the aisle just because he needs a seat. No one's on that guy's side. And also wearing a baseball cap on an airplane for some reason. The sun wasn't even up yet.

So I just walked to the back of the plane and told the flight attendant, and she went and asked the person point blank, and that person said that someone was sitting in her seat. So the flight attendant approached that person, who looked up at the flight attendant and said, "What seems to be the problem?"

See, this is why I can't be a flight attendant. I would have given the guy a parachute and pushed him out of the plane.

So at that point I walked to the very back of the plane and hung out in the kitchen because I didn't want to follow the flight attendant back and forth playing, "Who's sitting in whose seat? This Jewish guy wants to know."

She finally found me an unrelated seat, because it was getting late and the plane had to sit on the tarmac for 40 minutes waiting to take off already. It was a middle seat, obviously, between two people who B"H didn't know each other. But at this point it was late enough that they'd probably gotten excited that there'd be an empty space between them so they could stretch out, and by "stretch out" I'm speaking figuratively. I mean that they could each have the middle armrest, which they basically both used anyway. I felt like I was intruding.

The flight attendant actually thanked me for being so good-natured and non-pressuring about the whole situation and standing back and letting her handle it, and it would have been a nice kiddush Hashem except that I was wearing a baseball cap. So she had no idea I was Jewish.

So the flight was a little claustrophobic, to say the least, sitting between two people you don't know, and feeling too guilty about it to fight over either armrest. Not to mention that the person in the window seat gets to choose whether the shade is open or closed, and he was asleep, so you can guess.

Fun fact: Whoever falls asleep first gets the armrest. The pilot and copilot know this too, and it's a race between them as to who's gonna fall asleep first.

The highlight of the flight—and what kept me from going crazy—was that every seat had a screen in front of it that displayed an official program, like at yeshiva dinners, which shows you what to expect over the course of your flight. Mine said, "Departure < Snack < Arrival." Like that's it? That's the whole flight? That doesn't seem very long.

"Miss, are we there yet?"

"No, we haven't had our snack yet! We're circling the destination until everyone gets their snack."

The snack wasn't even kosher, so I had to get food from the bag between my legs without moving my elbows. This took half the flight. So yes, it was Departure < Snack < Arrival.

At least I think it wasn't kosher. I took a snack and looked for the hechsher and didn't see one, so I asked for the other option, and she handed it over, and that definitely had no hechsher. It was probably worse. And by then, it was too late to give it back to the flight attendant, so at the end of the flight I gave it to the sleeping guy next to me when he woke up. I figured that way I'd create some goodwill in case he got annoyed at me for not standing up immediately after the plane landed so we could stand for ten minutes with our necks crooked under other people's carry-ons.

"I'm not getting up yet. Finish your cookies."

The screen also had features that could tell me things like the plane's altitude and the destination, in case I wasn't sure. And so I don't keep coming to the front and asking these questions. I guess enough people were asking the flight attendant these questions that they just decided to put it on a private screen for each passenger.

"Excuse me, what's the altitude? And... What's the destination?"

Or maybe they provide this information so people can make awkward conversations with their seatmates about the altitude.

Mordechai Schmutter is a freelance writer and a humor columnist for Hamodia and other magazines. He has also published eight books and does stand-up comedy. You can contact him at MSchmutter@gmail.com.



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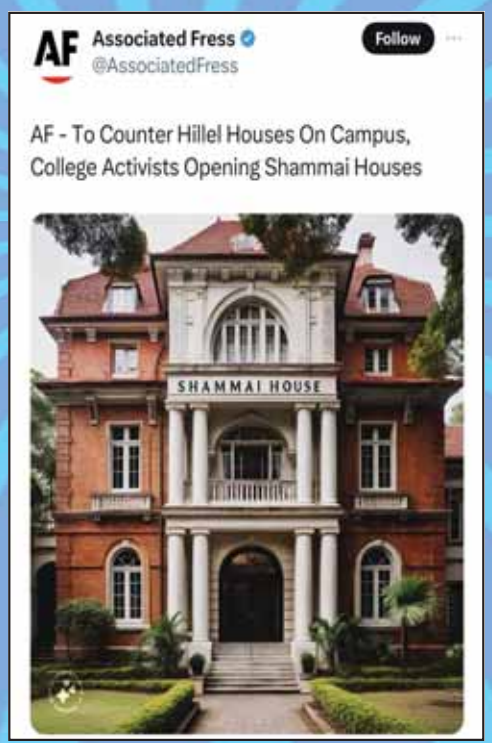
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FOOD & WINE LINK

The Bridge Turkish & Mediterranean Grill: Step Out of Your Comfort Zone

By Nati Burnside

Sam Eriske opened The Bridge Turkish & Mediterranean Grill in 2010, but it was very different back then. Situated in Long Branch and not kosher, Eriske had heard that he might have a wider audience if his place were kosher.

After Hurricane Sandy, Eriske moved the restaurant to Highland Park in 2015. It wasn't until 2019 that he took the plunge and became kosher. Since then, the restaurant has been popular with people driving from all over central New Jersey to get the only kosher Turkish cuisine money can buy.

So when a spot opened up on Cedar Lane in Teaneck in late 2023, Eriske jumped at it.

"It is our goal to bring genuine Turkish food to our kosher friends throughout New Jersey," said Eriske with confidence. "It was only logical to expand to Bergen County. We have been very gratified with the warm welcome we have received by our new neighbors in Northern New Jersey, Rockland County and New York City."

As it turns out, the kosher consumer is willing to travel quite a bit to experience a cuisine that they'd otherwise have no access to.

When I was invited to check out the new location in Teaneck, I immediately ordered the Bridge Combination. This is a platter of the five Mediterranean appetizers on the menu and it really is the best thing to order as soon as you sit down, as a kind of entry into the culture. There are three types of filo dough rolls on the platter. Sigara boregi are filled with a mixture of ground beef and lamb along with onions, tomatoes, parsley and green peppers. They'll remind you of Moroccan cigars, but with a deeper flavor due to the vegetables. Next are the avocado rolls which are stuffed with avocado (obviously), onions, tomatoes, cilantro, fresh peas and carrots. The smooth filling and the crispy dough are a nice compliment to each other. The last type was actually my favorite on the platter. The potato rolls may have had fewer ingredients than the others (just potato, carrot and onion), but the herbs used for seasoning made for a great flavor profile. These don't resemble the bland potato cigars you might be familiar with that are just mashed potatoes and dough.

The other two occupants of the platter are some falafel and mucver. The falafel will be familiar to you other than its unique shape. The Turkish version is more like a pancake, but it tastes just as good. Speaking of pancakes, Mucver are zucchini pancakes and they are really quite tasty with some shredded carrot and dill mixed in. Dipping any of these options with the tahini is up to you and your mileage may vary depending on personal taste. That said, they are all good on their own.

If you're looking for something else to share (a smart idea when trying new foods), order the Bridge Karisik Pide. A pide is a form of flatbread, even if it's not quite that flat due to the edges of the dough being folded over to prevent the contents from escaping. This one is stuffed with ground beef and lamb along with peppers and onions. It comes to your table sliced and is ideal for sharing. The soft dough can be either cut with your fork or lifted by hand and the filling packs a real punch of flavor.

Bridge Turkish & Mediterranean Cuisine
Sunday-Thursday:
11:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m.
Friday: 11:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
(201) 357-4405
BridgeTeaneck.com
461 Cedar Lane
Teaneck, NJ 07666
RCBC (Rabbinical Council of Bergen County)

Bridge Turkish & Mediterranean Grill
Sunday-Thursday:
11:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m.
Friday: 11:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
(732) 418-9000
BridgeRestaurantHP.com
315 Raritan Avenue
Highland Park, NJ 08904
Vaad Hakashruth of Raritan Valley

The most common entree on the menu is the doner kebab, otherwise known as the gyro. These are long flat strips of meat that are shredded off of a spit and served alongside a bunch of options to add to your bite. There's some chickpea rice, Turkish bulgur, house salad, a roasted plum tomato, sumac onions and cilantro, and some pita chips. All of those things can really enhance your meal as each one has a different flavor or texture for you to experience alongside the gyro. But you might just want to eat the gyro on its own as the unique flavor accomplished by grinding beef, lamb and herbs before searing them on the spit is something unique. The mouthfeel will also grab you as interesting with each strip being tender on one side with the crispiness on the other. It's their signature item for a reason.

If you want to lean into the lamb a bit more, I won't blame you. I'd suggest you order the Kuzu Tandir. Served on a similar type of platter as the gyro, this dish is essentially a pile of pulled lamb leg that is super tender from being baked until it falls off the bone. It is topped with some crispy onions which add a nice crunch given the soft meat. But while the platter comes with some of the same things as the gyro, there are two extra sides here that warrant mention. A healthy dollop of the house hummus and slices of charred jalapeño make this everything you want it to be. If you can get some lamb, onion and jalapeño on your fork and drag it through that hummus... mission accomplished. The spiciness of the pepper and the creaminess of the hummus make this one of the best bites I've had in a while. The hummus was so good that I contemplated ordering a full side of it even though I was in the middle of my meal at the time.

In case you have somebody in your party that might not be as adventurous, I suggest the Tavuk Plrzola. This is a dark meat chicken kebab that would be recognizable to almost anyone and is sure to please whoever eats it. The crispy exterior and tender interior make for a great combination and it also comes with some house salad, chickpea rice, Turkish bulgur and a roasted plum tomato. There's enough chicken for the most timid member of your group to just stay there if need be.

If you've left room for dessert, order the baklava. It's made in-house and is a great end to your meal, as the flavors in previous courses don't lean on sweetness. The dough comes out crisp and slightly crunchy, the sweetness of the silan is not overbearing, the cream is light and smooth, and the pistachio flavoring provides that signature nuttiness. Taking a bite of this will finalize your cultural experience.

Bridge is a great place to step out of your comfort zone and try something new. I'd suggest that you find your way there, whether it's in Teaneck or Highland Park.

Hopefully it isn't a Bridge too far.


Bridge combination


Karisik pide


Baklava


Kuzu tandir (Lamb leg)


Tavuk pirzola (Dark chicken kebab)


Doner kebab (Gyro)

Englewood Welcomes Dana's Pizza

By Nati Burnside

Lev Katzav is no stranger to a pizza oven. When he moved here from Israel, he had a bunch of different jobs, the first of which was learning everything there is to know about a pizza place.

"My cousin owned a [non-kosher] pizza place in the Village [Manhattan], and working there was something I started doing when I first came to America," Katzav said about his first step in the business. "I got my hands in the dough, but I also just tried to gain as much knowledge as I could about how to run a restaurant."





Like many restaurants, the pizza place fell on hard times during COVID and Katzav got out of the food industry entirely. But there was something that was pulling him back towards the restaurant scene and he ended up working with a few Mediterranean places for a little while.

"Working in a restaurant was just something that I missed and I found my way back into the business after COVID was over," said Katzav. "Soon I was working in another pizza place and that felt more like I was in the right place."



He even started helping other people to open pizzerias of their own. He would find an investor who was looking for some help, and he liked getting in the kitchen and starting a new business. But that wasn't quite enough.

"I really wanted a place of my own," Katzav said about his dream, while standing in it. "I wanted a place that belonged to me and my wife where we could make the decisions and be a part of a community."



Enter Dana's Pizza (46 East Palisade Avenue). Positioned on the main thoroughfare of Englewood (where Katsav and his wife now reside), the community's newest kosher establishment takes over the space that used to belong to a Ben & Jerry's scoop shop, which may have struggled since the company's public anti-Israel stance in 2021. Englewood didn't have a place that sold pizza by the slice, and Katzav thinks Dana's can fill that need. He believes that the foot traffic on Palisade should lead to enough customers walking through the door to justify the making of several types of house pies on a daily basis.

Dana's regular pies are 16 inches and they have a good roster of types to entice customers (Jewish and otherwise). Their Cheese pie is accompanied by a White (ricotta, mozzarella and parmesan), a Margherita (fresh mozzarella and basil), a Vodka (vodka sauce and parmesan), a Caprese (fresh tomatoes, fresh mozzarella and basil), and a Grandma (a square pie with parmesan). You also might walk in and find a pie that their chef has improvised on the spot, like one with jalapeño and red onion or a vegetable pie of some kind.

The logo for Dana's says "Premium Kosher Pizza," and that is something that Katzav is looking to build up to. He's trying to bring in a high-quality truffle oil so that he can make a white mushroom pizza with truffle oil. He has some other ideas that he also wants to test out, and they should be rolling out in the next few weeks now that Pesach is behind us.

Dana's has more than just pizza, though all of the other offerings are certainly secondary. The paninis are probably the next biggest attraction as the sandwiches are made fresh daily and can be bought either cold or hot, based on what the customer wants. They come in four flavors for now (Caprese, Feta, Pesto and Tuna) and have been a successful part of the menu thus far.

An interesting component of the menu is the pasta section. Dana's is not striving to be a regular pizza shop, so their pasta menu does not hold options like baked ziti or penne alla vodka. Instead, be prepared to order from a few options of cold pasta salad (like a feta/pesto and a tuna/veggie).

"We want to be a different kind of pizza place," Katsav emphasized. "We don't have french fries or a fryer at all. We want our menu to be filled with some options that might be a little healthier, and our goal is to use fresh ingredients whenever possible."

As you might imagine, salads will also be available at Dana's as they lean into Katsav's vision of a place that offers healthy options. But there will also be a little bit of added Israeli influence as bourekas will be joining the menu soon as well.

One thing that is sure to stand out on the menu is the dessert pizzas. Katsav has already started with one type—Eitan's Special Request is a pie made with nutella with the sauce and the toppings being slices of banana and a dusting of powdered sugar. While it certainly doesn't fall into the healthy category, it certainly is different from any local pizza joint.

With a grand opening to look forward to in the coming weeks, Dana's Pizza is up and running and early signs are that it will be a popular choice for those in Englewood and even a destination for those in the surrounding areas like Teaneck, Fort Lee and Tenafly.

Dana's isn't just looking to take advantage of the lunch crowd on Palisade. In fact, being on a street with so much foot traffic led to Katsav's decision to keep his place open later than any kosher pizza place during the week. The seating area can hold a dozen or so patrons, but there might be some outdoor options available as the weather gets nicer.



So whether it's getting delivery on a busy night or grabbing something quickly for lunch, Dana's Pizza will be available to serve anybody who walks through the door.

Dana's Pizza is open Sunday-Thursday, 11 a.m.-9 p.m.; Friday 9 a.m.-4 p.m., and Saturday nights from one hour after Shabbat until 11:30 p.m. Reach them at (201) 567-7200 or DanasPizzaNJ.com. They are under the strict supervision of the Rabbinical Council of Bergen County (RCBC).



Giddy's Restaurant Moves to Highland Park

By Harry Glazer



Exterior of Giddy's Pizza & Cafe.


Rabbi Dani Davis, standing, with Avi Berger.

It's been the talk of the town for months: "When will Giddy's open in HP?"

Giddy's Pizza and Cafe, a fixture in the East Brunswick community for over a decade, indicated in the fall that they were leaving their location on Route 18 and moving to Highland Park. It took a few months to get their new facility on North Fourth Avenue ready for their move; no small task when you're simultaneously still operating at full capacity in the "old" location.

They reopened in Highland Park for take-out on March 20 and for dine-in on March 25. The managers reported that the response has been exceptionally gratifying.


A sampling of dishes.

Giddy's benefits from a well-established reputation and a wide repertoire. Their menu includes a range of options in the starters, salads, fish, pizza, pasta, and sandwiches categories at affordable prices that invite families to eat in or order out.

Though my wife Fran and I had eaten at Giddy's in the past a few times, we just had to see how it had established a new vibe and an updated menu in its new setting. We enlisted our friends Cyndi and Avi Berger of Edison and went to the restaurant to sample their menu on April 9.

Between the four of us, we tried the following dishes: Pink Pasta, French Onion Soup, Truffle Mushroom Risotto, White Pizza, Southwest Salad, and Mushroom Onion Pizza.

We got to sample each other's dishes and we all agreed — the food was simply amazing. It's very fresh, very flavorful, and the portions are quite satisfying.


Kate and Steve Salit of Highland Park with their grandson Jordan.


Jordy and Rabbi Meir Lipschitz

I asked the mashgiach and manager Rabbi Daniel Davis why Giddy's decided to move to Highland Park. He told me that much of their customer base lives in Highland Park and the shopping center they were located in on Route 18 was going to be razed.

I inquired as to what were the most popular dishes at the restaurant. Davis told me they were the Truffle Mushroom Risotto, Crispy Sweet Potato Salad, Southwest Salad, Raritan Fries, Yeshiva Pizza, and the falafel wraps/pita/pizza.

Davis shared that the restaurant has been very pleasantly surprised with the response of the Highland Park/Edison community to their arrival. The volume of pizza orders and foot traffic has been truly remarkable and they've had to hire more counter help to manage all the orders.

Operations manager Joe Kurlantzick added that the restaurant has made a concerted effort to reinvent their menu for their new location. Teriyaki Salmon, which was a top item at the old location, is now accompanied on the menu by the Blackened Salmon. Similarly, the Ryders Fries, a top seller, now sits on the menu alongside the new Raritan Fries with Impossible Burger sauce.

He said that they have no microwaves in the restaurant since they cook everything fresh and bring in fresh vegetables every day. He seconded Davis' comments on the strong community response, noting that they sold 300 pizza pies on the first day they opened.

Not content to rest solely on my own impressions of the restaurant, I asked two other families who were in the eatery at the same time what they thought of their meals. Rabbi Meir Lipschitz, who was there with his wife Jordy, shared: "We had the Ryder Fries, Mushroom+Onion Slice of Pizza, and Blackened Salmon. We also took the kids there on Sunday (two days prior) and had fries, a falafel plate, and mozzarella sticks which were delicious. And I had been at the recent RCCS event as well, which was a very nice debut for the space and allowed for samplings of some excellent menu items.

"We really enjoyed our meal and are so happy to have another restaurant in town. The staff was very helpful and accommodating, and the salmon was the best we've had in years!"

Steve Salit stated: "My wife Kate and I had vegan pizza with pepper onion and mushroom toppings. Our grandson Jordan had a carb fest: Ryder Fries and Truffle Mushroom Risotto. We really enjoyed the pizza, Crispy Crust and everything tasted great. Jordan's opinion of his meal choices was 'kadosh'. That's high praise for sure!"

Giddy's Kosher Pizzeria/ Restaurant/Catering
17 North 4th Ave.
Highland Park
(732) 659-6898
giddyspizzeria.com
Sunday, 11 a.m.-8 p.m.
Monday-Wednesday, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.
Thursday, 11 a.m.-8 p.m.
Friday, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
Saturday, one hour after Shabbat ends-11 p.m.
Certification by Vaad HaRabanim of Raritan Valley.
Follow Giddy's on Facebook and Instagram

Harry Glazer, the Middlesex County Editor of The Jewish Link, can be reached at harryglazer615@gmail.com. In case you're wondering, he enthusiastically recommends that you try Giddy's Pizza & Cafe.

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KosherPalooza: An Unforgettable Kosher Culinary Adventure

(Courtesy of Fleishigs Magazine) On May 30, KosherPaloozza will take the Meadowlands Expo Center in Secaucus, New Jersey by storm for an all-day festival of feasting, entertainment and mingling with the pros.

KosherPaloozza is back for the second year after a sold-out event with over 4,000 attendees last year. Participants will be able to explore every corner of the innovative and ever expanding kosher universe. Attendees (and their appetites) are invited to a massive celebration of all things kosher with hundreds of food brands, cookbook authors, influencers and experts, all under one roof.

KosherPaloozza, the first-of-its-kind festival for foodies, will be hosted by Fleishigs Magazine and Powwow Events, and take place from 10 a.m.-6 p.m.. Tickets are on sale now at www.kosherpalooza.com.

The extravaganza will be packed with events like "Chopped"-style cooking competitions, cooking and mixology demonstrations, wine tasting classes, exclusive book signings with renowned cookbook authors, and informative panel discussions. Visitors are also welcome to hobnob with some of the top kosher creatives and influencers from across the globe. In addition, it wouldn't be KosherPaloozza without bites and sips from a wide range of exhibitors from restaurants and visionary startups to classic brands.



Among the exhibitors are more than 100 booths including: Tnuva, Bethel Creamery, Royal Wine Corp., Eden Foods, Flavor on Board, Loosiez, 7th Heaven, The Nuttery, Natural & Kosher, kosher.com, Tuscanini, Heaven & Earth, Yummy foods, Pelleh Poultry, Mehadrin, Liebers, Reisman's, Haus of Babka, Cinko, Recanati Kravy and so much more.

The lineup will include noted kosher cookbook authors and influencers Miriam Pascal Cohen, Melinda Strauss, Isaac Bernstein, Gad Elbaz (aka Chef Gaston), Ahuva Gottdiener, Micah Siva, Sol Dining and more, who will all be cooking up a storm. The "Chopped"-style contest will feature chefs and influencers competing and judging. Headliners including Chanie Apfelbaum, Elan Kornblum, Gabriel Geller, Sarah Lasry and Dani Klein will all host and toast, and there will be games like blind taste tests, hot sauce contests, and wine glass challenges. There will also be a panel of experts offering wine tastings, mixology demos and the "People's Choice" for best new product. Attendees will also hear from leading organizations including the Orthodox Union (OU) and Masbia.

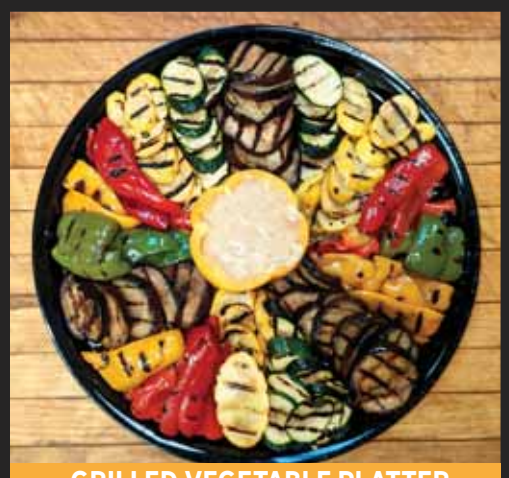
Attendance is limited to those 16 and up and those age 16-20 will receive a "no alcohol" wristband. Children under 2 may join parents in strollers.

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FOOD & WINE LINK

Sabich: For Yom Ha'Atzmaut or Anytime

By Sybil Kaplan, z"l

Here a recipe for Sabich was being prepared by Michael Shemtov and chef Stuart Tracy at the Butcher & Bee in Charleston and Nashville. Halabi's daughter also wrote a children's book called "Saba Sabich."

Sabich

4 servings

- 1 large baking potato
- Salt
- 1 eggplant in 2-inch slices
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 cucumber diced in 2-inch pieces
- 1 tomato diced in 2-inch pieces
- 1 large minced jalapeno
- 2 minced garlic cloves
- 3 tablespoons chopped cilantro
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley
- 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 4 thick, warmed pita breads
- 1 cup hummus
- ¼ cup tahini
- 4 large, sliced hard-cooked eggs
- 4 small, thinly sliced dill pickles

1. Preheat the oven to 425 F. Place potato in a saucepan with 2 inches of water and bring to a boil. Cook until tender, 20 minutes. Drain and cool and slice into ¼-inch thick slices. Season with salt.

2. Arrange eggplant on a rimmed baking sheet and brush both sides with olive oil. Season with salt and bake for 10 minutes until browned and tender.

3. In a large bowl, toss cucumber, tomato, jalapeno, garlic, cilantro and parsley with lemon juice and 3 tablespoons olive oil. Season with salt and pepper.

4. Cut off 2 inches from the side of the warm pitas to make openings in the pockets. Gently open the pitas. Spread the hummus on the bottoms with 1 tablespoon tahini. Layer potato slices, eggplant, egg and cucumber-tomato salad in the pitas along with some of the salad juices. Top with the pickle slices and serve.

Sybil Kapla, z"l, was is a Jerusalem-based journalist, lecturer, book reviewer, food writer, author ("Witness to History: Ten Years as a Woman Journalist in Israel") and contributor or author of nine cookbooks. She worked as a foreign correspondent for North American Jewish publications and created and lead walks in English in Machaneh Yehudah, the Jewish produce market.

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Appreciating Our Elders



By Nesanel Yoel Safran

When we're young, we can feel like we don't have much in common with older people, and maybe not much to learn from them either. But in this week's portion, God teaches us that older people deserve our attention—and our respect. They have a lot of life wisdom, and give us a connection to what were in many ways the greater days of the past.

In our story, we meet a kid who gets a new perspective on old age.

Something Old, Something New

I felt both guilty and relieved as I watched my parents begin to pack up our minivan. They were getting ready to visit Grandpa later in the afternoon at the old age home. As usual they wanted me to go along, but this time I told them I wasn't coming with them. My parents were disappointed, and I knew Grandpa would be too, but I just couldn't do it this time. I hated to admit it, but I just found old people so, you know, boring. I like things new and exciting, lots of action. And let's face it—old people are not like that at all. Besides, I had big plans. There was a special hi-tech exhibit at the science museum—talk about new and exciting—and my buddies and I had planned to go check it out. They had the latest computer equipment on display, and there was even supposed to be a robot that could clean a whole room—I could sure use one of those.

I got there first and waited for the other guys to show up. After a few minutes, something unusual caught my eye. It seemed like some celebrity or something arrived, because there was this old man being followed around by about a whole bunch of kids who couldn't do enough for him. One kid brought him a drink, another was carrying his coat, someone else brought him a chair, and even brushed it off before he sat down!

"He must be really big," I thought. Maybe he's a famous actor or some billionaire sports team owner. My pals hadn't shown up, so I figured I'd move closer and try to get a piece of the action.

As I got closer, I could see that the kids were from the local Torah school. I nudged up to one of them, and whispered, "Who is he?"

I guess I didn't speak clearly, because the kid gave me a funny look, and said, "I'm sorry—I don't know what you mean."

I explained, "I can see from the way you're all fawning over this old man that he must be someone important, like, you know, a celebrity. So who is he?"

The kid nodded his head, and I thought he was trying to cover up a smile. "Well, you're right," he said. "He's someone very important, but not like you think. He's our great-grandfather and almost 90 years old."

I didn't get it, and I guess the kid could tell because he went on to explain. "You see, we learned in our school how important it is to show respect for older people."

"Why?"

"Well first of all, anyone who has lived so long has seen and done a lot, and picked up a lot of life wisdom along the way. When I hear an older person tell a story about what life was like when he was our age, I feel like I'm getting a living history class. But more than that, we learned that the way God designed the world is that in each generation you go back, people were greater and wiser."

"But we have so many new things today that they didn't," I objected.

"Maybe they didn't have all the high-tech we do," he said, pointing toward the exhibit, "but they didn't need it—their brains were already high-tech. So when we get a chance to be with an elderly person, we do all we can to show him respect, and learn from him. Get it?"

Meanwhile the old man had started to get up from his rest and move on, so the kid apologized to me, and jumped up to follow him. I thought about what he said. I had never looked at it that way, but I had to admit, the kid made sense. Maybe old people did deserve more respect than they get.

I watched the "great-grandfather" make his way down the aisle, surrounded by his admirers, and thought about my own lonely Grandpa, and how I wasn't even making him important enough in my life to pay an occasional visit.

"Hey Jay, where have you been hiding?" called out one of my buddies from across the museum lobby. "C'mon, let's go and check out all the great new stuff."

"Sorry," I said. "Something's come up and I have to catch my parents before they leave. I've gotta go with them to see someone who may not be new—but is definitely great."

Nesanel Yoel Safran is a writer, chef and a teacher/student of Jewish spirituality. He blends these assorted vocations on his blog, "Soul Foodie," where you can join him on mystical cooking adventures and glean practical wisdom for the kitchen—and for living. https://soulfoodiecom.wordpress.com/



RYNJ second grader Akiva Blachman from Fair Lawn created this engineering marvel, a rocketship, in Boynton Beach while with his grandparents, Leslie & Elaine Srolovits.

JEWISHLINK
Linking Northern and Central NJ, Bronx, Manhattan, Westchester and CT

I ♥ YOU MOM

MONTHLY KIDS ART CONTEST
May Contest

Happy Mother's Day!
Send us an art project showing what you love about your mom, grandma, aunt, or other relative!

First Place will win a $50 Chickies gift card!
Second and Third Place will win a $25 Chickies gift card!

Chickies

Entries must be received by Sunday, May 26.
Winners announced in Kids Link in the May 30 Edition.

Email your artwork to
contest@jewishlink.news
Make sure to include your name, age, and city.

JEWISH LINK MONTHLY KIDS ART CONTEST: WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF THE PESACH SEDER?

Congratulations to our winners!

Zachy, Dayna, Hannah, Ella, Miri and Eliana, email dena@jewishlink.news to claim your Chickies gift card!

ZACHY, DAYNA, HANNAH AND ELLA HERCMAN, TEANECK. HERE IS OUR FAVORITE PART OF THE SEDER.





MIRI SCHULGASSER, AGE 9, TEANECK.



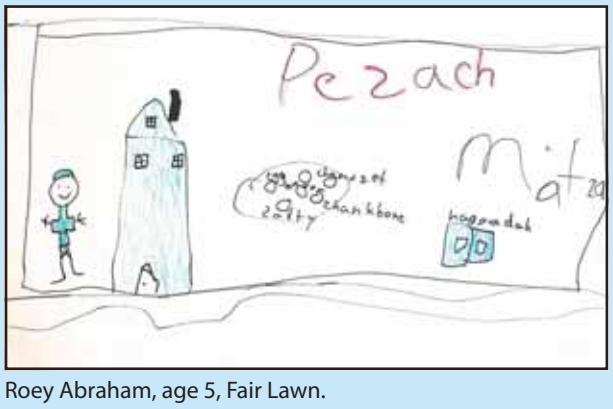
ELIANA MELNIKOV, AGE 10, FAIR LAWN.



Thank you to everyone who entered!



Adina Shapiro, age 11, Teaneck.



Roey Abraham, age 5, Fair Lawn.



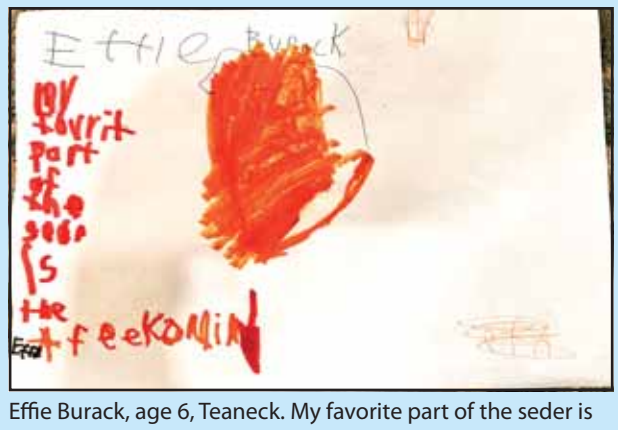
Arthur Lacher, age 8, Bergenfield. Jenga Kotel for L'shana Haba B'yerushalayim.



Yonatan Liss, age 6, Bergenfield.



Levia Sagi, age 10, Teaneck.



Effie Burack, age 6, Teaneck. My favorite part of the seder is the Effiekomen.



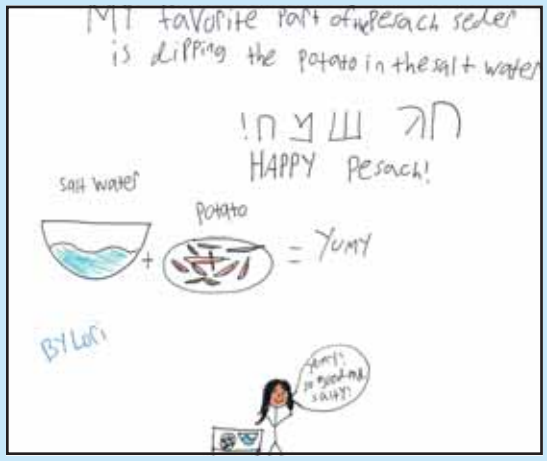
Ateret Block, age 6, Englewood. Search for the Afikoman.



Benny Maik, age 7, Bergenfield.



Jamie Miodownik, age 4.5, Fair Lawn.



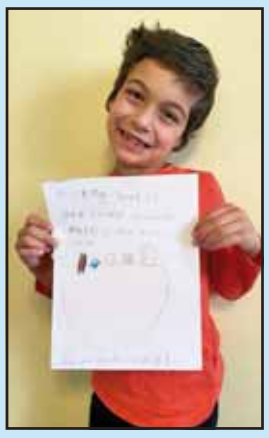
Lori Rotblat.



Nirtza Mayefsky, age 9, Elmwood Park.



Julie Remin, age 11, Ramat Bet Shemesh.



Sauly Miodownik, age 7, Fair Lawn.



Shalva Newman, age 5, Bergenfield. I like to eat matzah at the seder.



Rena Abraham, age 7, Fair Lawn.



Sarah Weinberg, age 11, New Rochelle.



Alana Weinberg, age 9, New Rochelle.



Noa Greenbaum, age 9, Teaneck.



Shayna Sagi, age 8, Teaneck.



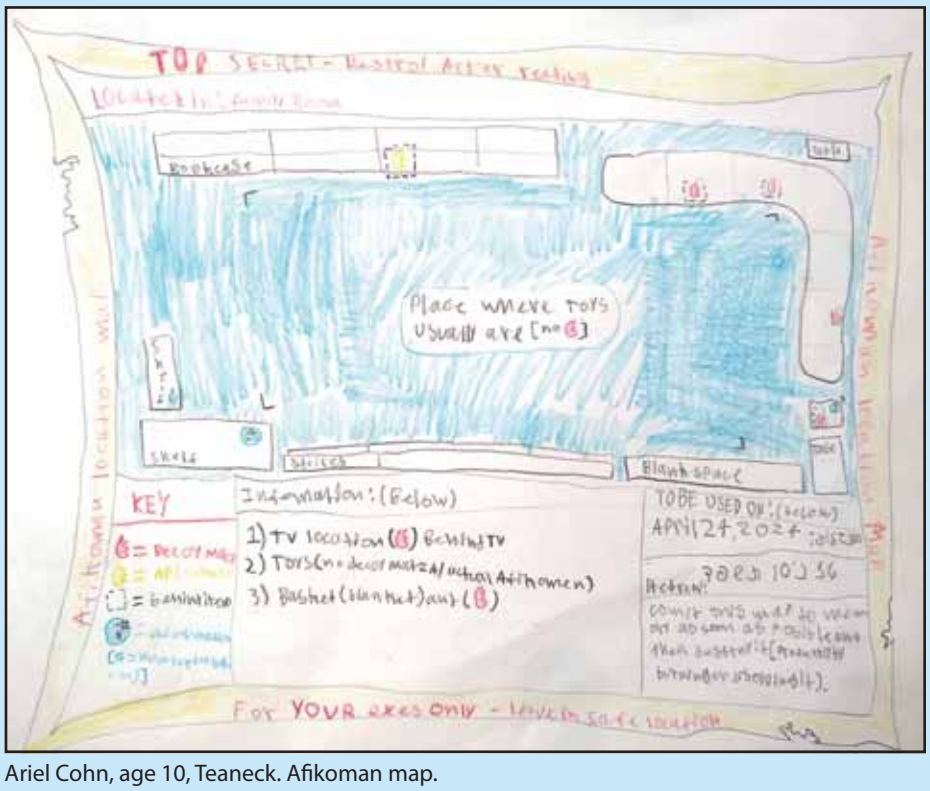
Ilana Newman, age 8, Bergenfield.



Yehudit Batts Henya (Josephine Perich), age 11, Teaneck.



Elisha Liss, age 7, Bergenfield.



Ariel Cohn, age 10, Teaneck. Afikoman map.



Chani Sagi, age 6, Teaneck.



Daphna Gottlieb, age 9, New Milford.



Levia and Shayna Sagi, ages 10 and 8, Teaneck. Magid.

Miller Brown And The Book of Cures

PREVIOUSLY: THE YEMENITE GOONS FIRE THEIR WEAPONS AT THE GOLEMS, WHO PROVE TO BE INDESTRUCTABLE AND KILL MOST OF THE REMAINING HENCHMAN. RABBI BROWN THINKS BLOWING THE QUEEN'S SHOFAR MIGHT WORK BUT THE HEAD GOLEM TAKES IT FROM HIM. THE LAST OPTION: RUN!



NEXT WEEK: TALIA FIGURES IT OUT!

Yoni Glatt Writer

Chappy Aguilar Artist

Yoni Glatt's

JEWISH SPELLING BEE

How many common words of 5 or more letters can you spell using the letters in the hive? Every answer must use the center letter at least once. Letters may be reused in a word. At least one word will use all 7 letters and have a direct Jewish connection.

Proper names and hyphenated words are not allowed.

Score 1 point for each answer, and 3 points for a Jewish word that uses all 7 letters.

Rating: 21= Good; 25= Excellent; 30= Genius



Answers on page 199

THE PARSHA CUFF-LINK

Kedoshim



By Martin Bodek

Hi everyone! It's good to be back. I missed you all. Depending if you're a parent or child, I hope you either got the afikoman present you wanted or didn't go broke during afikoman negotiations. Good times.

Now it's time to get busy with another round of World of Linkcraft. There are commonly two parshiyot this week and I've usually found cuff links that were relevant to both parshiyot; this time it's heavily weighted towards one because that makes sense. More hints, I'm not giving you.[*] Thanks for playing, and Shabbat Shalom!

[*] That's either me regressing to Brooklynese or it's Yodaspeak. You decide.

For years now, Martin Bodek has been wearing cufflinks themed to the week's parsha to stimulate conversation around the Shabbat table. Naturally, it begged for a wider audience and The Jewish Link seems like a perfect home — especially in name. Every week, we'll present the cuff links, and you tell us how it ties into the parsha of the week. Email your guesses, educated and otherwise, to thejewishcufflink@jewishlink.news and we'll publish the best and most creative answers a week later. Have fun!



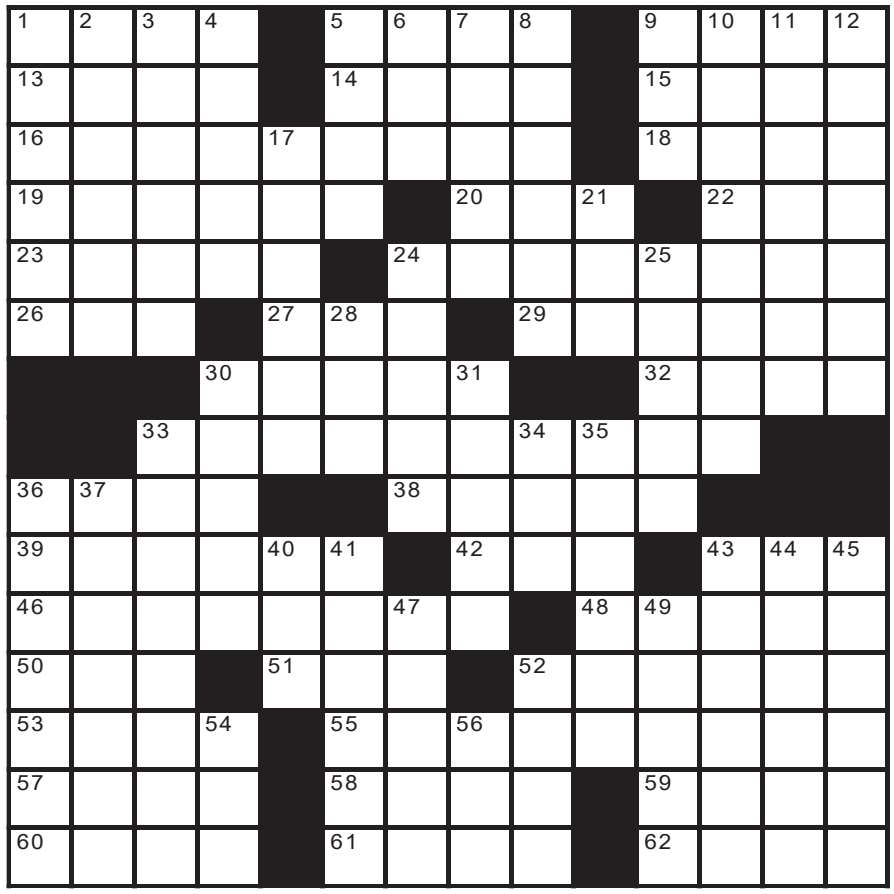
The Kosher Crossword

Answers will be printed next week.

Anatomical Notables

By Yoni Glatt,
koshercrosswords@gmail.com

Difficulty Level: Easy



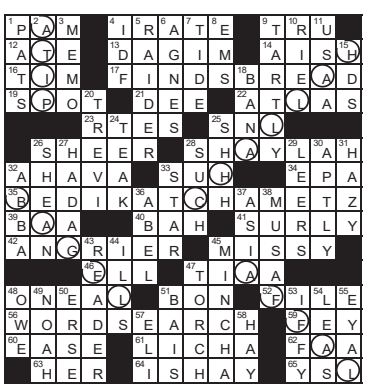
ACROSS

1. Approximately 1,600 feet, for the Brooklyn Bridge
5. Edinburgh girl
9. Some JFK guesstimates
13. "Leading With My Chin" author Jay
14. Important talmudic Rav
15. After-dinner confection
16. Notable Jerusalem locale often visited by foreign dignitaries
18. Actor Sharif of "Funny Girl"
19. Off the mark, as a throw
20. Alternatives to a 27-Across
22. Bigeye tuna, in Hawaii
23. Driving hazard, in winter
24. Notable Chaim Potok character
26. TLV search party?
27. Kind of comp.
29. 2001 Audrey Tautou title role
30. Promises
32. The Jewish High Priest wore several on his chest
33. Notable Jewish holiday treats
36. Rubik of "cube" fame
38. Finish in the top three, in the Olympics
39. Former Mets' star Céspedes
42. Beat or peace ender
43. Tsp., e.g.
46. Notable song by Shalsheles
48. Shemonah ___
50. Pub
51. Software for a 27-Across
52. Cause genetic anomalies
53. Pitchers' assets
55. What can be found in 16, 24, 33, and 46-Across...or an alternate title for this puzzle
57. "In ___ of..."
58. Jewish daughters
59. "The Wizard of Oz" surname
60. Bonanza vein
61. "___ Tikvah" (Benny Friedman hit)
62. French for "summers"

DOWN

1. Craftiest
2. Bits of wisdom
3. Singer Bocelli
4. Astronomical bursts
5. Dead finish
6. Pompeii coating
7. Enjoys (nachas)
8. Occasion where one 7-Down
9. Angsty rock genre
10. Buzz Lightyear's voice
11. Home of Angels
12. Contends
17. Scott Lang's superhero alter ego
21. Yeshiva alt.
24. Kayin and Hevel, e.g.
25. Princely, perhaps
28. Hit the shmorg
30. Important layer
31. Second aliyah
33. Like the drummer of Def Leppard, amazingly
34. "Jeweled" Israeli name
35. Like some exams and dates
36. Evaluate visually
37. Dawson who plays "Ahsoka"
40. A crowd, for Caesar?
41. Elitist
43. Har where the ark was parked
44. Courage and fortitude
45. Advanced-degree writings
47. United
49. Performance location
52. The Maharal's golem is one (so it would seam)
54. Basketballer Bird
56. Spanish for "two"

Last week's crossword answers



BPY





On Monday, May 6, Yom HaShoah, BPY hosted an assembly for middle school students, led by Morah Racheli Gothelf and the eighth grade students. This year's program was especially poignant and meaningful, as students understood that the Holocaust is not just an historical event, as the echoes of antisemitism reverberate in the world today. As part of the program, students sang "Ani Ma'amin," led by the new chazzan, Rav David Chayak.

The opening of the program set the tone for the day: "Today is seven months after October 7. World Jewry in general, and the Jews in Israel in particular, understand—even if it was for one day—what a holocaust looks like. Those who cannot tolerate our very existence raised their heads and said out loud, once again, that we have no right to exist, that we have no right to a Jewish state. As happened in the past, hatred and antisemitism is expressed in the streets. In the name of freedom of speech, intimidation and public expressions of hatred toward Jews and the State of Israel is allowed to happen, and many remain silent in the face of all this. Yom HaShoah is a day not only to remember tragedy; it is also a day to commemorate heroism. There were strong and proud Jews during the Shoah who stood up with a mighty stance against the Nazi decrees and their desire to wipe out the Jewish presence from the world. On October 7, terrorists tried to break the spirit of the Jewish people, and today we declare loudly and strongly—Never Again! This is our duty—we will never forget. Not 80 years ago, and not today. This is our moral obligation—and that of Jews the world over, the third and fourth generation from the Holocaust."

The students said how inspired and moved they were from this program, and that they will carry with them the never-ending message of zachor—remember—and aseh—do.

Yeshivat Noam







The Yeshivat Noam eighth graders presented their Yom HaShoah Living Museum including a play and presentations. The students spent months preparing for the event to honor the survivors of the Shoah. With the help of Rebecca Lopkin of Envision Theater and under the leadership of middle school social studies teacher Rabbi Jeremy Hellman, each student presented the life of a Holocaust survivor through art and creative writing as they documented the stories of survival. Additionally, the students rehearsed and presented a play re-enacting some of the struggles the Jewish people faced during the Holocaust.

JKHA





In JKHA middle school, Yom HaShoah began with a schoolwide Zoom, which set the tone for the day. Classes received profiles of survivors whose stories they shared with the class and kept them in mind as they went throughout the day. A solitary slideshow ran all day with victims' names and portraits movingly placed on screens at the front of the building next to the portrait of JKHA's namesakes and Holocaust survivors Joseph and Rae Kushner z"l.

In social studies classes, sixth and seventh graders explored Jewish resistance against the Nazis in all its forms, physical, spiritual, educational and cultural. Each student shared why they thought different forms of resistance were important.



All of middle school came together for a meaningful program, led by eighth graders that encouraged students to see themselves as part of the larger story, taking on the memory of those that were killed. They were tasked with combating forces of anger and hatred, protecting humanity and treating others with dignity and respect.

Yavneh Academy



Yavneh Academy students viewed the school's Torah scroll from Vyskov, Czechoslovakia, which was rescued from the Nazis and presented by the Class of 1985. The curtain for the Torah showcase is only raised once a year, on Yom HaShoah. Together with fourth grade students, Yavneh faculty member Azi Steiner sang a very moving song, "Place Where I Belong." The song tells the experiences and feelings of a Torah scroll in the first person, from its creation by a scribe in Kiev and regular use there in a shul, to its eventual resting place in an American museum.





JEC





Yom HaShoah v'HaGevura included a meaningful program for third to fifth graders. Fifth grade students embarked on a three month long research project learning about many of the brave righteous gentiles during the time of the Holocaust. After reading "Number the Stars" by Lois Lowry, students were put in groups to research and create a multi-faceted presentation featuring their rescuers. They will be sharing their work with their families on Wednesday at their Righteous Gentiles presentation. In preparation for this presentation and in honor of יום השואה, fifth graders presented one aspect of their work to their fellow students in third and fourth grade. Rabbi Beer and Morah Reich gave an introduction which included a קל מלא and communal תהלים.

The Shefa School




On Yom HaShoah v'HaGevura, Holocaust Remembrance Day, the Shefa School commemorated the significant moment in history and tremendous loss of life that was the Holocaust. Throughout the day, students visited the Ulam Hazichronot, Hall of Memories. This year, the room included candles with the names of victims, a slideshow and music showing Jewish life before, during and after the War, and a Wall of Eternal Flames, which featured names of victims and survivors related to members of the Shefa community. In addition, there was a section dedicated to the Righteous Among the Nations, non-Jews who risked everything to help Jewish people during the Shoah. At the end of the day, the community came together for a tekes, ceremony. Eighth graders whose families were directly impacted by the horrors of the Holocaust recited names of their family members who were killed during the Shoah before lighting candles on behalf of the community.

The Shefa School also welcomed Holocaust survivor Aron Krell to address the fifth through eighth grades, emphasizing the significance of honoring the victims of the Holocaust and safeguarding their memories. Through Aron's touching narrative of his life before the war, the four years he spent in the Łódź Ghetto, surviving Auschwitz-Birkenau, Sachsenhausen and Mauthausen concentration and labor camps, and eventually being placed in a displaced persons camp, the students gained insight into his life and experiences. They were reminded that the Shoah is not only a solemn occasion but also an opportunity to honor and celebrate the lives of their ancestors and all Jewish people. Near the end of his presentation, Aron highlighted why he tells his story. He said, "I will never forget and I will never forgive. But life has to go on and it is very important for all of you to try and remember; and when you have children, to tell them the whole story. We have to remember what happened to the rest of the Jews." He also very importantly added that "...but I do not hate because a person filled with hate cannot be a whole person and enjoy life to the fullest."



It was an exceptionally meaningful day. Thank you to Mr. Krell for sharing your story and the reminder that we must never forget.

RPRY







RPRY students commemorated Yom HaShoah with age appropriate programs across the school. Throughout the school day, classes paused at different moments to hear the names of school-community family members who perished in the Holocaust read over the loudspeaker. Students in fourth and fifth grade came together to hear the story of Simcha, a young boy who survived the ghetto and dedicated his life to bringing simcha to others. They participated in an interactive presentation with proud RPRY grandparent Tom Goldstein, who recently translated the memoirs of his mother, a Holocaust survivor, into English. Students were fascinated by her story which ended with the king of Sweden personally responding to her plea for help. Middle school students watched a multimedia performance of seventh and eighth grade students directed by Rebecca Bick that combined acting, song and video that weaved together multiple scenes and stories surrounded by the sefer Torah who wanted to return to the place where he belonged. The performance took place on six stages set to a background of a candlelit room and featured lessons of hope, survival, continuity and strength. Students demonstrated unity as they ended the performance singing "Acheinu" and "Ani Maamin" culminating a meaningful program that is sure to have a lasting impact.

RYNJ



Yom HaShoah at RYNJ was meaningful and educational. After an inspiring Shacharis, students in grades four through eight attended different presentations that focused on personal experiences during the Holocaust. Fifth grade rebbe Rabbi Abish, in his powerful storytelling style, shared the experiences of his mother and father, who both survived the Shoah, with the fourth and fifth grades. The middle schoolers attended a presentation entitled "Their Memory Still Shining," which profiles six individuals and their stories. Narrated by the students themselves, they learned all about these heroic individuals and their incredible lives.





Heichal HaTorah





This past Yom HaShoah, Heichal talmidim and faculty were privileged to hear from Holocaust survivor, Marlit Wendel, as she shared her harrowing experiences during the war, which resonated deeply with the young men. Following her talk, a selection of talmidim and rebbeim who are descendants of survivors shared their own personal family stories, further enriching the day of remembrance. In light of the resurgence of antisemitism around the world, the commemoration of the experiences during the Shoah carried even greater significance, serving as a stark reminder of the persistence of antisemitism and the unique form of hatred that applies to the Jewish nation throughout time. Following the presentations, the talmidim viewed first-hand accounts from Holocaust survivors, which was particularly meaningful after seeing the events of October 7 and the convulsions of antisemitism in cities and college campuses throughout the world since then. The program concluded with a moment of silence observed by the entire yeshiva as the siren sounded in Israel, followed by the recitation of Tehillim. The commemoration served not only as a day of remembrance but also as a call to action against the antisemitism that threatens our community daily. The significance of the day was palpable to all in attendance.

SAR Academy






SAR Academy commemorated Yom HaShoah as a school community. In the morning students in grades three through eight gathered on the steps for a powerful program which began with the sound of the siren and a moment of silence. Students were privileged to welcome survivors, children and grandchildren of survivors to light nerot zikaron in memory of the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust. Together they recited Tehillim and Kel Maleah for the lives lost and sang "Ani Ma'amin" and "Acheinu" in unison—an uplifting moment for everyone. The program concluded with "Hatikvah," transitioning towards a hopeful future. Throughout the day, students had the unique opportunity to hear the personal stories of the Shoah directly from the visitors. The Middle school also participated in a beautiful program which combined singing and text to help bring to mind those who perished. Every hour, students and faculty stood in silence to honor and remember the six million as the names of SAR family members who perished in the Holocaust were recited. Thank you to all who participated in the tekes and spoke to the students.

RKYHS





Yom HaShoah programming at JKHA middle school and RKYHS placed an emphasis on perpetuating the memory and legacy of all those that perished and survived the Holocaust, with the increased understanding post October 7 of this incredible responsibility, and the importance, now more than ever to "Never Forget." RKYHS gathered as a school to commemorate the day. Student representatives came up one by one to share the stories of their relative's survival, reinforcing the message of how our ancestors live on through their descendants. The students then exited through the Seryl and Charles Kushner Holocaust Memorial Garden as "Ani Maamin" was poignantly played on the violin. Students had the opportunity to reflect on the importance of the day during an afternoon class period and put it in context with the current news.

WTA



Part of WTA's commemoration of Yom HaShoah this year included a special visit from Celia Kener, a survivor of the Shoah. Mrs. Kener shared with the middle school about her experience being hidden in plain sight, as the child of a couple of British expatriates living in Poland. These tzadikim sheltered the young Mrs. Kener, and also hid her mother in their barn, despite the extreme danger of such an arrangement. Be"H Mrs. Kener and both of her parents survived the war, reunited afterward and made their way to America. Her pride in having not just survived, but grown to raise three Jewish children of her own and a slew of Jewish grandchildren shone through her presentation, and WTA students are eternally grateful to Mrs. Kener for sharing her story.

Ma'ayanot

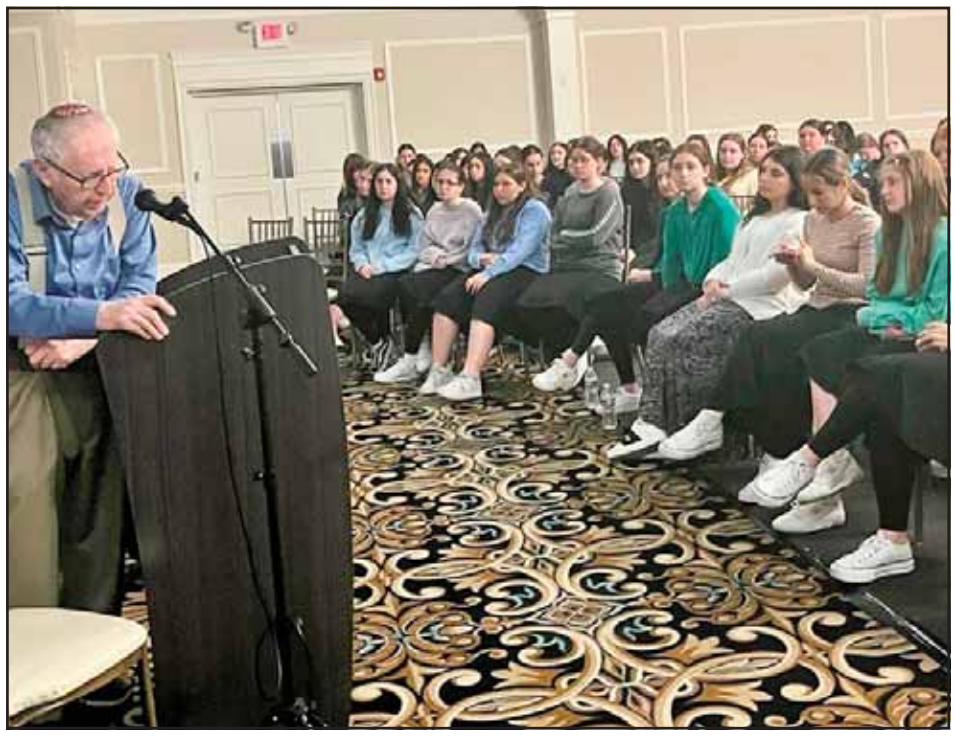






On Yom HaShoah, Ma'ayanot students and faculty joined together to remember the six million Jews that perished. Following a candlelight procession, students were honored to hear from Holocaust survivor Hadassah Carlebach, great-grandmother of senior Dina Kalmanson. Mrs. Carlebach shared her story of courage, perseverance and strength and reminded them about the power of emunah and believing in Hashem.

Naaleh



Naaleh commemorated Yom HaShoah with a poignant presentation. Holocaust survivor Michael Epstein shared his incredible journey from Łódź, Poland, to a Siberian work camp, and later to a displaced persons camp before he came to America at the age of 13.

Following his moving testimony, six students and faculty members shared stories of their own family members affected by the Holocaust and lit yahrzeit candles in their memory. The entire school then stood in silence as the sound of a siren honored the millions of lives lost.





TABC





On this year's Yom HaShoah, TABC students, parents and faculty had the privilege of hearing from Emil Fish. Mr. Fish is a Holocaust survivor from Bardejov, Slovakia, and has dedicated his life to Holocaust education. He founded the Bardejov Jewish Preservation Committee dedicated to the education and commemoration of the Holocaust in Bardejov, as well as to the restoration of the still-standing Jewish structures in the town which once had a thriving Jewish community but today is home to no Jews. Mr. Fish also spearheaded and endowed a Holocaust and genocide studies graduate school program at Yeshiva University, published a book and, most recently, produced a film based on the story of Bardejov during the Holocaust. In a Q&A format with TABC senior Yaakov Beyda, Mr. Fish relayed his experiences growing up, surviving the war in hiding, being caught by the Gestapo, and being sent to Bergen-Belsen. He reminded the audience of how quickly the world forgets "Never Again" and the importance of continued education. Students, parents and faculty were moved by Mr. Fish's recollections of his and his family's experiences in not only surviving but starting anew. An ensemble of TABC students then performed a moving rendition of "Ani Maamin" to conclude the program.

Moriah Commemorates Yom HaShoah

CONTINUED FROM P. 110

in an important conversation around antisemitism.m.

Seventh grade students joined as well for the shared candle lighting ceremony and to hear directly from Esther Elefant, a Holocaust survivor.

Esther Elefant, a Moriah great-grandparent, openly shared her memories of her childhood in Romania and her journey to freedom. She told of being a young girl who was beaten by a neighbor solely for being a Jew. Her family was split up and forced to hide. When asked about her faith in HaShem, she articulated that it is continuous and that it was what her mother and father taught her as a child.

When telling of her enjoyment scrolling through (Instagram?) "Reels," Esther connected with the young audience. She spoke of what she sees online and shared her dismay as to the state of antisemitism today. She stated: "All of my fears of being a Jew as a little girl have resurfaced now as I am afraid once again." Her message to the students was to seek the truth, continue to be educated and not allow propaganda and social media to influence them negatively.

Afterwards, the eighth grade students completed a learning activity on justice as it relates to the Holocaust. Some key questions students explored together were: Is it possible to achieve justice for the crimes committed during the Holocaust? Is spreading hateful lies that influence people to harm others a crime against humanity? To end the program, the students discussed modern challenges on college campuses, freedom of speech and the concept of working together.

Students in both schools left the program with an appreciation of the importance of Holocaust education in the modern world. One Moriah eighth grader remarked: "The partnership program with Walter T. Bergen reminded us that as Jews we need to educate others on the atrocities of the Holocaust to ensure these stories are not forgotten or ignored."

Rachel Schwartz is a Moriah teacher and the Holocaust education coordinator.

WTA



Each year, as part of WTA's commemoration of Yom HaShoah, the fifth graders undertake a research project about their own Jewish history. Each student, together with their parents, chooses an artifact that represents their Jewish heritage. The students research the origin and history of the item, and how it is used or revered now, in order to tell a story about their family through the lens of the artifact. This year's submissions ranged from an old-fashioned Omer counting tool to family sets of Tefillin, and so much more.

Tenafly Chabad Academy





Tenafly Chabad Academy had the profound privilege of hosting John Nanasi, a cherished grandfather to three students and a resilient Holocaust survivor, on the solemn occasion of Yom HaShoah. With reverence, he shared his journey through the war with our fifth through eighth-grade students, offering a firsthand account of resilience and courage amidst the darkest of times.

Born in Hungary in 1937, Mr. Nanasi's was separated from his parents, who were stranded in America due to the war's upheaval. He found refuge with his grandmother in Pest, Hungary at the age of 2. As the Nazi regime tightened its grip, he was entrusted to the care of non-Jewish individuals, navigating the treacherous landscape of survival under constant threat.

During the war Mr. Nanasi's aunt was abruptly taken to Auschwitz, yet miraculously survived to be reunited with her family after the war. Mr. Nanasi himself endured the hardships of post-war displacement, attending a Red Cross camp for orphaned children. Amidst uncertainty, his parents orchestrated a daring plan for his reunion with them in America. At the tender age of 9, after seven years of separation, he was "kidnapped" from a trip to Austria the Red Cross took them on, and put on a plane to America where he was reunited with his parents.



Mr. Nanasi's poignant narrative served as a profound lesson in empathy, courage and the indomitable human spirit. They were captivated by the living history before them, understanding the solemn responsibility of preserving and passing on his legacy. They were able to ask him questions and hear answers directly from a holocaust survivor.

As the last generation with the privilege of hearing firsthand from Holocaust survivors, Tenafly Chabad Academy was humbled by the opportunity to host Mr. Nanasi, ensuring that his story remains for generations to come.

RKYHS and JKHA Address Campus Protests







As students returned to campus after break, RKYHS and eighth graders had the opportunity to learn together and address the anti-Israel protests that spread to college campuses and dominated the news cycle over the Pesach break. In separate age-appropriate presentations, the eighth graders and RKYHS students were engaged, inspired and empowered to be educated advocates and ambassadors for the Jewish people, as well as reinforce ways to display their Jewish pride. RKYHS faculty and guidance members presented to the RKYHS students about what is happening, why it is happening and why it is important. The details included information about BDS, the history of antisemitism, the rights afforded by the First Amendment and strategies to manage one's emotional wellbeing.

Eighth graders participated in a meaningful and informative learning module with JKHA Middle School Principal Mrs. Levenson. Over the course of the session, students learned about the vitriolic, antisemitic rhetoric being used and behavior being displayed by student protestors, limiting Jewish students' ability to feel safe on their own campuses, and offered action points for what they as eighth graders can do to show support and proudly represent Am Yisrael.

Yeshivat He'Atid Has Poetry Slam







The second graders finished their poetry unit with a slam! They enjoyed a jazzy, cool poetry cafe where they read their poems—with a very hip vibe! The event was topped off with sparkling grape juice and a cafe snack. Here's to our very swell sonneteers.

Yeshivat Shalshelet Visits Sephardic Congregation of Fort Lee







Shalshelet students joined Rabbi Acoca for a trip to his shul, the Sephardic Congregation of Fort Lee. They learned about the history of Rabbi Acoca's family and the shul, and said Birkat Ilanot, a bracha on a blossoming fruit tree.

BPY Celebrates 'Poem in Your Pocket' Day





Right before Pesach break, the BPY third grade students celebrated Poem in Your Pocket Day. After spending the month learning about poetry and figurative language the students had the opportunity to write their own poems or pick favorites that they read to share with the class. Some parents from the class shared recordings of themselves reading poems of poems they also love to read. How special it was that a parent shared a poem about hot cocoa which was the exact drink students drank to celebrate the day!

Yavneh Gan Gardens And Learns





Yavneh Academy Gan students were excited to come back to school and check on their wheat, garlic, potato and sage crops in the GrowTorah garden. Farmer Shimon also taught the students about the Omer, the piles of barley that would dry out in the sun between Pesach and Shavuot.

Chabad of Tenafly Learns About Sefirat HaOmer




Preschoolers at Lubavitch on the Palisades are counting the days until the next holiday. Children returned from Pesach vacation to start creating mountains to set the stage for learning about Matan Torah and Chag Shavuot. Each day they count the Omer and are making their very own Sefirat HaOmer charts to bring home.

Moriah Nursery Has Moroccan Mimouna





The Moriah School nursery students celebrated the conclusion of Pesach with a vibrant Moroccan Mimouna party! Everyone enjoyed making and eating the delicious mofletta together which they ate with butter, honey and chocolate spread. The air was filled with the aroma of freshly prepared treats as the students sang and danced together. Nursery students always have so much fun embracing the rich culture of the Moriah family!

RYNJ Welcomes Students Back





After a meaningful and fun-filled Pesach break, RYNJ students return to school ready and excited to continue their learning.

Yeshivat Noam Publishes



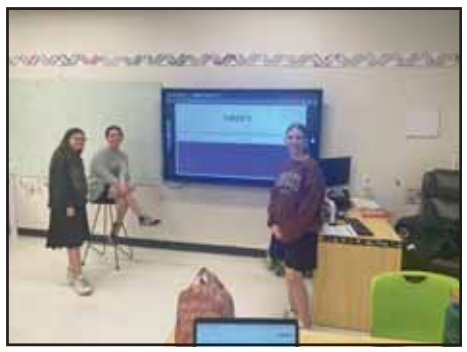
Yeshivat Noam second graders celebrated their animal books with a publishing party. Classes visited each other to show their books and enjoy a special treat.




Yeshivat He'Atid Learns About the Amidah







The seventh grade Halacha classes completed the Sulamot textbooks Al HaTefillah. As a final project, each student choose a bracha from the Shemoneh Esrei, set forth whether it is a bracha of praise, request, or thanks (the three type brachot in the Amidah) explained its sequence in the Shemoneh Esrei and shared thoughts on why the bracha is meaningful to them. He'Atid is so proud that students have the tools to pray a meaningful Shmoneh Esrei three times a day.

Yeshivat Shalshelet Is Ready for Pesach







Shalshelet students prepared for Pesach in so many ways, including a matzah challenge. They made matzah in class with an 18-minute timer, and had a model Seder. They also made Pesach-themed glass plates for their Seder tables.

Ramaz Upper School Visits Penn

Ramaz administrators continue to visit alumni on various college campuses to support them, to learn with them and to learn about their very unique and challenging experience this year. Recently, Rabbi Kenny Schiowitz visited alumni at the University of Pennsylvania to offer a shiur at the Hillel and to shmooze with students.



Tenafly Chabad Academy Visits 'Family of Caring'







Tenafly Chabad Academy students paid a visit to their friends at Family of Caring in Tenafly. They delighted the residents with a medley of timeless Passover tunes and proudly displayed their personally crafted Passover Haggadahs. Together, they journeyed through the 15 steps of the Passover Seder, revisited the narrative of Passover and delved into the significance of symbolic foods. The residents relished the crispy matzah, four cups of wine, the pungent bitter herbs and the tradition of dipping vegetables into salty water.

RPRY Builds Roller Coasters in STEM



Middle School science at RPRY has many strands. Part of the learning includes an online textbook, note taking and investigations, many of which are hands on. However, what is probably the highlight for both seventh and eighth grade science classes are the weekly STEM activities known as Marvelous Mondays for eighth graders, and Wondrous Wednesdays for seventh graders. These projects which take one to three weeks to complete are generally partner or group activities which encourage cooperation and collaboration. The most recent Wondrous Wednesday project was to design and build a roller coaster made of nothing but cardstock and scotch tape. The students showed an amazing amount of creativity and perseverance as they made and tested their coasters. While some were immediately successful, others needed some tweaking to ensure that the marble rolled down the track did not stop or jump off. Their results were truly inspiring.





Ma'ayanot Hosts Rep. Josh Gottheimer







Ma'ayanot was honored to host Representative Josh Gottheimer's press conference last week where he discussed the importance of the federal homeland security grants that act to protect religious institutions across the state and nation. Gottheimer also spoke about his bipartisan legislation, the Antisemitism Awareness Act, that supports students facing antisemitism. Under his leadership, the legislation passed overwhelmingly in the House of Representatives. With the alarming increase in antisemitism in Bergen County, students appreciated the opportunity to show the congressman gratitude.

Ma'ayanot also welcomed Sarah Wallace, a reporter for NBC News, who covered Representative Gottheimer's press conference and then visited with students to discuss the rise in antisemitism. Wallace's visit and interview with the students aired last week on NBC Nightly News.

JewBelong Inspires RKYHS Students



Just prior to the Pesach break, RKYHS students had the privilege of hearing from Archie Gottesman, founder of JewBelong. Gottesman provided background on JewBelong, which was founded to provide practical and relatable resources for disengaged Jews to reconnect to Judaism. When the world changed on October 7, Gottesman knew that the task at hand was no longer just to focus on the joy of Judaism and shifted her focus to target the antisemitism that began raging throughout the country. Through blunt, relevant and purposefully edgy messaging, JewBelong targets antisemitism through billboards in public places, in cities large and small across the country, in addition to billboard trucks driving around. JewBelong's easy-to-digest messaging aims to reach a world and population that continues to receive its news and information through soundbites and headlines.

Students were enraptured with Gottesman's dynamic and relatable presentation and were inspired to take the message to heart of being proud Jews, but also knowing their task at hand to fight antisemitism and use their voices to effect change, no matter how big or how small.





Bruriah Caps Off Year of Toameha





Last week, Bruriah High School culminated a beautiful year of Toameha programming, a monthly Bruriah Erev Shabbos tradition. The Toameha program highlights the spiritual components of Shabbos in the form of zemiros, learning, and divrei Torah, and complements them with delicious Shabbos food. For last week's final Toameha program, students focused on the words of the first Ani Maamin, "Shehaborei yisborach shimo hu borei umanhig...," and discussed the primacy of Hashem and His role in creation, specifically as it relates to the Day of Rest. After gaining appreciation for these immortal words, they then sang "Ani Maamin" together kumzitz-style. They finished up the event with delicious cholent and deli roll.



Students Shulamis Miller and Rosa Miodownik have been enthusiastically spearheading the Toameha program for the past two years as they feel that an extra Erev Shabbos boost is crucial to appreciating the special day. "We pay so much attention to the physical aspects of Shabbos preparation," explained Miller, "It's so important to prioritize spiritual preparation as well."

As students reflect on another successful year of Toameha, they are grateful for the infusion of kedusha that the program provided students with in school, thus enabling them to spread the kedusha at home.

Naaleh Alumnae Gather for Pre-Pesach Inspiration





In the lead-up to Pesach, Naaleh hosted an incredible evening for alumnae at Rabbi Aryeh Wielgus's home. The event featured a delicious dinner and inspiring shiurim by Dr. Danielle Bloom, Naaleh's Tanach department chair, and Rabbi Yosef Loewy. It was a beautiful opportunity for local alumnae, and those visiting from Eretz Yisrael, to reconnect, ensuring the relationship between Naaleh and its alumnae remain vibrant and enriched by learning.



MTA Student Is National Merit Winner



MTA is delighted to announce that Pinchas Rosenfeld '24 has been named a National Merit Scholar. To those who know Pinchas, this is not at all surprising, as he is an excellent student with outstanding scores on standardized tests. But those who remember October of 2022, when MTA administered the PSAT to Pinchas' class, should indeed be surprised. Pinchas missed the PSAT, as he was sick with COVID-19, and since the PSAT is also the NMSQT (National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) and Pinchas did not take it, then he should have been disqualified from the competition.

Fortunately for Pinchas, his parents and MTA's College Guidance Office worked to save his candidacy for this scholarship. National Merit offers what they call "alternate entry" into the scholarship competition for exactly this circumstance, when a student "does not take the PSAT/NMSQT because of illness, an emergency, or other extenuating circumstance, but meets all other requirements for NMSC program participation." MTA helped Pinchas appeal for alternate entry under this provision, and when he demonstrated his excellent grades and scores he became, in turn, a semifinalist, finalist, and now a winner.

The lesson here is that although there are strict rules for qualification for scholarships and other academic recognitions, the organizations that administer them are frequently aware that sometimes exceptions are appropriate. Students who believe that their circumstance warrants special consideration, therefore, should work with the College Guidance office at their school to determine their eligibility and what the process is to file an appeal. At least in Pinchas' case, a path was found and he was able to seize the opportunity.

Heichal HaTorah Hosts Annual Alumni Shabbaton





This past month, over 50 Heichal alumni gathered at the Camelback Resort in Tannersville, Pennsylvania for an exciting reunion shabbaton, enjoying a weekend with their rebbeim and fellow alumni. Talmidim gathered for a memorable and meaningful weekend of bonding and friendship, catching up, discussing their growth in learning over the last several years, reflecting on their yeshiva experience, and considering their plans for their future. The rebbeim who joined the talmidim for Shabbos, which included Heichal's Rosh Yeshiva Rav Aryeh Stechler, Rav Pesach Skolnick, Rav Aryeh Westreich, Rav Dovid Comet, Rav Daniel Schwechter and Rav Avi Rosalimsky, remarked on how well the talmidim were doing, noting the palpable energy and excitement among them. After a full Shabbos during which the rebbeim and talmidim reunited and bonded together over inspirational divrei Torah, ruach-filled davening, singing and shmoozing, the weekend concluded with a melava malka and spirited dancing in signature Heichal style.

SAR High School Students Give Back at Chesed Night

By Ezra S. and Ananya S., SAR seniors







SAR's recent Chesed Night proved that the possibilities to do good are endless at SAR High School. Chesed in SAR takes on many different forms. No matter which clubs students choose to participate in, there is room for everyone and everything when it comes to chesed at the hive.

Chesed opportunities include the KCI Food Pantry, advisory trips to Manhattan Children's Center and POTS, and numerous chesed clubs like DOROT, Community Connections and Music Vs., which works with the elderly, Breakfast Run, Hearts & Homes for refugees, and Learn to Be.

We have had the opportunity as this year's Chesed Council co-presidents to expand chesed opportunities and make them more accessible for the SAR community to do chesed in their daily lives. We wanted the chesed to be both enjoyable and meaningful.

We hosted Chesed Night in order to highlight different organizations: Yachad, BeLev Achad and Zaka. We both felt connected and grateful to these organizations and wanted to give back.

We wanted Chesed Night to be fun but also meaningful and therefore had many different chesed activities people could partake in. Some of the stations featured were: kickball and circle time with Yachad members, Pesach packing for fallen soldiers' family members where we wrote individualized notes to the families to go along with a bottle of wine, Cookies for a Cause where we baked and sold brownies and cookies, a pre-Pesach car wash, packing in the KCI Food Pantry, packing necessities to be distributed on the next Breakfast Run and more.

It was incredible to see how the SAR community showed up on a Thursday night with one goal: to do as much chesed as possible. We're super proud and grateful to everyone who contributed to this truly meaningful event.



Nitzanei Noam Cleans Cars for Pesach





Splish splash! Nitzanei Noam students had a blast cleaning their toy cars and the morahs' real cars for Pesach. Not a crumbs was found.

Cheder Yaldei Menachem Holds Key for Success





As is customary the week after Pesach, CYM made traditional challah with a twist—they added a key. This special challah is known as shlissel challah or key challah, and serves as a reminder that Hashem holds the keys to our livelihood. Although everyone must diligently do their part, this shows recognition that everything is ultimately a gift from Hashem. People ask Him to unlock His treasure box and bless them with healthy sustenance in a gracious way. This integral, life-lesson was experienced in a practical way. As children made their challah, they pushed in a key while shaping it. Some children even designed their challah to look like a key! What a meaningful experience with a lifelong lesson.

Gan Henel Is Back





Pesach feels like forever ago but Gan Henel is so happy to have everyone back!

Anshei Lubavitch Recites Birchat Ha'ilanot




Anshei Lubavitch students have been stopping by the fruit tree in their school's field to recite birchat ha'ilanot. They were so excited to make the special, once a year, bracha on the trees during the month of Nissan.

Gan Yavneh Has Outdoor Fun





The yeladim were so happy to be back at Gan Yavneh after Pesach and enjoying the warmer weather on the playground. They are excited for all of the fun events coming up this spring.

JEWISH SPELLING BEE Answers (puzzle on page 189):

Jewish Answer- TREIFAH (TEREIFAH). – Here is a list of some common words (Yes, we know there are more words in the dictionary that can work, but these words are common to today's vernacular)- AFFAIR, AFTER, AIRFARE, FAIRER, FAITH, FARTHER, FATHER, FATTER, FEARER, FEATHER, FERRET, FIFTH, FIFTIETH, FITTER, FRATE, FREER, FRIAR, FRITTER, HEFTIER, HEIFER, HEREAFTER, IFFIER, RATIFIER, REFER, REFEREE, REFIT, RIFER, TAFFETA, TARIFF, THEFT, THIEF,THRIFT, THRIFTIER, TREIF (TRAIF). Questions/comments/compliments- email Yoni at koshercrosswords@gmail.com

The Humble Toast Sportstar Of the Week: Dahlia Bressman

By Jewish Link Sports Desk



The Jewish Link and The Humble Toast would like to recognize Dahlia Bressman as this week's Sportstar of the Week. The 14-year-old eighth grader at the SAR Academy is the goalie on the SAR girls hockey team. The Sting got off to a great start this season—3 and 0—with Bressman in goal. Dahlia told The Jewish Link, "I love reading The Jewish link weekly and the sports section always inspires me to try harder as a goalie." Dahlia and the Sting hope to continue on their winning ways when the playoffs start next week.

Dahlia, happy birthday and congrats on being recognized as this week's Sportstar of the Week! Who is your role model and why?

My role model is Henrik Lundqvist because he was a goalie for the New York Rangers, just like I am a goalie for my hockey team. I am inspired by him because he was an incredible goalie who won MVP several times, and never gave up even at difficult times. He had a lot of determination and was able to successfully thrive in one of the most competitive hockey leagues.

What is your favorite sport?

My favorite sport to play is floor hockey because I enjoy that the game is fast paced, exciting and involves a lot of teamwork. I also love watching basketball because I like seeing the players' strategies, quick reflexes and energy during an intense game.

What is your pregame routine?

Before my games I usually stretch for five minutes, do about 30 knee drops and have my teammates shoot on me.

What is your greatest sports accomplishment?

One of my greatest sports accomplishments was winning three hockey games so far this season with a lot of crazy saves.

Who is your favorite athlete?

One of my favorite athletes is Kevin Durant. He is a phenomenal basketball player with great talent. His famous quote "Hard work beats talent when talent fails to work hard" inspires me because when I first started playing sports I wasn't the most talented, but I knew that if I practiced hard enough, I would play well.

What is your earliest sports memory?

When I was little, my dad and I used to play basketball every Shabbos.

What is your favorite thing to do when you are not playing sports?

When I'm not playing sports I enjoy baking, hanging out with friends and watching TV.

What is the best thing about being a Sportstar?

The best thing about being a Sportstar is feeling proud of yourself after a tough game. It is rewarding when my teammates congratulate me for my hard work after playing.

The Humble Toast Star of the week will receive a $25 gift card to The Humble Toast. Please send nominees for an upcoming The Humble Toast Jewish Link Stars of the Week to Sports@jewishlinknj.com.

RPRY Girls Soccer Meets Rutgers Women's Team



RPRY girls soccer team with their coach, Felix Urban. (CREDIT: SARA WELNER)



RPRY girls soccer team members (in front) with Rutgers University Women's soccer team members, at a local bowling alley. (CREDIT: SARA WELNER)

By Sara Welner

Rabbi Pesach Raymon Yeshiva (RPRY) created their first girls soccer team in the spring of 2022 thanks to the dedication of Coach Felix Urman. He has made it a priority from the beginning to not only build the players' individual skills but also their teamwork through activities outside of practice such as movie nights and hikes.

During the recent Passover break, he met with the players in the local park for skill building and then took them on a fun outing to a bowling alley for some team bonding time. Coincidentally, the Rutgers Women's soccer team arrived at the same bowling alley for the very same reason! The Rutgers players offered encouragement and inspiration to the RPRY team as they head into the playoffs. The RPRY Panthers finished the regular season first in their division after winning their first seven games in a row.

Waterwaze Swim Academy Gets You Ready for Summer

One of the benefits of living in Rockland County is how accessible pools are. Many of us have friends or neighbors who are willing to share. Maybe you're not lucky enough to know the 'right people', but still get invited to pool parties or go to the bungalow colony for the weekend. Practically every camp offers swimming on a daily basis, and many have seasonal trips to waterparks. Swimming is a great activity that provides fun for the whole family. It offers numerous benefits, including sensory input, muscle tone and strengthening, and helps with focus. The problem is that drowning is the sixth leading cause of death worldwide for children aged 5-14 years. Statistically speaking, if you both own a gun and have a swimming pool in the backyard, the swimming pool is about 100 times more likely to kill a child than the gun is. Every year in the United States, there are over 4,000 fatal unintentional drownings. Having been in the industry for over 15 years, Waterwaze Swim Academy has made it our goal to train parents, therapists, and educators in what to look for when hiring a swim instructor. Over the next few weeks, this column will address the 10 most commonly asked questions about swimming lessons.

WATERWAZE
SWIM ACADEMY
551-775-2745
waterwazeswimacademy.com

What's the best age to start swimming lessons?

Unfortunately, there's no clear-cut answer to this, and as with many swimming-related questions, the short answer is that "it depends." For example, I had a client who started lessons with her child at 5 months old because she had a pool in her backyard. Even with all the proper safety features in place, she knew that most of their summer afternoons would be spent by the water and wanted to ensure that her child was safe in case something happened. Some parents start their kids at a young age for other reasons including sensory integration and increasing muscle tone. Parents tell us that as a result of swimming lessons, their kids have learned to focus better and listen to directions.

I took a training course in Portland, Oregon, where it was very trendy to sign up for infant swimming lessons as an extracurricular activity. Some questions to take into consideration when deciding how young you should start teaching your child to swim are: Do you have a pool, or exposure to a pool? How much time and money are you willing to invest? What are your goals? Do you want your child to be safe in deep water—or to have perfect strokes?

Another factor to think about is which camp you're sending your child to and making sure to do research on their swimming program. The Department of Health only requires that camps provide one lifeguard for every 25 children. For older groups who are strong swimmers, this might be enough. But for young kids this ratio can border on dangerous. If your child is attending a camp with a large pool and minimal lifeguards, it's imperative that they are deep water safe prior to the advent of the camp season.

Along a different vein, in order to end drowning, we need to make sure that all adults learn how to swim. That way, they will truly understand the importance of passing this life skill to future generations—something that is hard to comprehend if it's something they themselves avoid out of fear or discomfort.

Next week we'll talk about how many lessons it will take for your child to learn how to swim.

Stay wet and stay safe!
Swimcerely yours,
Zahava

Zahava Shapiro is the owner of Waterwaze Swim Academy, based in Monsey. At Waterwaze, we teach swimming to all ages, from 4 months to 99 years old using a gentle approach that prioritizes comfort over skill. Instructors are trained in Total Immersion, Infant Swim, and Swim Angelfish methods. Waterwaze swim instructors specialize in people who have been traumatized or affected by a negative experience with water. We believe every person is capable of learning how to swim. You can reach Waterwaze at 551-775-2745

Y.M.S.S.A

Yeshiva Middle School Sports Association

Girls Hockey Standings Hockey

Team	Wins	Loss	OTL	Ties	Points
Ramaz	6	1	0	0	18
Yavneh	6	1	0	0	18
Noam	4	1	1	1	15
Kushner	4	2	0	1	14
SAR	3	3	1	0	10
RPRY	3	4	0	0	9
WDS	1	6	0	0	3
Moriah	0	7	0	0	0

6th Grade Boys Basketball Standings

Division 1

Team	Wins	Loss	Winning Percentage
He'Atid	7	1	.875
RYNJ	6	2	.750
Noam	4	4	.500
Yavneh	2	6	.250
BPY	2	6	.250
Moriah	1	7	.125

Division 2

Team	Wins	Loss	Winning Percentage
MDS	7	1	.875
Ramaz	7	1	.875
SAR	2	6	.250

Division 3

Team	Wins	Loss	Winning Percentage
Hillel	8	0	1.000
JEC	4	4	.500
Kushner	2	6	.250
RPRY	0	8	.000

6th Grade Girls Basketball Standings

Division 1

Team	Wins	Loss	Winning Percentage
He'Atid	7	1	.875
RYNJ	6	2	.750
Noam	4	4	.500
Yavneh	2	6	.250
BPY	2	6	.250
Moriah	1	7	.125

Division 2

Team	Wins	Loss	Winning Percentage
MDS	7	1	.875
Ramaz	7	1	.875
SAR	2	6	.250

Division 3

Team	Wins	Loss	Winning Percentage
Hillel	8	0	1.000
JEC	4	4	.500
Kushner	2	6	.250
RPRY	0	8	.000

Boys Soccer Standings

Division 1

Team	Wins	Loss	OTL	Ties	Winning Percentage
SSBC	8	0	0	0	1.000
Noam	6	2	0	0	.750
He'Atid	5	3	0	0	.625
Yavneh	4	4	0	0	.500
Moriah	4	4	0	0	.500
BPY	0	8	0	0	.000

Division 2

Team	Wins	Loss	OTL	Ties	Winning Percentage
Kushner	8	0	0	0	1.000
JEC	4	4	0	0	.500
RPRY	3	5	0	0	.375
JFS	0	8	0	0	.000

Division 3

Team	Wins	Loss	OTL	Ties	Winning Percentage
SAR	7	1	0	0	.875
Ramaz	6	2	0	0	.750
MDS	4	3	1	0	.500
WDS	4	4	0	0	.500
Kinneret	4	4	0	0	.500
WTA	1	7	0	0	.125
PEDS	0	8	0	0	.000

Girls Soccer Standings

Division 1

Team	Wins	Loss	OTL	Ties	Winning Percentage
RPRY	7	1	0	0	.875
Moriah	7	1	0	0	.875
SSBC	5	3	0	0	.625
Noam	5	3	0	0	.625
Kushner	3	4	0	1	.429
He'Atid	3	5	0	0	.375
BPY	2	3	1	2	.333
Yavneh	0	7	0	1	.000

Division 2

Team	Wins	Loss	OTL	Ties	Winning Percentage
WTA	8	0	0	0	1.000
Ramaz	5	3	0	0	.625
Kinneret	5	3	0	0	.625
MDS	3	5	0	0	.375
PEDS	1	7	0	0	.125
SAR	0	8	0	0	.000



MYHSAL

Playoffs as of 5/8/2024

Boys Volleyball Standings

Western Conference

Team	Wins	Loss	Winning Percentage
RAMAZ	6	0	1.000
SAR	5	0	1.000
TABC	4	2	.667
FRISCH	3	3	.500
HESCHEL	1	5	.167
KUSHNER	0	6	.000

Boys Soccer Standings

Western Conference

Team	Points	Wins	Loss	OTL	Ties
KUSHNER	9	4	0	0	1
TABC	9	4	1	0	1
FRISCH	8	4	0	0	0
RAMAZ	8	4	2	0	0
SAR	4	2	4	0	0
WESTCHESTER	3	1	2	1	0
JEC	2	1	4	0	0
MTA	0	0	6	0	0

Boys JV Soccer Standings

BJV

Team	Points	Wins	Loss	OTL	Ties
SAR	16	8	0	0	0
FRISCH	12	6	1	0	0
NORTH SHORE	8	4	2	0	0
TABC	8	4	2	0	0
HESCHEL	8	4	3	0	0
KUSHNER	5	2	3	1	0
HAFTR	5	2	3	1	0
DRS	4	1	3	1	1
RAMBAM	1	0	6	0	1
YDE	0	0	5	0	0

Boys Tennis Standings

Western Conference

Team	Wins	Loss	Winning Percentage
RAMAZ	4	0	1.000
SAR	3	0	1.000
HILLEL	1	0	1.000
FRISCH	2	1	.667
HESCHEL	1	1	.500
TABC	1	5	.167
KUSHNER	0	2	.000
MTA	0	3	.000

Boys Varsity Softball Standings

Western Conference

Team	Wins	Loss	Ties	Winning Percentage
HILLEL	2	0	0	1.000
HEICHAL HATORAH	3	1	1	.750
FRISCH	3	2	0	.600
TABC	4	3	1	.571
SAR	3	3	0	.500
MTA	0	5	0	.000

Boys JV Softball Standings

Western Conference

Team	Wins	Loss	Ties	Winning Percentage
HILLEL	2	0	0	1.000
HEICHAL HATORAH	1	1	0	.500
FRISCH	1	2	1	.333
TABC	1	4	1	.200

Girls Varsity Soccer Standings

Western Conference

Team	Points	Wins	Loss	OTL	Ties
FRISCH	14	7	0	0	0
KUSHNER	10	5	0	0	0
MAAYANOT	10	5	1	0	0
HESCHEL	8	4	2	0	0
SAR	6	3	5	0	0
BRURIAH	2	1	4	0	0
RAMAZ	2	1	6	0	0
NAALEH	0	0	8	0	0

Rabbi I Poleyeff Girls Softball Standings

Western Conference

Team	Points	Wins	Loss	OTL	Ties
FRISCH	4	0	0	1.000	0
HILLEL	3	0	1	1.000	0
NAALEH	3	1	0	.750	0
BRURIAH	1	1	0	.500	0
ILAN	2	3	0	.400	0
MAAYANOT	1	2	1	.333	0
SAR	0	4	0	.000	0
KUSHNER	0	3	0	.000	0

Girls JV Soccer Standings

GJV

Team	Points	Wins	Loss	OTL	Ties
FRISCH	12	6	0	0	0
SAR	10	5	1	0	0
NORTH SHORE	8	4	3	0	0
MAAYANOT	6	3	3	0	0
CENTRAL	4	2	3	0	0
KUSHNER	2	1	5	0	0
WESTCHESTER	0	0	6	0	0

Girls Hockey Standings

Western Conference

Team	Points	Wins	Loss	OTL	Ties
SAR	12	6	0	0	0
RAMAZ	11	5	0	0	1
FRISCH	10	5	1	0	0
HESCHEL	10	4	2	0	2
MAAYANOT	7	3	2	0	1
KUSHNER	7	3	3	1	0

Girls Tennis Standings

Western Conference

Team	Wins	Loss	Winning Percentage
FRISCH	3	0	1.000
SAR	2	0	1.000
HESCHEL	2	0	1.000
HILLEL	2	1	.667
KUSHNER	1	1	.500
ILAN	1	3	.250
RAMAZ	0	2	.000
MAAYANOT	0	4	.000

Boys Baseball Standings

Western Conference

Team	Wins	Loss	Ties	Winning Percentage
FRISCH	3	0	0	1.000
SAR	3	0	0	1.000
HILLEL	1	1	0	.500
TABC	1	2	0	.333
JEC	0	1	0	.000
MTA	0	2	0	.000
KUSHNER	0	1	0	.000

FCCJBL 2024 Season Opens in Stamford

By Judy Berger

On Sunday April 14 at Scalzi Park in Stamford, Connecticut, the Fairfield County Connecticut Jewish Baseball League (FCCJBL) celebrated its opening day. FCCJBL is a Jewish community youth baseball league open to boys and girls pre-k through grade six living in lower Fairfield and Westchester Counties. All games are played on Sundays at fields in Stamford. According to their website, "We play on Sundays to allow our league's players and families to enjoy Shabbat." The league has a long history as a synagogue youth baseball league in Fairfield County. Beldotti Bakery in Stamford provides weekly refreshments.


Little league baseballers getting signed swag from Mayor Simmons.


FCCJBL batter at the plate.


Maccabee teammates warming up for their FCCJBL game.

For this year's opening day, the participants arrived early, received their uniforms, met their coaches, sang Hatikvah and played ball. Due to a scheduling conflict, Stamford Mayor Caroline Simmons was on hand for the following Sunday, April 21 games to throw out the ceremonial 'first pitch.'

This year, the league has 110 players registered between the ages of 3-12. This year, the league expanded to add a fourth division for three- and four-year olds. The other three divisions are: Pre-K for the four and five year olds; T-Ball/minor division for kindergarteners and first graders, and the Majors for the second-sixth graders. In each of the divisions, the coaches stress the basics of the game and the spirit of being on a team. This season, there will be two teams in the new three/four-year-old division (the Knishes and the Sufganyot), two teams in the T-ball division (the Matzah Balls and the Falafels). The biblically named T-Ball division teams includes the Angels, the Kings the Maccabees, and the Tribes. The geographically named teams in the Majors division are Judea and Samaria. Also new for this season, the sixth graders from the Majors will help coach the Pre-K division.


2024 FCCJBL players, parents and Stamford Mayor Caroline Simmons.

On Father's Day, June 16, after the season's final game, the league will celebrate with an award ceremony and a dairy brunch where each participant will be presented with a trophy. In addition, each participant can purchase a pack of their own baseball cards.

"The league teaches basic skills, developing each kid's knowledge of the game and ability to hit and field," explained League Commissioner Ari Goldstein. "You have a whole range of kids from 4-12 years old. You may have a 10 year old who has never picked up a bat before or have a 7-year-old who is really good; it's a big mix. You're teaching kids the basic skills, how to catch the ball, base running, how to swing and hit the ball. Our main thing is sportsmanship. That's really what we want to see. By end of the season, the goal for our players is to be comfortable hitting the ball and having a basic knowledge of the game. Some kids really develop and some kids kind of stay the same, but we just want them to have a basic understanding of the game. We are a recreational league; it's just about having fun as opposed to being competitive."

Special for the 2024 season, the league will be partnering with the New York Mets. On Sunday, July 14, when the Mets take on the Colorado Rockies, the FCCJBL will be having a league outing to Citi Field. Prior to the game, the FCCJBL players and coaches will be allowed on the field to take a picture and run the bases. During the game, the Jumbotron will welcome the Fairfield County Connecticut Jewish Baseball League. Goldstein noted, "It's really cool, we got a lot more signups this year due to the scheduled outing. One parent noted, my kid didn't want to play baseball but he is a huge Mets fan, so we signed him up."

To learn more about the FCCJBL visit their website at https://fccjbl.org

Bergen County Flag Football Plays at Metlife


The La Cucina Di Nava Seahawks post game smiles.


The Humble Toast Lions talk it over during halftime.


The La Cucina Di Nava Bills had a great time at MetLife.


The Burger Boss Steelers soaking up the MetLife experience.


Isaac Stone of the Burger Boss Jets handing off the ball to teammate Abe Reich at MetLife Stadium.


Coaches Shmuel Ash and Shua Last having fun with their sons, Joseph and Judah of the La Cucina Di Nava Rams, on the field.


BCFL Co-Commissioner Rabbi Avi Rosalimsky and Noam Mirkahni, Coby Shatzkes, and Eitan Carmi of the Chopstix Dolphins enjoy a great day.


Sammy Rotenberg, Charlie Goldshor and Ben Keshner had a great day at MetLife.


The Burger Boss Giants feel at home in MetLife.


(l-r)t: Eli Zamir, Isaac Zamir, Ollie Goro.


The La Cucina Di Nava Falcons celebrate the win.


The La Cucina Di Nava Giants bring the victory home to MetLife.

Ironman World Championship Nice 2023: Part 2



By David Roher

No Shabbos observant Jew had ever competed at the Ironman World Championships and I was about to get that shot. But first ... I had to get here.

I opened my email at 5 a.m. and saw, "Hi David, Congratulations! You are now ready to finalize your registration for the 2023 Ironman world Championship in Nice, France..."

I stood in disbelief. This was really happening. I was going to worlds. I woke my wife, Janet. It was 5:15 a.m. and we were both jumping and exclaiming, "We're going to worlds! We're going to worlds!"

And that's when the world came crashing down around me...

Well, not exactly. I went to work, keeping in mind that I had just hurdled the one obstacle that was keeping me from my dream of going to the world championships. I knew that when moments like these happen, I pivoted from worry to elation and my endorphins ramped up to a 1,000.

(So?)

So, that part of my brain that filters my thoughts to my mouth gets run over by my excitement.

(Like when your wife said about you, "Get on board, get out of the way or get run over?")

Worse. My OCD gets ramped up and I'm liable to say anything that comes to mind.

(Anything?)

This used to be an issue before.

(How big an issue?)

Robin Williams level.

(How do you still have a job?)



The Ironman bike course that scared me due to its elevation. (CREDIT: DAVID ROHER)

I've trained myself to notice the signs of this euphoria and pause before I start speaking.

(How do you do that?)

I pause, and listen to how my thoughts might sound to someone not in my head.

(Like me?)

Like you. There's a flowchart in my head.

(That sounds uncomfortable.)

It folds up.

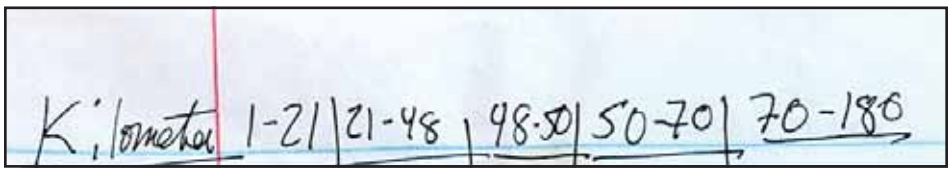
(Oh, OK.)

But the chart is a step-by-step of options on how to proceed based on the reactions I get when I speak.

It's similar to the scene in the first "Terminator" movie when Arnold uses a drop-down menu of options of responses to questions.

(Why do you do this?)

Because when I get excited my OCD brain starts to play connect the dots.



The coffee stained chart I devised that no matter how I twisted my math I could not find an extra 10 minutes to make it off the bike course before being disqualified. (CREDIT: DAVID ROHER)

(The dots?)

My son Eric calls it a "neurotypical" thing. It's like when Rabbi Bashevkin gives a class and I want to tell him how my mind made a connection to every single example he mentioned during those 30-minutes.

(You become "Michael" from the show "The Office.")

It's more like Sheldon from "The Big Bang Theory."

If you have ever driven from Teaneck to Fort Lee, up Fort Lee Road, that's 9% ... for only ¾ of a mile!

I sat down and graphed out the sections of the 112 miles of biking. I had to reach the top of the mountain by 1 p.m. or I was done.

(How far into the course was that?)

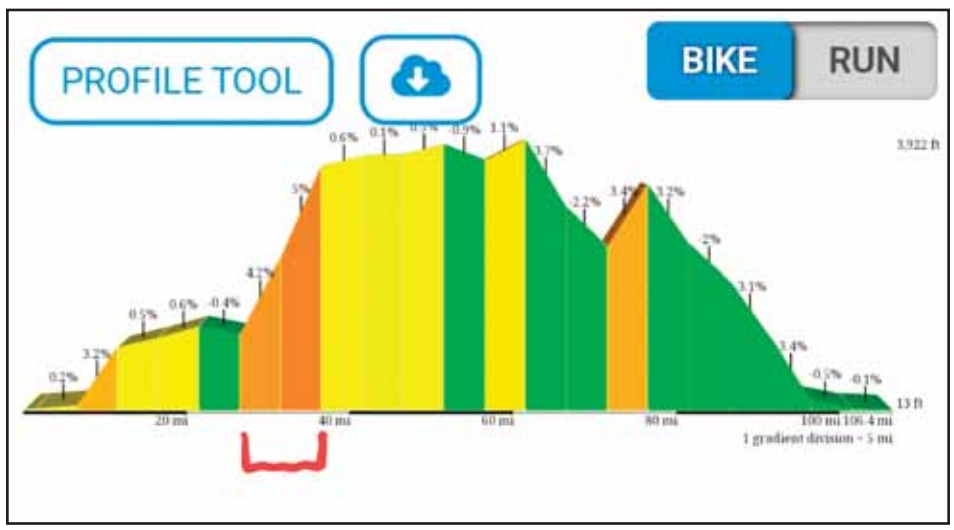
Mile 40 of 112.

(You had four hours, half the allotted time to go a third of the distance?)

Yup. Even if I made it to the top by 1 p.m. I had four and a half hours to travel 72 miles.

(That averages out to 16.25 miles per hour. What is your best bike finish at an Ironman?)

My best was 15.25 mph back in 2014. I was in trouble.



The more detailed elevation chart where at mile 27, the 13 mile climb elevation went as steep as 9%!!! (CREDIT: DAVID ROHER)

So, yeah, I have taught myself to consciously slow down my thoughts, listen and respond.

(So, what happened when you got to work?)

I told my work friends, they congratulated me, I thanked them and then I sipped my coffee.

(So, when did the world come crashing down around you?)

After I got home. I sat down and looked at the bike course again. The more I thought about it, the more I worried that I had bitten off too much, and there was no way I could complete the bike course in time.

(But you survived Ironman UK, with its 12,000 feet of climbing. This was only 10,000 feet.)

Ironman UK had three loops totalling 12,000 feet, which I barely survived. This was a 13 mile climb into the mountains. Some sections were 4%.

(Manageable.)

Other sections of the 13 mile climb were 9%!

(How bad is that?)

David Roher is a USAT certified triathlon and marathon coach. He is a multi-Ironman finisher and veteran special education teacher. He is on Instagram @David Roher140.6. He can be reached at TriCoachDavid@gmail.com.

Yavneh Girls Hockey Defeats SAR



Congratulations to the Yavneh Redhawks and Coach Aliza Hiller on their incredible 10-4 win vs. SAR on April 16.

Yeshiva League Stock Market
Sponsered by The Jewish Link
STOCK MARKET CHALLENGE
Standing
Standings are as of May 7th

Individual	School
1. Danny Hofman (MTA)	1. Frisch
2. Joshua MItchell (SAR)	2. MTA
3. Zev Deutsch (MTA)	3. Ramaz
4. Eitan Shichor (Frisch)	4. SAR
5. Shmulie Friedman (MTA)	5. TABC
	6. Haftr

HAFTR
RAMAZ
ישיבת רמז
TABC
SAR
EFRISCHSCHOOL

Bergen Girls Flag Football: Week Four

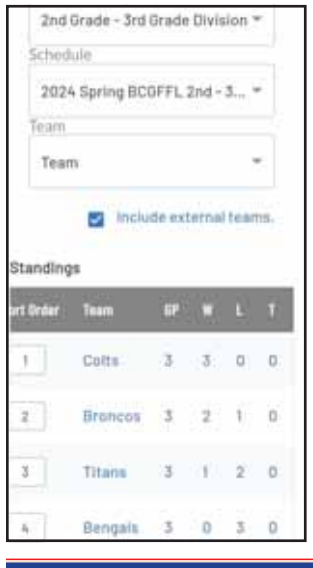
(BGFF) Despite some damp conditions, the players from the Bergen County Girls Flag Football League, were anxious to return to the gridiron after the Pesach break. Week four saw some great games. The action continues this Sunday at Johnson Park in Hackensack. For more information visit www.bergengirls.com or call 201-314-8931.

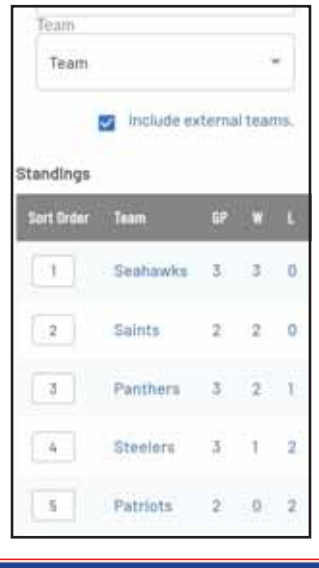


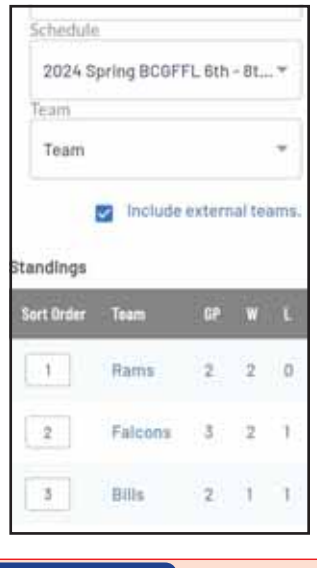












Little League Has a Great Week



Max Hagler of BBO's Pachter Orthodontics Pachters getting ready to run while Jake Richman of BBO's Kindersmiles Canines gets ready to field the ball.



(l-r) Rabbi Yosef Weinberger, Rabbi Daniel Goldberg, Rabbi Jason Finkelstein and Rabbi J.Z. Spier (not pictured: Rabbi Zev Goldberg who was previously present) enjoying a beautiful day of baseball with their sons, Nachi Weinberger, Moshe Goldberg, Elisha Goldberg, Tani Finkelstein and Ezra Spier of BBO's Kindersmiles Canines.



Kyle Friedman, James Ladenheim, Ethan Teller, Judah Ehrenreich, Ezra Hill, Tzvi Selevan, Aryeh Westreich and Saul Miodownik of BBO's Cross River Vipers chilling in the dugout during their game.



(l-r) Jesse Okrent, Alexander Turin, Moey Setton, William Berg, Jack Blumenthal, Ben Mirvis, Leo Weinberg and Shua Goldenberg of BBO's 2/3 Sammy's Pizza Pie-thons having fun in the dugout in between innings.



Moey Setton of BBO's Sammy Pizza Pie-thons getting ready to hit a dinger.

Yeshivat He'Atid Is Having Record Spring Season



(He'Atid sports) In an unprecedented triumph for Yeshivat He'Atid Athletics, the boys basketball team has clinched the title of Division I champions for the first time in the school's history. This title marks a significant milestone for the team, reflecting their dedication, teamwork, and unwavering spirit throughout the season. The boys wrapped up their regular season 7-1, led by the defensive prowess and playmaking from point guard Jack Weiss, sharpshooting from Natan Dorfman and powerhouse plays by Ezra Barzideh. Under the guidance of their passionate coach, Aaron Neufeld, and the relentless effort of the players, Yeshivat He'Atid has emerged as a formidable force in the competitive arena of sixth grade boys basketball, inspiring pride and admiration among their fellow students, faculty and supporters alike.

Moreover, this season heralds another remarkable feat for Yeshivat He'Atid Athletics, as three spring sports teams have secured spots in the playoffs. The boys and girls sixth-grade basketball teams as well as the boys middle school soccer teams have shown collective success, underscoring the depth of talent and commitment within the school's athletic program. This not only showcases the prowess of individual teams but also exemplifies the school's holistic approach to fostering sportsmanship and camaraderie among its students. As Yeshivat He'Atid continues to make strides in the realm of athletics, their fans eagerly anticipate the exciting journey ahead, both in this year's playoff season, and next year, b'ezrat Hashem, in their new gym.

SPORTS

Ma'ayanot JV Soccer Picks Up a Win



Ma'ayanot Varsity Soccer Beats Naaleh



BEN PORAT YOSEF IS HIRING EXCEPTIONAL FACULTY TO JOIN OUR TEAM FOR THE 24-25/5875 SCHOOL YEAR

- Director of Programming
- Director of Technology
- Elementary School Learning Center Teacher Judaic Studies - Hebrew and English fluency required.
- Early Childhood Assistant Teacher, Hebrew or English Speaking
- Elementary School Assistant Teacher - General Studies
- Elementary School Assistant Teacher - Limudei Kodesh
- Middle School Social Studies - Part Time

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Send CV to **careers@benporatyosef.org**

MANHATTAN DAY SCHOOL
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MANHATTAN DAY SCHOOL IS HIRING:

SPECIAL EDUCATION PUSH IN TEACHER

Manhattan Day School, an 80 year old Modern Orthodox elementary school on the Upper West Side, seeks a Middle School Special Education Push In Teacher for the 2023-2024 school year. Appropriate candidates must have a graduate degree in Special Education, experience providing academic support and remediation to students with language-based learning disabilities, at least 2-5 years of teaching experience, and knowledge of better practice in pedagogy and up to date research in learning and teaching. Candidates should be able to communicate with parents and partner with other school professionals.

Salary commensurate with experience in the range of $50,000.

Applicants should send their resume to: resumes@manhattanday.org.



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The following P/T late afternoon teaching positions are available at our Passaic campus:

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YBH

of Passaic Teaching Positions:
COME JOIN OUR TEAM!

General Studies teachers in grades 1-5 to complement our current staff for the remainder of the 2024 school year.

Positions Available for the 2024-2025 School Year:

- General Studies/ ELA Teachers for Grades 1-8
- Kriah Teacher (AM-elementary grades)
- Girls Limudei Kodesh Permanent Sub
- Kindergarten Teachers and Assistant Teachers - Part Time or Full Time
- Assistant Teachers for girls Lower elementary
- Learning Center Teachers (PM, elementary grades)

Please send resume to **employment@ybhpassaic.org**

Torah Academy of Bergen County (TABC), a Modern Orthodox yeshiva high school for boys, is seeking faculty members for the 2024-2025 academic year.

TORAH ACADEMY · TABC · OF BERGEN COUNTY

High School English/History Teacher

TABC seeks a teacher who is skilled at teaching both English and History.

- Teaching responsibilities will include two English classes and one 9th-grade World History class.
- Master's in teaching or a related field preferred.
- Proven success in teaching writing and literature at the high school level.
- Demonstrate understanding and commitment to reaching students of all levels and learning styles.
- Ability to differentiate the curriculum to accommodate students with IEPs and 504 plans.
- Familiarity with backward design in lesson planning.
- Exhibit exceptional classroom management skills.

High School Science Teacher (P/T & F/T available)

- Positions are available to teach high school biology, chemistry, forensics, AP Biology, and a biomedical elective.
- Ideal candidates should be able to teach at least two different subject areas, work with multiple student levels, and incorporate labs and real-world applications.
- Teaching experience and related Master's degree preferred.

High School Inclusion Teacher for Ninth Grade (F/T)

- Dynamic teacher needed for a cohort of 4-5 freshman boys for a pilot inclusion program.
- Candidate should be flexible in pedagogical approaches in order to differentiate materials for inclusion students, and be able to implement best practices in teaching.
- He/she should have excellent interpersonal skills in order to communicate and collaborate with students, classroom teachers, and parents.
- The position includes daily push-in to General and Judaic Studies classes, as well as additional pull-out periods each week for skill development and instructional support.
- The inclusion teacher will also set benchmark goals and monitor progress, updating as necessary, in conjunction with parents and the Director of Student Services.
- Degree in special education or related field preferred.
- 3-5 years of experience with students with learning challenges is required.

If you are interested in any of these exciting positions, please submit your resume, a cover letter, and contact information for three professional references to employment@tabc.org.

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TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES AT P'TACH FOR THE 2024-25 SCHOOL YEAR

Seeking Math, History, Navi, Science & Resource Room Teachers for the P'TACH High School Program at MTA (Upper Manhattan) and P'TACH High School Program at Central (Queens). Excellent salary and working conditions. For more than 40 years, P'TACH has been educating students with learning disabilities in small classroom settings.
To join our team, please send a resume to: rabbifeder@yuhsbptach.org

RJJ BOYS SEEKING TEACHERS FOR 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR

RJJ Boys School seeks to complement our incredible faculty with new hires for next year.

Enjoy competitive pay and a four-day workweek. Seeking second and fourth-grade General Studies teachers. Email your resume to rabbiglustein@ymht.org.

OPEN POSITIONS FOR 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR

Looking towards the '24 - '25 school year, MTA is looking for a few excellent educators to join our team. We are looking to fill the following full-time positions:
- English instructor
- Science instructor (chemistry and physics)
- Learning Specialist - Learning Center support
- Hebrew Language (full time)
- Spanish (part time)

Please send resume and cover letter to jobs@yuhsb.org

SEEKING PART TIME SOCIAL WORKER

The JEC Lower School is seeking a part-time social worker for the 2024-2025 school year. The social worker will work alongside the Director of Guidance to promote student social and emotional well-being and growth. The social worker will teach and reinforce healthy social and emotional skills by providing whole class lessons and running social groups. The social worker will also provide short-term individual school based counseling to select students who are experiencing social, emotional, and/or behavioral problems that interfere with their learning or the ability of others to learn. The social worker will further support students by consulting and collaborating with crucial stakeholders, i.e., parents, teachers, and administrators. Applicants should be passionate about helping children grow and develop life skills and their self-confidence. To apply or for more information, please contact: sdobin@thejec.org

ELA TEACHER NEEDED

Yeshiva Ketana of Manhattan for Boys seeks an inspiring middle school ELA teacher. The ideal candidate will be a creative and dynamic educator passionate about passing on a love of literature, poetry, grammar, and writing. We are a small school with small classes. The opportunity to reach each student is evident! Courses are taught in the afternoon hours. We are flexible about times and offer excellent wages.
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in Paramus, NJ
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Middle School - Psychologist

Please send cover letter and resume to: hiring@yeshivatnoam.org
Or apply online at www.yeshivatnoam.org/careers

Yeshivat Noam is an Orthodox, Zionistic Yeshiva day school located in Bergen County NJ.
Yeshivat Noam is a warm learning environment with Freedom to be Creative, Resources to Differentiate, Technology to Innovate, Support to Grow, Opportunity to Inspire.
All Head Teachers must have a Masters level degree or higher.
Ideal candidate builds relationships with students, is a passionate, creative teacher and has expertise in their subject matter.

Opportunities for Middle School Social Studies & Language Arts Teachers

Yavneh Academy is looking for experienced and dynamic Middle School Social Studies and Language Arts teachers who will bring their creativity, love of teaching and professionalism to join our faculty.

Join Yavneh Academy and be a part of our legacy of excellence!

To express interest, please submit CV to Andrea Reichman at andrea.reichman@yavnehacademy.org

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Sage Advice versus Aged Advice



By Shmuel Shayowitz

Unfortunately, in today's world, there's no shortage of so-called experts offering advice on quite frankly, everything...

Woman: So, I see you drink a lot of coffee?

Man: Yes

Woman: How many coffees a day, you think?

Man: Usually about 3

Woman: How much do you pay per coffee?

Man: $5.00, including tip

Woman: And how long have you been drinking?

Man: About 20 years, I suppose.

Woman: So a coffee costs $5 and you have 3 coffees a day, which puts your spending each month at $450, or $5400 annually. Not accounting for inflation, you have spent $108,000 in the last 20 years! That money could 've been put into an investment account and, after accounting for compound interest for the past 20 years, you would now have enough money to buy a Ferrari.

Man: I see you in here often. Do you drink coffee?

Woman: Not really.

Man: Where's your Ferrari?

This humorous exchange highlights a fundamental truth: it's easy to dispense advice, but far harder to follow it oneself. In the realm of finance, there are countless "talking heads" who offer advice on real estate, mortgages, and financial planning without the basic knowledge or experience. Your uncle Larry, who last got a mortgage 15 years ago, or your real estate agent aunt Bessy, who hasn't been active in real estate for 10 years, might mean well, but their advice could be outdated or based on limited experience.

When seeking financial advice, it's crucial to consider the source. Look for professionals with a proven track record of success in their field. Prioritize those who have demonstrated expertise and a history of helping clients or other family members achieve their goals.

Moreover, don't just listen to advice—evaluate it critically. Consider whether the person offering advice has a vested interest in the outcome. Analyze their recommendations and seek multiple opinions before making any major financial decisions.

Additionally, remember that financial advice should be tailored to your individual circumstances. What works for one person may not be suitable for another. A cookie-cutter approach to financial planning rarely yields optimal results. Instead, seek personalized advice that takes into account your goals, risk tolerance, and short term and long term ambitions.

Ultimately, the best financial advice often comes from those who have "walked the walk" themselves. Seek out mentors and advisors who have achieved the financial success you aspire and learn from their experiences. When being guided by experienced experts, you can avoid costly mistakes and set yourself on the path to true financial well-being.

New segment: Would you rather get $5,000 this minute, or $100,000 in ten years from now? Please email or message me to let me know your choice! If you have a good "Would you rather" question, please let me know and we will highlight your submission.

Shmuel Shayowitz (NMLS#19871) is a respected Real Estate & Finance Executive, Writer, Speaker, Coach, and Advisor. As the President and Chief Lending Officer of Approved Funding, a leading national mortgage banker and direct lender, Shmuel has facilitated over $2 billion of mortgages over the past two decades. Shmuel's expertise spans various licenses and certifications, including specialized mortgage underwriter, licensed real estate agent, and accredited coach. His market insights and experience are highly sought after in the real estate, finance, and coaching industries. In addition, Shmuel is a seasoned real estate investor and property manager, facilitating thousands of rentals nationwide. Shmuel can be reached at www.approvedfunding.com/shmuel.



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Are We Entering the Golden Age of the Leaseback?



By Nechama Polak

Since my time as a realtor in Northern New Jersey I have encountered many different types of sales and sale structures. One sale, called the leaseback, would come up a few times a year as a concession to the seller, whereby the seller would be allowed to stay in their home post closing until the new place they were moving to was ready. The lawyers didn't love it as it presented specific problems, including who would be responsible, for example, if a toilet stops working after the closing. Would the original owner, who is now a tenant, force the new owner to fix or replace it?



Attorneys are able to design leases to handle these concerns and we execute a handful of these types of sales in any given year. But these post closing agreements fall under the category of short term rentals for such short term problems, i.e. the construction on the seller's new home isn't complete yet, or Mr. and Mrs. Seller must stay an extra month due to a family simcha before they move to Florida.

But now we have seen the "leaseback" make an entirely new entrance onto the stage. One as a much longer term solution. My company recently attended an actual closing whereby all documents were signed and money wired from buyer to seller.

An agreed upon leaseback was then signed by both parties whereby the seller was allowed to stay in the house for an agreed upon period of time. The new tenant (seller) was charged rent and paid all utilities and the new owner (buyer) paid the taxes and not just for 30 or 60 days. The arrangement was structured for an entire year. This process affords the seller the comfort of knowing his/her home is sold and there is a breathing period to strategize and ultimately make arrangements for the next move. This fit the new buyers criteria as they had an apartment in the city but anticipated outgrowing it in the coming year. They felt comfortable staying in Manhattan knowing that they had secured a house that they loved in a neighborhood they were happy with.

The sellers, secure in the knowledge that they had sold their home for top dollar, were more than happy to take their time finding their next home.

Of course, this scenario does not work for every buyer and seller. If a mortgage is involved with this type of transaction, the buyer must also confer with their mortgage banker or broker first, as not all mortgages allow the sellers to occupy the home post closing for more than 60 days. It is an option that can be useful to many in a way that historically wasn't so relevant before. We like to describe this as "having your cake and eating it, too!"

Nechama Polak is the broker of record and owner of V&N Group LLC, located at 1401 Palisade Avenue in Teaneck. Send your thoughts and comments to nechamapolak@gmail.com or call 201 826 8809.

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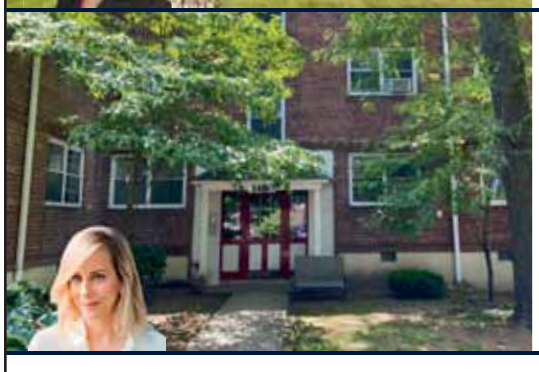
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Automobile Street?



By Gedaliah Borvick

Jerusalem has numerous streets whose names are connected to nearby historical sites. Ir David, the City of David, was the capital of Jerusalem when King David reigned almost 3,000 years ago. The charming Givat Chananya community offers panoramic views of the Old City and Ir David, and therefore many of its streets are named for King David's relatives, including ancestors Obed and Yishai, wife Batsheva and sister Tzruya.

Other streets are named for cities that the roads lead to. One of Jerusalem's longest streets is Rechov Yaffo, which runs from the city's entrance all the way to the Old City walls. Jaffa Street is named after Jaffa, a city adjacent to Tel Aviv, because from Biblical days (see Jonah 1:3) until the late 1800s, Jaffa served as the main port city of Jerusalem. Visitors would disembark in Jaffa's port and then continue their pilgrimage on land to Jerusalem. Interestingly, the present highway from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv follows a very similar route to the path taken by pilgrims for thousands of years.

Derech Beit Lechem's name stems from its historical connection as a route leading to another city. Also known as Bethlehem Street, it is a vibrant north-south road which runs through Jerusalem's Baka and German Colony neighborhoods. Archaeological digs underneath this street uncovered the ancient road that served as an important route for pilgrims from the south who visited the Beit Hamikdash, or the Temple, on religious holidays.

Similarly, Derech Chevron is a main thoroughfare in southern Jerusalem that extends from Jerusalem all the way to Hebron. Jerusalem and Hebron are two of the four holiest cities in Israel, the other two being Tiberias and Tzfat, both of which also have streets in Jerusalem named after them.

Finally, Rechov Azza, or Gaza Street, was one of the major roads leading in and out of Jerusalem, providing merchants access to the southern coastal ports of Gaza and Ashkelon. One of its most famous residents, Israel ben Moses Najara, served as Gaza's chief rabbi over 400 years ago and composed many famous liturgical poems, including the Shabbat zemer "Kah Ribon Olam."



Harekhavim Street.

Now that we are all mavens of Jerusalem street themes, let me share with you a message that my normally even-keeled business partner Eliezer Goldberg excitedly sent me. Eliezer was walking with clients in Talpiot and passed by a street that for decades has been lined with car mechanic shops. The street is named Harechavim, which means vehicles in modern Hebrew, and Eliezer — and most everyone else in the city — always thought it was named for the industry that dominates the block.

Glancing at the street sign for the first time, Eliezer realized that he was mistaken. The sign explains that the name Rechavim is in honor of the illustrious Benei Rechev family, also known as the Rechavim, from the First Temple period. Its patriarch was Yehonadav Ben Rechev, who is mentioned in Jeremiah and Kings 2.

Every time I read Jerusalem's street signs I learn something new. A fun activity that my brother-in-law and I enjoy — and I highly recommend that you give it a try — is to grab a few hours and a few books about Jerusalem's neighborhoods and streets, and wander around the city. It's such a joy learning about our capital's rich history, and you never know what new nuggets of information are awaiting you just around the corner.

Gedaliah Borvick is the founder of My Israel Home (www.myisraelhome.com), a real estate agency focused on helping people from abroad buy and sell homes in Israel. To sign up for his monthly market updates, contact him at gborvick@gmail.com.



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A Guide to Key Moving Products

(StatePoint) Whether you're relocating across the street or across the country, packing can be an overwhelming task. However, with the right supplies, the process can be structured and smooth. This guide provides tips for getting organized and protecting your personal property from damage so that you can enjoy the excitement of settling into a new space.



1. Be Box Smart: As you prepare for a move, you may be tempted to utilize old boxes rather than purchase new ones. While it may seem cost effective, it frequently results in ripped cardboard, damaged possessions and frustration. Instead, invest in heavy-duty boxes to keep valuable items safe in transit. It's best to have various sizes to accommodate an array of belongings – both large and small. This minor investment will pay off when things arrive at their destination neatly arranged, secure and ready to be placed in their new home.

2. Control Chaos with Labels: Maintain your personal inventory and reduce unpacking stress by labeling as you go. Write the area where each box goes on the outside or assign each room a different colored label. Not only will this action keep you organized while packing, but it will also streamline the unpacking process, ensuring that all items are delivered directly to the space where they belong.

3. Create a Bubble Barrier: When it comes to fragile possessions like frames and vases, don't underestimate the need for proper protection. Utilize products like Duck Brand Small Bubble Cushioning Wrap to shield valuables from bumps and nicks. The reusable wrap conforms around treasured goods to provide cushioning and fills empty voids. Maximum protection can be achieved by wrapping objects with the bubble side facing inwards.

4. Seal the Deal: All the work from the tips above can go to waste if you use a moving tape that splits or tears. It's essential to find one that is stronger and more durable than ordinary tape, like Duck Max Strength Packing Tape from Duck Brand. The heavy-duty, clear tape offers maximum strength and superior quality for moving and storage. With the right tape, even the heaviest boxes will stay sealed, and items will stay safely secured throughout the journey.

A smooth transition to a new home all starts and ends with smart packing and unpacking strategies.

For more moving tips and products, visit DuckBrand.com.

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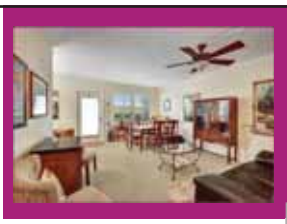


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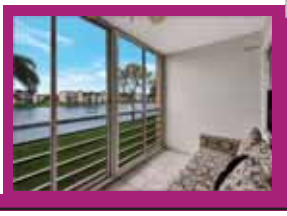
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Legacy Mortgage Group: The Company to Trust for Life's Biggest Purchase

By Jewish Link Staff



Bradford Haberlin and Andrew Wexler of Legacy Mortgage Group have been up since 4 a.m., and insomnia has nothing to do with it. With the constant ebbs and flows that are the hallmark of the mortgage industry, these two pros know that their clients are relying on them to be at the top of their game to make sure they get the best rate, white-glove service, the smoothest transactions and no unwelcome surprises.

For over 10 years, Haberlin has been helping both commercial and residential clients navigate the ups and downs of the mortgage market. As a former law enforcement professional, as well as a private security operations surveillance specialist, he has cultivated a talent for understanding people and is highly selective when it comes to his team of loan officers.

Before joining Legacy Mortgage Group, Wexler spent over 30 years in the commercial real estate industry. Most recently Wexler was with Ashkenazy Acquisition Corporation in NYC for 15 years, focusing on financing and banking relationships. He had known Haberlin for many years before joining his team and knew that he wanted to be aligned with Legacy Mortgage Group. As for Haberlin, "I knew Andrew was a good, honest person and dedicated from the beginning.

"I have a culture to which I want my team to adhere and which is guided by integrity, honesty and respect," Haberlin explained. "At Legacy Mortgage Group, we treat clients the way we would treat our own family members when it comes to mortgage transactions.

"The name of the company is Legacy Mortgage Group because not only is it my legacy to my children, but whenever someone purchases a home, it is their legacy to their family as well."

Purchasing a home is one of the biggest and most important transactions people make in their lifetime and Legacy Mortgage Group makes sure every transaction is treated accordingly.

"I wanted to build a platform where clients come here knowing that they are in good hands, that their transaction is safe, and if we give them a pre-approval letter their loan will go through and they will have no reason to worry."

Indeed, rising interest rates have been scaring potential homebuyers away, but Haberlin advises them to not let that be a deterrent. "Interest rates go up and interest rates go down, but to completely take yourself out of the market may cause you to lose out on a really excellent opportunity," he said.

According to Haberlin, it's always a good idea to get pre-approved before beginning any home search. "Legacy Mortgage Group can underwrite a homebuyer's file before they even put in an offer on a property so that they can submit an offer with a full underwritten loan approval." He said that as long as someone is willing to sit and take a few minutes to fill out an application and upload some documents, that person can get an answer from Legacy Mortgage Group within a day. "It's a quick process and even if you find a house first, you can know within 24 hours whether or not it is going to work for you.

"We are on it for them since we know there is a sense of urgency and because people will look at homes over the weekend and will need to submit a best and final offer by Tuesday."

Sometimes buyers may qualify for a lot more than they realize, but that doesn't mean they should purchase a house for the full amount if the monthly mortgage payment may be more than they can handle. Legacy Mortgage Group will work with clients to determine a monthly mortgage payment that is comfortable for them.

"If rates go up during a search, Legacy Mortgage Group can also help clients adjust those numbers and advise clients how to shave a little bit off their price point or calculate how much capital to put down in order to keep those monthly payments where they want them to be," Haberlin said. "It's simply about educating our clients and then adjusting the numbers accordingly."

To learn more, scan the QR code.

Sometimes, Legacy Mortgage Group will suggest a temporary buy-down, which is simply an upfront fee, usually paid by the seller, that allows a homebuyer to lower the mortgage interest rate for the first few years after the purchase. Permanent rate buydowns are another great way for homebuyers to lower their interest rate by purchasing discount points at the time of their closing.

What many people don't realize is that there are key advantages to using a mortgage broker over a bank. When you go through a bank, once a loan is locked, there is little, if anything, that can be done if rates go down. Float-down options allow homebuyers to lower their mortgage rate if prevailing interest rates drop during a lock period. "However, there has to be a significant market drop in order for a bank to even consider a float-down," Haberlin said.

CONTINUED ON P. 223



Which Rates Are Important?



By Carl Guzman, CPA

My original intent was to write an article about specific mortgage products that would be great for people living in this country. I hesitate to say *our* country.

This country was great and can still be great (with the right president). This country allows all of us the opportunity to be free, productive and successful. My uncles fought in World War II and my father was in the Korean War. My great-uncle Izzi Goodman was a doctor in World War II at a time when it wasn't so easy for Jews to get into medical school. Now look where we are. We're living, very well, in a country that is upside down. I'm asking myself, *who can we trust and do we belong here*? And more importantly, *are we too comfortable and complacent where we are*?

Are all the things we have contributed as a Jewish people appreciated by the people who live in this country? How is it possible after 9/11, the Boston marathon bombing and other numerous terrorist attacks and threats against this country, that all Americans, Jewish or not, are not up in arms against our enemies? Did I say *our* enemies? Anyone with any kind of intelligence should know that these protestors who burn the American flag and the Israeli flag are not only the Jewish people's enemies, but the world's.

Last month, Iran attacked Israel. Our president didn't have the backbone to say he would stand with Israel and support them with our American troops. I'm disgusted and praying there was a method to Biden's madness.

I can't deny there are practical considerations as to why many of us are still living here. There are family dynamics and individual economics that realistically cloud the realities of moving to Israel. While we are here, living in the United States of America, maintaining an awareness and standing in the face of our politicians while keeping a presence in front of those people who are our nemeses are some of the ways we can combat the vermin who are on a mission to destroy without any practical benefits to anyone, let alone "their people."

For the present, yes, rates might be important because we have practical financial considerations, but on a long-term basis, I think we have to ask ourselves, when it comes to mortgage financing in this country: Should we really care about rates? If so, maybe the only rate we should be caring about is the rate of antisemitism and hate that is spreading across this country, and the rate at which our government is showing cowardice and a big lack of tactical execution in protecting God's "chosen people."

Carl Guzman, NMLS# 65291, CPA, is the founder and President of Greenback Capital Mortgage Corp. & www.residentialmortgageadvisor.com He is a Real Estate Mortgage Banker & Business financing expert with over 35 years' experience. He currently has 217 5-star reviews on Zillow. Carl and his team will help you get the best mortgage financing for your situation and his advice will save you thousands! www.greenbackcapital.com ceg@greenbackcapital.com

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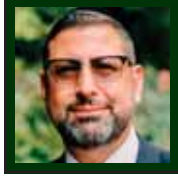
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Five Spring Safety Tips for Your Home

(BPT) Refreshing your home in the spring is about more than organizing closets and cleaning floors. As winter melts away and warmer weather returns, proactively checking your home's systems will help keep it running efficiently while remaining a comfortable and safe space for you and your loved ones.

Upgrade Fire and CO Safety Solutions

While you're ticking through your list of spring maintenance to-do's, don't forget about the smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms. Proper smoke and CO alarm placement, regular maintenance and alarm replacement are essential to keeping your family safe. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recommends that alarms be installed on every level of the home, including the basement, as well as in every sleeping room and outside each separate sleeping area. Alarms should be tested regularly, and if the device is battery-powered, batteries should be changed at least every six months.

To make maintaining your smoke and CO alarms easier, upgrade to a 2-in-1 smoke and carbon monoxide alarm, such as the First Alert 10-Year Battery Combination Alarm. This 10-year sealed battery alarm eliminates battery replacement and late-night battery chirps for a decade. Easy to install, 10-year alarms come equipped with a mounting bracket and installation kit - making safety simple for you and your family.



Check for Winter Wear and Tear

Winter's extreme temperatures can take a toll on the outside of your home and its appliances. Examine the outside of your house and roof to check for fallen branches or debris that could block gutters or downspouts and cause a drainage problem. Inspect the driveway and sidewalks for new potholes or cracks that may have developed in the cold, and ensure all exterior lights are working properly.

Tune-Up Your Cooling System

When the weather gets milder, schedule a professional maintenance service to ensure that your heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are operating optimally and won't quit after the first heat wave. If you don't already have one, upgrade to a smart thermostat, like a Honeywell Home Smart Thermostat, which allows you to adjust your temperature from anywhere and set different temperature schedules for various times of the day. ENERGY STAR certified thermostats can provide comfort when you're home, and energy savings when away.

Change Your Air Filters

Over a long winter, your heating system's air filters naturally accumulate dust and other airborne particles, which can clog your air filter, impact indoor air quality and affect system performance. Regularly replacing your air filters is a great way to help maintain indoor air quality and support a comfortable environment for your family. Clean air filters also allow for better air flow, reducing the stress on your home's HVAC system and promoting energy efficiency.



Secure Windows and Doors

Warmer weather often breeds more home break-ins as burglars like when windows are open at night or garage doors are open during yardwork. But you can help lower the threat by hardening the target. Walk around outside of your home to inspect doors and windows for working locks and be mindful not to leave valuables in sight. If you have cars parked in your driveway, keep them locked and garage door openers should be tucked away.

To help protect what matters most and learn more fire safety tips, visit FirstAlert.com. For assistance with HVAC or home security assessments, contact your local professional service.

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Interior Painting

By Adam S. Mark

I had a quiet evening so I took some time to write something that you might consider running. No harm, no foul if it's not suitable for publication. I ain't no Truman Capote.

Let's talk about paint. It's been my experience that one of the first things a realtor recommends when asked to sell a client's house is that all the main rooms, if not all the rooms in the house, be given a fresh coat of paint. The reason for this is that painting is one of the least expensive improvements to freshen up a house.

In this article we'll look at the importance of quality of the paint you choose, the different finishes of the paint and their usage, and the parts of a paint project.

Like anything else in life, quality costs and this applies to paint as well. Paint consists of various components. The main two that we concern ourselves with are the pigment and the solvent. There are many other components that do very important things, but let's keep this concise.

The pigment is the actual color we are applying. What's important is how much pigment is in the paint and that's where quality/price plays in. It's always tempting to go to the big box store and get their top of the line paint because it's less expensive. The issue here is that the bargain paint has less pigment than even the 'contractor' line of paints offered by either Benjamin Moore or Sherwin Williams. What this translates into is that your colors will not be as deep or last as long. Are you really saving money if you need to apply three coats of paint to attain that desired depth of color and then have it fade sooner than expected?

The solvent is what makes paint wet and evaporates as the paint cures. One type is water-based (also called latex) paint and the other is what is called colloquially oil-based (no longer really oil but the name stuck). For most of our day-to-day work, we use water-based paint since it's easier to work with, cleans-up with warm water and has a less disagreeable smell. We tend to use "oil-based" paint for special surfaces where we want a super smooth finish. Think furniture and cabinetry.

For those of us who are worried about our families breathing volatile organic compounds (commonly called VOCs), I've been seeing that almost all Benjamin Moore and Sherwin Williams paints are rated 0% VOC. That's not to say that you won't want to open a couple of windows. Let's face it, the paint still has a smell to it.

Flat, matte, satin, eggshell, semi-gloss,and hi-gloss are finishes (sheens) that paints come in. Flat is totally non-reflective so it's commonly used on walls that are less than smooth and ceilings, this is to hide imperfections on those surfaces. In order of increasing reflectiveness, you have matte, satin, and eggshell. It's really a matter of personal taste which of these you might use on your walls. Semi- and hi-gloss finishes are found on doors and trim. Again, one might use semi-gloss to downplay imperfections in your trim work since repairs to these surfaces are difficult and costly.

Once your floors are covered with drop-clothes and furniture with plastic sheeting, a paint project will normally start with remediating minor damage. Foundation cracks, splits between trim and its mounted surface, noticeable dents should all be attended to even before a can of paint is opened.

The scope of the actual paint project is up to you or what the room requires. Sometimes all you need is a clean-up (freshen-up) coat of paint to the walls. In this case the ceiling, trim, and doors are in good shape. A clean-up coat does require that the new paint is the exact color and finish as the existing one. Do you want a color change? This will normally require a primer coat and two coats of paint. I normally suggest that the primer be tinted the paint color. It doesn't cost extra but adds to the depth of the color. Finally, you have what I call 'the Full Ride'. This includes remediating all surfaces, then painting the ceiling, walls, trim, and doors.

I've spent over 20 years in home improvement, having painted in dozens of homes and working with some of the best painters and finishers in Bergen County. I hope this article gives you some insight into the world of interior painting.

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CONTINUED FROM P. 217

At Legacy Mortgage Group, Haberlin and his team advise all clients to lock in their rate right away, whether their closing is 30, 60 or 90 days out. "We are communicating with 30 to 40 different investors at any given moment so if there is a huge market drop before a client closes and we still have enough time to move the file, we have the ability to a look for different investor if the current investor won't give us a float-down and lock in our clients at the better rate."

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"That's the message here, " added Wexler. "Obviously you want everything to go smoothly, but as mortgage brokers we have flexibility and can make adjustments that benefit our clients, which may not be an option for a mortgage banker or your traditional depository bank."

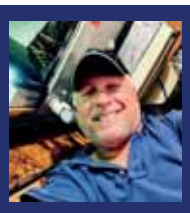
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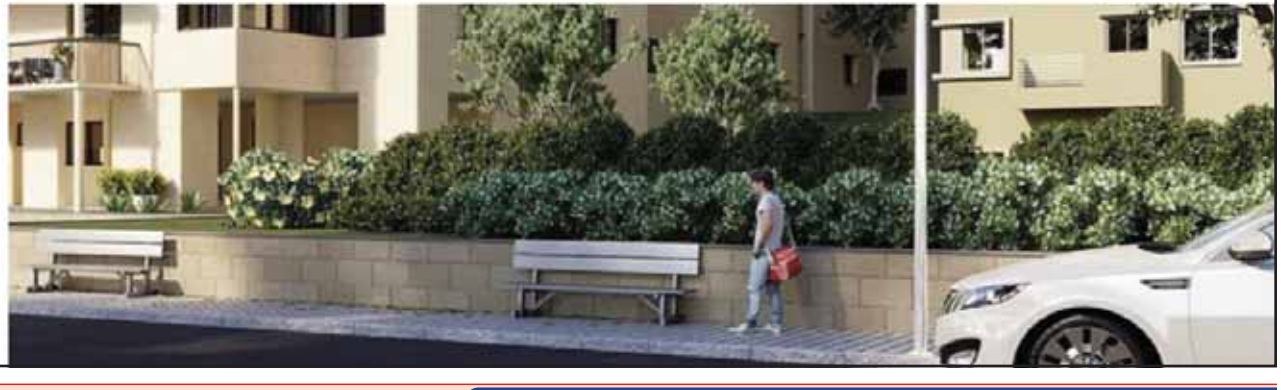
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	879 Red Road, Teaneck	$689,000	3 Bedrooms / 2 Bathrooms. Charming Tudor Colonial in quiet area of Teaneck. Living room, family room, dining room with french doors to 3 season porch. Expanded eat-in kitch with double sinks, double ovens & 2 dishwashers. Second floor, primary bedroom with wall of closets, 2 additional bedrooms, full bathroom. Walk up finised attic is perfect for an office or guest space and has plenty of storage space. Finished basement, rec room, full bathroom, laundry room and lots of storage. Backyard is great for playing or entertaining. Detached oversized garage. Close to houses of worship, shopping and transportation. Listing Agent: Nina Eizikovitz I 201.280.5025	10am - 12pm	LINKS RESIDENTIAL BROKERED BY eXp REALTY	Nina Eizikovitz 201.280.5025





Springing Into Action: Why Now Is the Prime Time to Sell Your Home



By Yehuda Kohn

Traditionally, spring has always been recognized as the best time of year to sell a house, and for good reason. With longer days and milder temperatures, house-hunting becomes a more pleasant experience for both buyers and sellers alike. Families, in particular, prefer to make a move during this time, ensuring they are settled into their new homes before the school year begins.

According to a 2023 report by ATTOM Data Solutions, late spring and early summer—specifically April, May and June—are the peak months for home sales. Sellers who list their homes during this period can expect to net significantly higher profits. In fact, homes sold in May command a seller premium of 12.8% above market value, highlighting the financial benefits of timing your sale just right.

But it's not just about the financial incentives; the spring season brings with it a sense of rejuvenation and possibility. After the disruptions of the pandemic, the housing market has settled into a more predictable rhythm, making timing once again a crucial consideration for sellers. With economies stabilizing and people adjusting to post-pandemic lifestyles, the housing market is poised for a reset in 2024, according to Money magazine. This reset is expected to bring increased inventory and a more typical bustling season, providing buyers with a wider selection of homes to choose from.



For families with children, the timing of a spring sale aligns perfectly with the academic calendar, allowing for a seamless transition to a new home before the start of the school year. This strategic advantage not only eases the logistical challenges of moving but also provides ample time for settling into a new neighborhood and establishing routines.

As the housing market heats up, buyers are on the lookout for their dream homes, making it essential for sellers to be prepared. Ensuring your home is in prime condition and priced competitively can help attract motivated buyers and secure a swift sale. Additionally, buyers should take the necessary steps to get their finances in order, including checking credit scores and obtaining mortgage preapprovals, to avoid any delays in the purchasing process.

In conclusion, spring offers a prime opportunity for homeowners to sell their properties for maximum profit. With increased demand, favorable economic conditions and a sense of renewal in the air, now is the time to spring into action and make your move in the housing market. Don't let this golden opportunity pass you by—seize the moment and unlock the full potential of your home.





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For additional resources and assistance with your FSBO journey, visit SaveOnYourHome.com. SaveOnYourHome.com is a groundbreaking platform dedicated to demystifying the home selling process by providing FREE resources that empower sellers and buyers to navigate the real estate process with confidence. For more information, contact Yehuda Kohn at ykohn@SaveOnYourHome.com and follow us on Facebook/Instagram @Saveonyourhome.

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