

# *The Jewish* Post & Opinion • *Indiana Edition*

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Chag Pesach Sameach!

# Ancient Tradition Still Providing Protection

BY VALERIE GREENFELD

*At Indiana University – Bloomington, Ind., students, faculty, and staff show their solidarity with the Jewish community with The Mezuzah Project in response to historically high levels of acts of antisemitism.*



to show outward signs of Judaism such as a *mezuzah*, Jewish star, *kippah*, or *tallit*.

[And on many of universities and college campuses, it's just as prevalent. In 2021, a survey at 220 institutions of higher learning revealed an all-time high of 244 of wide-ranging antisemitic incidents – most likely a significant undercount says Midwest Regional Director for the Anti-Defamation League, David Goldenbrg, as a survey found that 75% of incidents are not reported.]

## A positive way to fight antisemitism

[A rash of antisemitic vandalism occurred at Indiana University (IU) in Bloomington, Ind., throughout the Fall semester. There were at least a dozen reports of *mezuzahs* being torn off the residence hall room door frames of students – some multiple times – as well as verbal harassment of Jewish students and swastika graffiti found at locations off campus and on dry erase boards of students' rooms. In February, horrendous, antisemitic posts appeared on a Greek Life social media site. In a historic collaboration, IU Hillel and Chabad came together to push back against hate and celebrate Jewish pride.]

To empower, and in solidarity with, Jewish students, hundreds of “*mezuzahs*” [large, student-painted IU-red, cases (without the parchment)] have been placed on the door frames of classrooms, offices [including the dean of students], and lounge [and dorm] rooms all across campus, affixed with the message, “I stand with my Jewish friends”, [along with pamphlets and signage explaining their religious significance] and “There is no place for hate in our community”. [Non-Jewish students are displaying them on their door frames, as well, to show their support of their Jewish classmates.]



*Many red Mezuzah cases along with information being affixed to doorways in the Indiana Memorial Union (IMU), IU's student center:*

*“To show our support for the Jewish community and to speak out against recent antisemitic acts, the Indiana Memorial Union has placed mezuzahs on a number of doorways in the IMU. Mezuzahs are traditionally found on doorways of Jewish homes, and to signify the Union's role welcoming everyone to the campus community, the IMU is joining in this practice. This project is being done in partnership with IU Hillel and Union Board. There is no place for hate in our community.” (accompanied by the logos of the IMU, Union Board, and IU Hillel.) Photos by Regan Jones, Office of Student Affairs.*

A tiny piece of parchment with 22 lines of Hebrew [from the *Torah*, including the *Shema* prayer,] handwritten by a scribe, rolled into a holy scroll and placed inside a box that is fixed on the doorpost is, and almost always has been, a cornerstone of Jewish tradition.

The *mezuzah* is so holy that we kiss it when entering and exiting the home, as we would a family member. The *mezuzah*, a spiritual symbol to remind us to fulfill the commandments. The *mezuzah*, a symbol to help Jews remember that we are not alone, God is with us.

Many Jews around the world are seeking the protection of God today. The exodus of over 20,000 Jews escaping terror in Ukraine are coming home to the Land of Israel. Hundreds of Israeli Jews are preparing to welcome them into their own homes by sharing a *Shabbat* meal in freedom. Hopefully, they will soon be placing a *mezuzah* at their own front door.

Each Passover, we are reminded that the tenth plague marked the death of the firstborn males of each household, as commanded by Pharaoh. Jews were told to smear lamb's blood on their doorposts so the angel of death would pass over those homes. This event marked the origin of the *mezuzah*. After the exodus from Egypt, the Jews wandered in the desert until they reached the land of Canaan to build their permanent homes. For the first time, they affixed a *mezuzah*, (literally meaning “doorpost.”)

As Jewish communities prepare for this upcoming Passover, we remember the exodus from Egypt long ago. But today, we also remember the attacks on Jews and acts of antisemitism in a supermarket, at a Jewish school, the Jewish Federation, the JCCs, a Jewish senior home, the Holocaust Museum, and in too many synagogues. Both ancient and recent antisemitism remain a part of Jewish dialogue.

According to the American Jewish Committee, 82% of Jews say antisemitism is increasing. [Data backs that up; the report goes on to state that nearly one in four Jews in the U.S. have been the subject of antisemitism over the past year in person and online.] Many Jews are afraid



*Materials for The Mezuzah Project at IU. ©WTHR-TV, Indianapolis, Ind.*

[This *Mezuzah* Project is a large part of the IU Hillel's task force to combat antisemitism with workshops and education efforts.] “Campus bodies who are in place to represent student interests are not letting antisemitism go unaddressed,” student Union Board president, Diptanshu Rao, stated. “We want students to see the

*mezuzahs* and say, ‘Here is a place [where] I can feel comfortable in my identity as a Jew’ and not feel attacked or hated.”

Thousands of years after the *mezuzah* was first used, its importance was not diminished. Still, today, Jews affirm their Jewish identity with the same words written on a scroll and placed on their doorpost. This tradition has passed from generation to generation.

“The *mezuzah* is so significant for college students because when they come to campus, it's the first time they're creating a Jewish home, the first time they get to make that choice,” recognized IU's Hillel Executive Director, Rabbi Sue Silberberg.

As lamb's blood on the doorpost protected Jews in Egypt, still today, *mezuzahs* serve as a positive, empowering reminder of Jewish tradition. As Passover approaches and Jews around the world fight for the right to practice their religion freely, it is

**(see Greenfeld, page IN 4)**

# Editorial

I am reprinting a column by Rabbi Maurice Davis, z"l, for more than one reason (page IN 6). For starters his enthusiasm for the holiday of Passover is infectious, especially his first paragraph. I also applaud his idea of including a "Matzoh of Hope" at the Seder. Thankfully we can update what we are hoping for today. Back then it was freedom for Soviet Jews.

A dozen or more years after he wrote that, I was an active volunteer at Indiana University Hillel in Bloomington. One of the efforts being done at that time to help the Soviet Jews when they were being discriminated against, was writing letters to the authorities in the former USSR. For a minor example, if a Soviet Jew applied for a Visa in order to leave the country, they were immediately fired from their job. When I was writing those letters, I was very skeptical that would make any difference.

I remember listening to a speech by an activist who had been over there at the time. He reported that a man from the KGB (their FBI) had been his taxi driver from the airport to his hotel. When he was packing to come back he noticed that while he had been away from his room someone had entered it and removed the film from his camera that was in his dresser drawer.

Making a difference seemed hopeless then but with hindsight one can see that with much effort by not only Jewish people, the goal was finally achieved. I remember meeting a Catholic nun who strongly believed in this cause and was spending all of her time on it.

I am fortunate to know several of these fine Jewish people who emigrated and settled in Indianapolis. They came with nothing and ended up making very significant contributions to the community.

This demonstrates that with enough motivation and combined effort of so many, it might not happen overnight, but we can also make a difference in the challenges that we face today. This year we can make our "Matzah of Hope" about peace and freedom for those in the Ukraine and Russia.

A new tradition I would like to see occurring during the Seder this year is to have a place to offer forgiveness. This could take place in the telling of the Exodus story where Joseph forgives his brothers for selling him into slavery. As we hear this part of the story it leaves us with a feeling of warmth as opposed to the feelings of angst when we hear about the killing of first born sons.

I am not suggesting that we should forget the story of what took place to our people 3,000 years ago because "those who forget history are bound to repeat it"

and lessons can be learned by studying it. However by remembering in great detail the bitterness of slavery and bondage, it might be more difficult to do what Melinda Ribner suggests we should be doing in her column on page IN 5.

She writes that the month of Nissan is all about going forward in life, not holding oneself hostage to the past. "Let go of feelings of regret, resentment, judgment and disappointment...Now is the time to be open to receive the flow of new blessings to take you forward to greater freedom and love."

This message ties in with what many of our current spiritual leaders are teaching. They say that by the law of attraction, one can only receive more of what one is already thinking and feeling. For example, if one is desiring a new job, car, house, or close friend, one has to imagine in great detail that one has already received this because those feelings of content are what will attract that desire to him or her. If one is feeling bad because one believes one will not be able to get the desired item, one will attract to oneself more of that and not the desired item.

This is similar to what I wrote in one of my first editorials in 2003.

*"If one is constantly bitter, filled with anger, hatred, resentment, and regrets, eventually that will affect other areas in one's life and could lead to health problems. My suggestion to all those who doubt what I have said is to try the following experiment.*

*"In order to get the most out of it, include the five senses – taste, touch, smell, sound, and sight – in the two scenarios I will ask you to recall. In other words, if one is remembering a beach experience, think about the sound of the waves, imagine the sight of sea gulls flying above, the smell of salt water, and the feeling of the wet sand between your toes.*

*"Sit quietly in a comfortable chair and close your eyes. Stretch your muscles and take a few slow, deep breaths. Begin to think about one of the happiest times of your life. Where were you? What were you wearing? Whom were you with? What was the weather like? Imagine all the details of what took place.*

*"After a few minutes have passed, stop thinking about that happy time and begin to examine how you feel physically. Go through your body from head to toe. Are you taking shallow breathes or breathing deeply? Is your heart pounding or is there a warm feeling in it? Are your muscles tense or relaxed?*

*"Now begin to think about someone who has treated you unfairly. Imagine in detail all the things they said and did to you. After a few minutes stop and examine your physical body. Are your teeth clenched or relaxed? Are your palms sweaty, or your hands in fists? Is your thinking clear or cloudy? Does your stomach feel as if it is in a knot? Now gradually open your eyes.*

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*"Hopefully you will notice at least a slight difference in how you feel after the two different memories, and you will feel more (see Editorial, page IN 4)*

**GREENFELD**

(continued from page IN 2)

time for Jewish communities to stand up and demand zero tolerance for antisemitism.

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**More additions by JPO Staff:**

In Indiana, Jews account for less than 1% of the state's population, but about 12% of the 45,000 student body at IU. Rabbi Sue Silberberg has commented that there have been more incidents of anti-semitism on campus this year than in the combined 31 years she's been there.

*Kosher mezuzahs* (ones containing the Hebrew verses) have been distributed free to all Jewish students who want them, and have been newly affixed to all six predominantly Jewish Greek houses to proclaim that while cowards hide anonymously behind their computers and express their hatred, we loudly and proudly proclaim our love for Judaism.

The red *mezuzahs* have also been placed at many doorways throughout the Indiana Memorial Union – the school's student center building – along with signs that say: "There is no place for hate in our community." "The IMU is the community center for the campus, and our mission statement starts with 'Welcoming all,' " said IMU executive director Hank Walter. "This seemed like a great way to symbolically stand up and show the entire campus community they are welcome here."

One Jewish freshman, a Jewish Studies major, on the IU student government's advocacy community, and future civil liberties lawyer, has said that while she has not personally felt or witnessed any antisemitic acts on campus or in her residence hall – where many of the acts did occur – she has kept well abreast of the incidents, making her somewhat want to guard her Jewishness, but they also make her want to fight the darkness

**EDITORIAL**

(continued from page IN 3)

*peaceful after the first one."*

This is the reason another opportunity for letting go of resentment will help. Leading up to and during *Yom Kippur* we have the opportunity to ask and offer forgiveness from our fellow humans and God. We have prayers in the daily *Amidah* that asks for forgiveness for all sins, and praises God as being a God of forgiveness, and we also have a bedtime prayer of forgiveness. On this holiday that more Jews observe than any other, this could be a nice addition.

Holocaust survivor Eva Kor, z"l, had said that she became free "physically" when she was liberated from Auschwitz on Jan. 27, 1945, but she was not "emotionally" free until 50 years later when she forgave her tormentors in 1995.

This Passover it might be a relief to say, yes, slavery took place and I am not going to forget that, but I will no longer be filled with bitterness toward Pharaoh and the Egyptians. We can free ourselves from our own personal enslavement to past hurts and then we will be more open to receive our desires.

To read about Passover from a *Kabbalistic* Perspective go to: [jewishpostopinion.com/?s=Rabbi+David+Zeller](http://jewishpostopinion.com/?s=Rabbi+David+Zeller). We wish you, our dear readers, a happy and *kosher Pesach* 5782!

*Jennie Cohen, April 13, 2022* ✨



with light all that much more. Last month, she organized an antisemitism seminar for her Civics Leadership living-learning community – of the nearly 100 students, only a few are Jewish. She said that it was very well attended and an engaged and respectful conversation was had with all.

She says that she thinks IU is overall a welcoming and inclusive community, but when a few do want to express and spread their hatred of others, it does take *the whole community* to stand up as one to fight it, condemn it, suppress it, and maybe one day, eradicate it – The *Mezuzah* Project is a great effort to do just that. She added that maybe it could spread across the country and the world as symbol of tolerance and inclusion for all – after all, a primary tenet of Judaism is *Tikkun Olam*, be a light to heal the world.

On the first night of *Chanukah* back in December, Rabbi Levi Cunin of IU's *Chabad* gathered with students to light the community *chanukiah* (*menorah*) at the campus' Sample Gate – a main campus entry point – a site near where swastikas were found painted just off campus. "We will add in light in the world," said Cunin, "even when people try to add hate and darkness." ✨

# Congratulation Deborah Lipstadt

NEW YORK, NY – William C. Daroff, CEO, of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, issued the following statement:

"I am pleased to finally extend a warm congratulations to my long-time friend and colleague Ambassador Deborah Lipstadt following her unanimous confirmation by the U.S. Senate to serve as Special Envoy for Monitoring and Combatting Antisemitism at the State Department.



"Having been involved with the creation of the post, working with the late Senator George Voinovich (R-OH) and the late Rep. Tom Lantos (D-CA), I can attest that her expertise is needed now more than ever – with antisemitism and Jew-hatred at seemingly all-time highs. We are still haunted as a community by the attack on the synagogue in Colleyville, Texas at the beginning of the year. And this week in Israel, terrorists claiming allegiance to the Islamic State have killed 11 innocent people in three different cities.

"We offer our full support at this critical time on behalf of American Jewry and look forward to working with Ambassador Lipstadt in the ongoing fight against antisemitism."

*The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations is the recognized central coordinating body representing 53 diverse national Jewish organizations on issues of national and international concern.* ✨



## "Seder for the Jewish Soul," an Art/music Video Haggadah

Created by Bruce David and Orin Reynolds for Light of the Nations, this is an original, artistically creative, modernly relevant *Seder* video (1 hour), designed to enhance the Passover festival! Find it at: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLP8K0uoVInMqgDN1JUunnSL-Hn2x7bDah7>

This video *Haggadah* is for families, to guide them through and enhance their own *Seders*; for Passover group gatherings; as a learning tool for students of all ages desiring a sensible, contemporary approach to the value of Passover; as well as for the sick and those unable to attend a *Seder*. ✨



# Kabbalah of the Month



By MELINDA RIBNER

## Nissan – A Month of Miracles

The month of *Nissan* began at sunset on April 1, 2022. *Nissan* is the month to leave your personal limitations and limiting beliefs, and move to greater freedom, love and joy. This was the month when the Jewish people were redeemed from Egypt, and it will be the month in the future when the final redemption will take place. In every *Nissan* there is the hope and expectation that something new and wonderful will happen within you and for you.

*Nissan* is also called *Chodesh Ha'Aviv*, the month of Spring. The scent of spring in the air makes us aware of new life emerging in nature and reminds us to pay attention to the new energies stirring within us as well. There is a heavenly influx of grace and compassion this month that enables us to go forward easily in our lives.

This month is all about going forward in life, so do not hold yourself hostage to the past. Let go of feelings of regret, resentment, judgment and disappointment. Let go of trying to figure out and understand life with your mind. These feelings and tendencies do not support your ability to go forward and only keep you tied to the past and to what is already known.

*Nissan* is the time to let go of what has kept you feeling limited and tied to the past and create the space within you for newness. The month of *Nissan* is the headquarters for newness. Now is the time to be open to receive the flow of new blessings to take you forward to greater freedom and love. A sign we are close to God is when everything feels new to us, full of wonder and possibilities.

What often keeps us feeling stuck in life is fear. We hold on to old habits, beliefs, behavior patterns and relationships that are uncomfortable and even toxic because they are familiar to us. What we know feels safe to us, what we do not know feels scary. What if that is not true? What if letting go and taking steps forward into what is unknown, into greater vulnerability, into new and expanded expressions of being in life is the way we deepen our connection to God?

The epitome of the energy of the month is the holiday of Passover, the celebration of the miraculous departure of the Jewish people from Egypt. At the Passover *Seder*, we are reminded that this Exodus was

not just a one-time historical event. The *Haggadah* says, "In every generation one should regard himself as though he personally had gone out from Egypt." Until we are fully embodying our soul potential, we are living in varying forms of bondage. It is helpful to acknowledge that much of our suffering we afflict upon ourselves, so we can let go of our suffering by accepting and loving ourselves more deeply. Passover, and the entire month of *Nissan* is a propitiatory time to liberate oneself from internal and external constraints.

The power of speech is the healing dimension for this month. *It is through our own speech that we redeem or enslave ourselves.* Be particularly mindful of your speech this month. The more mindful we are of our speech, the more powerful our words are when we do speak. Guard your tongue, don't waste words. Your energy increases when you engage in virtuous speech and decreases when you engage in forbidden or loathsome speech like gossip, lies, cursing, and insults.

During the month of *Nissan*, let's spend more time in the awareness and gratitude that every moment of life is a Divine gift. God is sustaining and animating each of us and everything in creation moment by moment. We are not limited by our past unless we chose to be so. We are not victims. Everything in life is divinely orchestrated to take each of us forward to greater freedom especially during this month of *Nissan*. No matter what is happening externally in the world, the world is filled with the glory and presence of God. God is closer to you than your own breath.

Sending love and blessings that this month of *Nissan* be one of miracles. May we have many moments of Divine synchronicity reminding us that God is running this world. In this month of *Nissan*, may we each leap forward in our consciousness and in life to greater freedom, joy and love.

### Passover begins on 15 *Nissan*

Passover is one of the most observed holidays among the Jewish people. The Ten Commandments even begins with the statement, "I am *Hashem* Who took you out of Egypt."

The *Haggadah* of Passover reminds us that the Exodus out of Egypt is not just a one time historical event. the *Haggadah* says, "In every generation one should regard himself as though he personally had gone out of Egypt." Egypt means "narrow straits". According to the teachings of Rabbi Yitzchok Luria, living in a human body is likened to being in Egypt. We are taught that prior to this incarnation into a human body, the soul lived in a palace of love and expanded consciousness and descended into this physical world for a Divine

purpose. We have each been granted the privilege of a human incarnation, to have the kind of experiences we could only have as human beings for a limited time.

The story of Passover and its rituals was designed to provide us with the tools and blessings to access freedom within our lives, regardless of what is happening externally in the world. Attaching ourselves to the holiness of the Jewish people allows access to greater blessings than we would merit on our own.

The first tool is *matzah*. The *Torah* tells us "Eat *matzahs* for seven days. By the first day you must have your homes cleared of all leaven." (Exodus 12:15) Made of only flour and water and baked within 18 minutes so it does not rise or become leavened. The *Zohar* calls it the food of healing. *Matzah* is likened to the unleavened bread that the Jewish people baked quickly and took with them as they fled Egypt.

When we eat *matzah*, we become open to the experience of God feeding and sustaining us in our life. *Matzah* is humble and simple. Be like *matzah* in order to receive blessings in life. *Be humble and simple in your life.* It is best to not talk when you are eating *matzah* so as to receive the blessings of fulfilling this commandment. *Matzah* reminds us to surrender to Divine Will and connect to the holiness and mission of the Jewish people who are also eating this same simple food Jews have been eating for thousands of years.

When it comes to eating the bitter herbs at the *Seder*, we are advised to eat them with love and acceptance. Life is not always sweet. Eating maror with others is bonding because every human being has hardship. *We are all vulnerable.* If you like, try kissing the *maror* and be grateful for all the challenges and hard times that helped shaped who you are in your life right now.

When we humbly acknowledge to God on Passover, "I need Your assistance to take me out of my Egypt, out of my suffering, my addictions, my fears, my doubts, my reactivity, so I can live with greater vitality," we may hear the words, "I am the God who took you out of Egypt." *Meditate deeply on those words.* We can not live authentically and courageously without a God connection. We can't even breathe on our own. It is only God who has the power to lift each of us to the highest consciousness of love, freedom and joy.

*Melinda Ribner L.C.S.W. is the author of Everyday Kabbalah. Free Jewish meditation classes are offered on zoom twice a week. Sign up for a free newsletter on the Kabbalistic energies of the months, holidays, meditation, and zoom links by emailing her at: Beitmiriam@msn.com or sign up on her Facebook pro page Melinda Ribner Spiritual Guide. Website: MelindaRibner.com. ✨*

## Cosmic Judaism



BY RABBI BARRY SILVER

### Do Not “Pass Over” the True Meaning of Passover

Many traditional Jews remove *chametz* (food forbidden on Passover) from their homes, but forget the meaning of this ritual. Removing un-*kosher* clutter from our homes to prepare for Passover is a metaphor for removing the clutter of negativity, greed and cynicism from our minds to prepare for spiritual liberation.

The Passover *Haggadah* (story) describes Pharaoh’s enslavement of the Jews, who he treated as objects to use and exploit without mercy. As a result, he unleashed a series of plagues upon himself and his nation. The unmentioned actors in this drama are the vast majority of Egyptians who remained silent and benefitted from institutionalized racism and slavery, bringing great suffering upon themselves. Throughout history, humans have emulated Egypt and doomed their nations by moral collapse as time “*matzahs*” on.

In the antebellum south, genteel southern Christians profited from the selling, trading, and owning of human beings before the south was destroyed; Roman crowds cheered as human beings were thrown to the lions and forced to fight each other to the death, which presaged the end of their civilization and today the Colosseum lies in ruins; and most Americans were silent or collaborated as the indigenous people of America were subjected to physical and cultural genocide, and now we face environmental collapse by ignoring their maxim that the earth does not belong to us, we belong to the earth.

Perhaps the appointment of the first Native American, Deb Halaand, to lead the Department of the Interior, augurs a turning point in our nation’s history and hope for the future. Sadly, many Jews learn nothing from the past and rebel against Moses, as in Biblical days, by denigrating Jews who follow the Mosaic ideal of compassion and love with their most vile epithet, “liberal”.

The *Torah* says that God “hardened” the heart of Pharaoh and kept the Jewish people enslaved despite ten horrific plagues. Our benevolent ancestors could not imagine anyone as cruel as Pharaoh, so they blamed his cruelty on God. But we

need not go back thousands of years or resort to supernatural agents to see the tremendous capacity for heartless stupidity among leaders and sheep-like acquiescence by their loyal subjects who follow these despotic leaders into the abyss with their sin of silence.

Today, humans face 10 modern plagues of ignorance, arrogance, intolerance, climate change, overpopulation, gun violence, religious fanaticism, poverty, injustice and war, as a result of our Pharaonic behavior and we also suffer from the worst plague of all according to Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, the plague of indifference, which makes all the other plagues possible and lethal.

The horrors in Ukraine are the result of the world community’s craven addiction to oil which causes us to abandon our ideals, debauch democracy, and dance “sheikh to sheikh” with oiligarchs who have us over a barrel and offer an oilwellian future by our continued enslavement to fossil fuels and the slick politicians who support Pharaonic regimes which threaten Israel and America. Let us free ourselves from the death grip of these murderous regimes by launching a Manhattan Project to develop alternative energy with new and improved technology that will make oil and gas obsolete and will bankrupt these vicious regimes and bring great wealth to those who devise this new technology.

May all Jews become “little Messiahs”, collectively taking on the role of Elijah, the forerunner of the Messianic Age whose presence is invited into all Jewish homes on Passover. On that day, Jews may spearhead a global spiritual transformation to perceive earth and all its creatures as one, reflected in the *Shema* and unite all people on Earth to protect Creation, symbolized by the parsley, and to free all people from tyranny.

Let us not “pass over” the true meaning of *Pesach*, i.e. freedom, and ask ourselves a 5th question this Passover, “Will the world be inspired by the Passover saga of liberation under Moses by standing with the modern-day Moses, the Jewish leader Volodymyr Zelensky, who is courageously leading his people in a struggle for liberation against the Pharaonic Putin?” This Passover let us respond to the call and be inspired by the stirring words of Moses, “Let my people go” and of Zelensky, “*Slava Ukrainiye, heroim slava*” (Glory to Ukraine and glory to the heroes), and bring freedom to all people on Earth.

Happy Passover!

**Rabbi Barry Silver practices Cosmic Judaism and may be reached at [barry\\_boca@aol.com](mailto:barry_boca@aol.com). He welcomes all opinions and is available for discussion, debate and good trouble. ✨**

## Posting the Past



BY RABBI MAURICE DAVIS

### Why The Rabbi Loves Everything About *Pesach*

*Pesach* is almost here, and there is no holiday in Judaism which I anticipate more eagerly. I love everything about it; its wondrous message of life and hope and freedom, its promise of a better tomorrow and a better world. *Pesach* is our own peculiar brand of spring fever on its most exalted level.

It is the time of year we sit down at our feast with family and fine food, with wine and with laughter, in order to tell and to retell the story of our slavery, and the story of our freedom. And yet, no matter how specific we become, the story demands of us that we think beyond ourselves.

We are reminded that we know – or ought to know – the heart of the slave, for that was once our lot in life. If we lose the sensitivity, we lose everything. And if we rejoice in our freedom alone, we abdicate our very right to the *Seder* and its story.

That is what a great many Jews this year – and I hope you will be among them – will add one prayer to the *Haggadah*. It is called the “*Matzoh* of Hope” and it is dedicated to the three million Jews of Russia for whom slavery is still their lot. This is the *matzoh* of hope.

“This *matzoh*, which we set aside as a symbol of hope for the 3 million Jews of the Soviet Union, reminds us of the indestructible link that exists between us.

“As we observe this festival of freedom, we know that Soviet Jews are not free to learn of their Jewish past, to hand it down to their children. They cannot teach their children to be teachers, the rabbis of future generations.

“They can only sit in silence and become invisible. We shall be their voice, and our voices shall be joined by thousands of men of conscience aroused by the wrongs suffered by Soviet Jews. Then shall they know that they have not been forgotten, and they that sit in darkness shall yet see a great light.”

**Rabbi Maurice Davis (1921-1993) z”l, was a champion of civil rights and a battler against the Moonies and other cults that preyed on young Jews. For many years he was a columnist for this publication. He served Congregation Adath Israel in Lexington, (see Davis, page IN 7)**

# Student Writing Award Winner

Every year, students of The Hasten Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis (Ind.) (HHAI), a Jewish day school, submit their writings to the Letters About Literature – a statewide reading and writing competition for 4th through 12th graders, a program of the Indiana Center for the Book an affiliate of the Library of Congress. The students write a letter to the author (living or deceased) of a favorite book, poem, essay, or speech about how the work affected how they see themselves or how they see the world.

Over the years, HHAI has been proud to have had many students awarded prizes of various levels. This year, over 1,000 letters were submitted and HHAI had three students in the top 10%, including sixth grader Liron Blinkov for his letter to Kwame Alexander and eighth grader Matanya Goldstein for his letter to George Orwell.

For the fifth year, HHAI is very proud to have a student place first in the state! Eighth grader Naomi Cohen wrote to Sara Leicht-Weinstein, the author of *The Power of Hatred, The Strength of Love*, to win top prize in the 7th and 8th Grade category. Below is Naomi's award-winning letter:



Ms. Cohen

Dear Mrs. Leicht,

From the very first page of *The Power of Hatred, The Strength of Love* to the last, tears began to sting my face as I envisioned a girl my age stepping off a filthy cattle car into the gates of hell – Auschwitz. I began to question the world and people around me. What causes people to hate so deeply? Why do people find it so difficult to put their differences aside? Which is more powerful -- love or hate?

As a 14-year-old Jewish Orthodox girl, your feelings really resonated with me. I have been bullied, made fun of, and judged because of my political opinions and devotion to Judaism. I feel like an out-cast to people in my school and city as the Orthodox community is so small. People make rude slurs and say terrible things about my modesty and the way that I talk. I am so sick of hearing "Why is your skirt so long?" "Why do you even pray? God is not real." I am afraid to share any opinion that I possess about the world for fear of being judged. I admit that I also am guilty of being quick to judge others and dislike them because of their opinions and beliefs. Reading your book forced me to reflect on my behaviors. We do not always need to agree with others, but it is possible to disagree peacefully. Of equal impor-

DAVIS

(continued from page IN 6)

Ky., from 1951-1956, Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation from 1956-1967, and from 1967-1987 he was senior rabbi of the Jewish Community Center of White Plains, N.Y. (Reprinted from April 21, 1967.) ✨



tance, I need to treat others with kindness, no matter their beliefs.

You found the ability to love even though I am positive your hatred of the Nazis was consuming and that's how you were able to survive and thrive, despite the inconceivable horrors that you witnessed as a child. You were miraculously spared death from the Nazi-built gas chambers by being pulled out as the doors were closing behind you. You had every right to live your life in bitterness and hatred but you chose a different path – one of love, acceptance and joy.

You devoted your life to help others in need by becoming a neonatal nurse, dedicating yourself to saving as many tiny lives as you could. Having lost your parents at such a young age, you made it your life's mission to be a loving devoted mother and grandmother.

You escaped the traumas of your past through love and acceptance. That is true power.

The Nazis were animalistic villains, who committed atrocities against Jews and minorities. Despite that, you still figured out how to find light in total darkness and love within hate. While spending your time at Auschwitz, you found ways to occupy yourself, to keep your mind on the future and not on the nightmares of the present. You were able to see past the barbed wire and envision a future away from the hell that you were experiencing.

Each night as you watched the new transports of prisoners arriving to the death camp, you would secretly hope that in the midst of the crowds of people you might recognize a family member, neighbor, or friend. You found that making friends and having your second cousin by your side kept your spirit alive as your body starved from hunger. The suffocating stench of death never left you as you grew older, but you refused to let it stop you from smelling the beautiful aromas of the Israeli markets you would frequent.

Your book, *The Power of Hatred, The Strength of Love* showed me that loving is so much more difficult than hating. You



# False Equivalencies

BY RABBI DENNIS C. SASSO



Recent efforts to draw parallels between the struggles and plights of Ukrainians and of Palestinians are ill-informed and misleading. A variety of oversimplified and erroneous comparisons and themes have emerged.

One common trope is to conflate American racial politics with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Israel is depicted as white country and the Palestinians as an oppressed people of color in whom Americans and Europeans are less interested than in the white Ukrainians.

But Israel is a nation of ethnic, racial, and religious diversity. While there are certainly elements of racial discrimination in Israel, as in countries worldwide, it is primarily internal to Israeli society. Many Israelis are, in fact, of the same middle eastern stock as Palestinians. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not racial, it is geopolitical. Further, to suggest that the world is not interested in the Palestinian cause is disingenuous. The Western press abounds with articles about the Palestinian cause, often to the exclusion of far worse humanitarian crises around the globe.

Another troubling motif seeks to equate the resistance of the Ukrainians to Russian invasion with Palestinian efforts against Israel, casting Israel in the role of Russia, as an unprovoked invader. This patently ignores decades of Palestinian and Arab warfare against Israel, including Palestinian leadership's continued calls for the eradication of the State of Israel. It also ignores the efforts of Israelis, Palestinians, and many American Jews in favor of political and diplomatic solutions to the conflict. Moreover, to equate Ukrainian proven democracy to the faulty, failed, and often sabotaged attempts among Palestinian leadership, whether in Gaza or the West Bank, to achieve democracy, is a lapse in moral judgment.

(see Sasso, page IN 9)



showed me that it takes more strength to put aside differences and agreements and find common ground. You made me believe that this was possible even during challenging times like today. If you were capable of letting go of your feelings of hatred, I know that I can with utmost certainty. You did not allow the flames of Auschwitz to extinguish your soul, rather you used them to keep the embers of love alive in your heart.

My deepest admiration and appreciation, Naomi Cohen. ✨

# Holocaust Educator



BY MIRIAM ZIMMERMAN, ED.D.

## Is Race Only Skin Deep?

As I write these words, war rages in Ukraine, caused by the crazed Russian despot intent on taking over the country. His army drops bombs and missiles on hapless civilians while they stand in bread lines, shelter in theatres, or huddle in subway stations. Indiscriminately, he bombs children's hospitals, apartment buildings, and those who attempt to flee.

Reuters pointed out that homes have been destroyed all over Ukraine. It cited the International Committee of the Red Cross, "Hundreds of thousands of people have no food, no water, no heat, no electricity, and no medical care". The White House described it as a "barbaric use of military force, to go after innocent civilians".

Scenes of dead civilians, including pregnant women, understandably unified and motivated the world in efforts to save these civilians, mostly women and children. I am proud of my daughter Leah and her husband Ian, who live in Munich. They have taken in three Ukrainian refugees for an indeterminate amount of time. Because of their efforts, two women, who are cousins, and the ten-year-old son of one of them, have found safety.

The media effectively ended the public fuss over Whoopi Goldberg's Jan. 31 gaffe about race and the Holocaust. Did Whoopi really command so much of our media attention and collective concern, just before the war broke out?

As a Holocaust educator, I need to point out the racism lurking under the surface of the refugee crises. In 2015, at the height of the Syrian civil war, the world had a completely different response. Despite the equally tragic circumstances of both Syrian and Ukrainian refugees, the Syrians found very few safe havens in the west.

When refugees share neither your religion nor your skin color, it is easier to remain passively unconcerned. So many Ukrainians have blue eyes and light hair. Racism, defined as conscious or unconscious bias, freezes the capacity of one human being to respond to another's humanity. Racists are unwilling or unable to help fellow human beings, even those facing dire circumstances.

The Holocaust taught Germany important lessons about race. Germany led the

European Union by taking in the most international migrants. According to Google, "between 2015 and 2019 alone, more than 1,622,954 people registered as asylum seekers [in Germany] with Syrians being the largest single nationality."

As a Holocaust educator, I would like to help Ms. Goldberg take the next steps in achieving a fuller understanding of the brouhaha caused by her misplaced comments about race and the Holocaust. The following column should help, originally published in the Feb. 23, 2022 edition of *The Indiana Jewish Post and Opinion*.

Actress, talk show moderator, comedian, author, media executive, and award winner Whoopi Goldberg inspires so many. I was smitten by Goldberg's talents after watching her in the 1990 movie, *Ghost*, followed by her portrayal of a pretend nun in 1992's *Sister Act*. Sadly, I read the hoopla in the media regarding her recent ill-chosen remarks about the Holocaust and race.

I believe Ms. Goldberg got a bad rap for statements made on ABC's *The View*, on Jan. 31, 2022. YouTube and other media outlets make her comments easily accessible. "Let's be truthful about it, because the Holocaust isn't about race. No. It's not about race; it's about man's inhumanity to man. That's what it's about."

On that fateful Jan. 31st, *The View* discussed the controversial banning of Art Spiegelman's *Maus* by a Tennessee school district. Ms. Goldberg's controversial comments arose from that discussion.



Ms. Goldberg

Her subsequent two-week suspension from *The View*, in my opinion, was overkill. As a Holocaust educator, I would like to point out that we do not punish students for their lack of knowledge; we have teachers to fill in information gaps. By suspending Goldberg from *The View*, executives missed this teaching opportunity.

Even though Jonathan Greenblatt, executive director of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) appeared on *The View* the next day, it wasn't enough. There should have been a week of such guests, to hone in on the nuances that this controversy encompassed. To put Ms. Goldberg on the defensive and require a hasty apology, without the necessary understanding, is a disservice to Ms. Goldberg, to her audience, and to the memory of the Holocaust. Students do not learn when they feel they must defend themselves.

A course in "Holocaust 101" would enable Ms. Goldberg to understand how the Nazis saw Jews as a race. She would learn about the rapid identification and segregation of Jews begun by the Nuremberg Laws. Jews had to give up

their radios, wear the yellow star, and crowd into ghettos. Finally, the *Judenrate* (Jewish Councils) of the ghettos drew up lists of those to be deported to extermination camps. The Nazi high command determined the schedule and how many Jews per department, but it was Jews who named their fellow Jews. A good discussion point for students: "Were the *Judenrate* victims or collaborators?"

Such a course would help Ms. Goldberg avoid such gaffes. Her need for a Holocaust educator cries out. For 25 years, I taught the Holocaust course at Notre Dame de Namur University (NDNU) in Belmont, Calif. Unfortunately, NDNU closed its doors as an undergraduate university in 2021, ending my class.

"Ms. Goldberg, are you listening? I'm available."

Your first assignment, a research question: "How did the Nazis know who was Jewish?" Ideally, you would find the World Jewish Congress (WJC) website, with its succinct explanation. The Nazis "identified Jews residing in Germany through the normal records created by a modern state. They used census records, tax returns, synagogue membership lists, parish records (for converted Jews), routine but mandatory police registration forms, the questioning of relatives, and from information provided by neighbors and municipal officials."

On Feb. 9, 2022, in a "Classrooms without Borders" webinar, noted Holocaust scholar and rabbi Dr. Michael Berenbaum pointed out that Goldberg got it half right. "Jews are not [just] a race. They are multiracial and interracial; they allow conversion, and some Jews even encourage conversion." Being Jewish is a "voluntary association," he continued, citing the Book of Ruth, 1:16-17, "...your people shall be my people and your God my God." In Dr. Berenbaum's words, one answer to the question, "What is a Jew?" is "an affiliation issue, not a race issue."

Motivated by her experience of racism in this country, Ms. Goldberg cited what it was like to grow up Black in the United States. In her experience, race was a matter of skin color, what one sees: black vs. white. Flashback to childhood conversations with my father, of blessed memory, Werner L. Loewenstein, M.D. He was a 1937 Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany. In one of our many discussions about his experiences growing up, I asked why, unlike him, I never experienced anti-Semitism, growing up in Terre Haute, Ind.

Dad pointed out to me that in this country, "We have the Negro [a term of respect at the time]. They are easily identifiable targets of hate." In Nazi Germany, he explained, Jews became scapegoats because they were different from the Germans. He asserted that "If there were

no Negroes in the U.S., there would be much more antisemitism.”

I believe Dad would agree with Ms. Goldberg that in the United States, in the 1950's and '60's, racism was a matter of color. As a woman of color, she was an easily identifiable target. She spoke the truth from her experience, the pervasiveness of anti-Black discrimination, while growing up in America.

Her heartfelt delivery of “the Holocaust is about man’s inhumanity to man” and not about race, indicated to me she was not being antisemitic, nor was she downplaying the enormity of the Holocaust. In fact, I believe she was striving to do the opposite. On a continuum between “prejudice” and “genocide”, with racism being somewhere in between, the Holocaust was worse than racism by being an example of “man’s inhumanity to man.” Her language *broadened* the scope of the Holocaust, making it more global than a racial issue. Such inhumanity, that resulted in genocide, is just as bad, if not worse, than the racism she experienced.

So where did Ms. Goldberg miss the mark? From her perspective, it was a logical, albeit false, conclusion, that the Holocaust was not about race. She mistakenly compared being Black in America to being Jewish in Nazi Germany, concluding that the Nazis couldn’t “see” race, as she defined race, by skin color.

Flashback again to my childhood. Many people, both Jews and non-Jews, asked my father, “How could the Holocaust have happened in such an advanced, cultured country like Germany?” In heavily German-accented English he would reply, “It isn’t widely known, but the Nazis had a racist ideology which required extermination of people they didn’t like. They had very effective propaganda to convince the people that it [extermination] was necessary. Finally, they had doctors to carry it out.” I heard my dad deliver this speech in social settings like *Onegs* (reception after religious services) or other casual encounters, many times while growing up.

Instead of a complicated lecture, he provided a clear and succinct answer, appropriate for social occasions. His “unholy trinity” of racist ideology, propaganda, and medical murder, was easy for people to retain. His trilogy infused my Holocaust class.

Because I taught at a Catholic University, very early in the semester I began with historical Church-sanctioned anti-Judaism. In Christian Europe, anti-Judaism was the norm, a context that enabled the Holocaust to happen. It is important to state that no reputable scholar today would assert that the Church is antisemitic. But the anti-Judaism of Christianity enabled otherwise good

Christians to look the other way when their Jewish neighbors were harassed in the streets or carted away.

The Nazis inherited the Enlightenment emphasis on scientific reasoning and the concomitant erosion of religion. Darwin, the “father” of evolution; and Eugenics, the “science” of race, ascended while religious dogma receded.

If Ms. Goldberg gleans only one thing, I would choose the following for her: *the Nazis ingeniously transformed historical religious anti-Judaism into contemporary racial antisemitism. For European Christians, it was a seamless transition from hating Jews because of their religion, to hating Jews because of their race.*

The Nazi science of Eugenics placed Aryans at the top. Nazi doctors conducted research and biomedical experiments to prove and maintain Aryan supremacy. Eugenics justified the extermination of people, mainly Jews, whose genes threatened to undermine Aryan purity.

Dad pointed out another difference between the United States and Christian Europe. We enjoy the Constitutional doctrine of the separation of church and state. For example, when I was growing up, people did not wear their religion on their sleeves. A more important issue, that we should be talking about, is the current erosion of that doctrine.

Example: on Feb. 2, students in Huntington High School in W.Va., were locked in the auditorium and forced to participate in a Christian revival ceremony. Disturbing questions arise. Why was a sectarian, religious group allowed to proselytize students in a public school, whether voluntarily on the part of students or not? Isn’t this a violation of the separation of church and state, and thus an abrogation of the Constitution? Shouldn’t the school authorities be prosecuted?

From racism to antisemitism to the separation of church and state, Whoopi Goldberg’s comments encompass many topics for meaningful discussion, learning, and understanding. We should not punish her for speaking from her lived experience, nor make her a whipping girl for her lack of knowledge, nor blame her as a catalyst for additional antisemitism.

The vitriol dumped on Whoopi Goldberg from the Jewish community is enough to engender in her a backlash. I wouldn’t blame her. Instead, treating her with the respect to which she is entitled, and providing her with learning opportunities should be the goal of all who profess to have knowledge about race and the Holocaust.

**Dr. Miriam Zimmerman** is professor emerita at Notre Dame de Namur University (NDNU) in Belmont, Calif., where she taught the Holocaust course for 25 years. She can be reached at [mimzim@aol.com](mailto:mimzim@aol.com). ✨

## SASSO

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Additionally, there is a failure to take seriously the complicity of Arab nations which has contributed to the Palestinian problematic and subjected Israel to decades of terrorism, warfare, and rejectionist policies. Fortunately, we witness today common interest efforts to rectify this history and normalize relations with Israel among some key Arab nations. Moreover, while the modern-day Palestinian people have developed a national identity fully deserving of a state of their own, it is to be noted that Palestinian Arabs living within the land of Israel enjoy full citizenship rights and representation in the government.

Michael Koplow (*Israel Policy Forum*, 3-3-22) addresses the problems inherent in attempting to draw false parallels between the War of Russia and Ukraine and the Palestinian struggle against Israeli occupation. He counters those arguments on historical, geopolitical, and tactical grounds. Israel’s control of the Palestinian territories did not result from an “invasion designed to recover a former Israeli republic or install a puppet government.” It resulted from the efforts of the new State of Israel to repel a multinational force invasion. It is important to note that Ukraine never posed an existential threat against Russia, as Palestinian terrorists and charters have baldly perpetuated.

We need not approve of every Israeli military or political tactic and there is reason to criticize decisions and actions on both the Israeli and Palestinian sides. But to suggest that the massive, relentless, and indiscriminate bombing of Ukraine by Russia somehow parallels the Israeli-Palestinian struggle is intellectually flawed and morally untenable. The Ukrainian fight against Russia is fundamentally and practically different from the Palestinian conflict with Israel.

As Passover approaches and we retell the ancient story of liberation, let us use the spirit and the rituals of the holiday to affirm and celebrate our people’s historic trajectory to freedom and join others in the unfinished journey. This can be done without creating false equivalences, cynically pitting one cause against another, and obliquely blaming American Jews and Israelis for ills that neither can solve alone. With the cooperation and leadership of people of good will around the world, let us hope: *Bashanah haba-ah....* Next year in Jerusalem and Kyiv at peace!

**Rabbi Dennis C. Sasso** has been senior rabbi of Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis for more than 44 years. (This originally appeared on the Times of Israel blog on March 30, 2022.) ✨

# Preparing for the Revised Passion Play

By MIRIAM L. ZIMMERMAN

Sister Roseanne Murphy planted the seed many years ago, sometime before 2010. She stopped by my office on the beautiful campus of Notre Dame de Namur University (NDNU) in Belmont, Calif. The lush landscape provided an oasis for deer, birds, small animals, and oblivious students. Sisters who lived on campus reported hearing raccoons and coyotes at night.

Sr. Roseanne gave me a thin blue book and explained it was the new script of the Oberammergau *Passionsspiele* (Passion Play). In Medieval times, such plays both educated an illiterate populace about the Passion story and provided a profound spiritual experience. Had I heard of the Passion Play?

Startled, my mind raced through centuries of pogroms (community violence against Jews by their non-Jewish neighbors) heaped on the Jewish communities of Europe. "Yes," I responded politely. "I have heard of this play." I restrained myself by not pointing out the centuries of persecution incited by the Play's performances.

Passion Plays usually depicted the trial, suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus, including scenes of angry Jewish mobs chanting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" The reenactment of "the Jew as Christ-killer" narrative, especially around Easter, galvanized otherwise peaceful Christians to heap abuse on their Jewish neighbors. From the beginning of my Holocaust class in 1995 at NDNU, I included this Medieval Passion Play's deadly effect on Jews.

In October 1965, the Vatican released *Nostra Aetate*, "In Our Time," a declaration that changed forever the relationship of the Church to non-Christian religions. The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, popularly

known as "Vatican II," made sweeping changes in Church teachings and rituals. For example, it allowed the mass to be spoken in languages other than Latin. *Nostra Aetate* made it official: the Jews were no longer responsible for the death of Jesus.

In 1965, I was a junior at university. My dad, a 1937 German-Jewish refugee, called me at my dorm. "Have you heard? The Catholic Church no longer blames Jews for the death of Jesus. If that had happened before, there never would have been the Holocaust." I can still hear the excitement in his voice and see myself in the hallway, hanging up a rotary phone that all four of us girls in the room shared. The importance of his message has stayed with me for almost 60 years.

Adolf Hitler attended the 1934 performance of the Oberammergau Play and proclaimed, "Never has the menace of Jewry been so convincingly portrayed." Is there a direct line from Passion Plays to the *Shoah*? To comprehend the mindset that allowed the Holocaust to happen, students need to understand the origins of the "Longest Hatred," the anti-Jewish diatribe in Christianity. The Oberammergau *Passionsspiele* reenacted the origins of that hatred, to Hitler's delight.

Before Vatican II, The Church taught that Jews, as Christ-killers, deserved the wrath of God. God-sanctioned Jewish suffering justified persecution, murder, rape, and destruction of property, all acts perpetrated in a pogrom. Jews became the universal scapegoat of society's ills, including plagues, wars, and economic woes.

The recent pandemic eerily echoed this blame. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) reproduced antisemitic memes and tropes on its website, which memes blamed the Jews for the Coronavirus. Goebbels, Hitler's propaganda minister, would have willingly utilized the grotesque caricatures of stereotypical Jewish men for his anti-Jewish propaganda.

Thus, my associations of Passion Plays were poles apart from what I assumed Sr. Roseanne harbored. For her, the Oberammergau Passion Play would be eagerly anticipated, a tribute to her Savior and Lord Jesus Christ. She explained that the Oberammergau Play was being revised to eliminate the anti-Jewish elements. *Nostra Aetate* had been published two generations earlier; it was about time, I thought.

As a result of Sr. Roseanne's kindness, the Oberammergau *Passionsspiele* has been on my radar in the interim years. I resolved to see this Play for myself one day, to determine how successful the Play's producers had been in getting rid of stereotypical anti-Jewish depictions. Because of the Covid pandemic, I knew that the 2020 production had been delayed two years. Having retired from my second career as a mediator in 2020, I now

## Save the Date

Miriam Zimmerman will be speaking in Terre Haute, Ind., on **Sun., June 5** at the CANDLES Holocaust Museum and Education Center located at 1532 S. 3rd Street. Alex Kor will also present.

Tentative title: **"From Terror to Terre Haute: Healing After the Holocaust While Growing Up in a Survivor Family"**. It will be a hybrid presentation, available on Zoom as well as in person. It will include the close relationship Miriam's parents had with the Kor family. ✨



had the time to see the play. The Play's press office accepted my application for press credentials and invited me to its May 14, 2022 premier. Sr. Roseanne's seed has grown to fruition.

In the interim decades, both Catholic and Jewish theologians served as consultants to the Play, working together to rid the Play of its anti-Jewish stereotypes. In advance of May 14, I wanted to speak with these theologians, better to prepare for seeing it.

In 1995, Father Michael McGarry, then a pastor at the University of California, Berkeley, was the original speaker on the "Longest Hatred" to my Holocaust class. A few weeks ago, he put me in touch with Dr. Philip A. Cunningham, Professor of Theology and director of the Institute for Jewish-Catholic Relations of Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia, Pa. A former president of the International Council of Christians and Jews, Dr. Cunningham now serves on the Advisory Committee on Catholic-Jewish Relations for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Dr. Cunningham suggested I also contact Rabbi A. James Rudin, an international leader in interreligious relations. Rabbi Rudin was a member of the American Jewish Committee's (AJC) professional staff for 32 years, where he served as the organization's Interreligious Affairs Director. Currently, he is the AJC's Senior Interreligious Adviser.

Both men were generous with their time on respective Zooms with me, sharing their expertise and experience. I submitted questions in advance, wanting to be respectful of their time, and also, of mine. At the risk of sounding sexist, I was certain neither of them would have to boil eggs or scrub cabinets after our Zooms to prepare for upcoming Passover *Seder*. But the question I really wanted to ask Dr. Cunningham was not on my list. I managed to blurt it out during a relevant lull in our discussion: "What was it like to be an expert Catholic theologian and have Jews dictating what should or should not be included in a Play about the origins of Christianity? Isn't that

(see Zimmerman, page IN 11)

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**ZIMMERMAN***(continued from page IN 10)*

the ultimate *chutzpah*?" I was thinking about Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, and his behind the scenes influence at Vatican II (see my article in *JP&O*, "Spiritual Audacity: The Abraham Joshua Heschel Story," Dec. 1, 2021).

Although he had not worked directly with the Play's writers, Dr. Cunningham pointed out that in the United States, both Catholic and Jewish theologians have been in dialogue for many years and worked together in the field of Catholic-Jewish relations. There was a high degree of trust [and respect] among these men as they strove to mend the unfortunate past. They wanted to forge a mutually reinforcing understanding that would not pit one religion against the other. As a result, one side did not dictate to the other. Thus, the U.S. Jewish and Catholic theologians were able to come together in friendship to help the Oberammergau authorities achieve their goals. "It's not the same in Europe," he added enigmatically.

Rabbi Rubin emailed me a PDF of his chapter, published in a 2004 book. The chapter, "Oberammergau: A Case Study of Passion Plays," contained the Hitler quote, cited above. When attending the Play in 1984, Rabbi Rubin consciously chose the same hotel where Hitler stayed in 1934. I was relieved that my husband and I have reservations at the Hotel Alte Post and not the Hotel Wittelsbach Oberammergau, which had provided lodging for both men.

I was later to learn that Rabbi Rudin's chapter was in the book, *Pondering the Passion: What's at Stake for Christians and Jews?* Dr. Cunningham had edited this book. The two men are friends as well as colleagues. Both have been involved in interreligious relations for decades, whether Catholic-Jewish, Jewish-Christian, or interreligious relations. That, in itself, is a story.

According to Rabbi Rudin, reform of the Play dates back to the 1970s and '80s. Rabbi Rudin has been involved since the '70s. In the aftermath of the *Shoah*, Christian (and Jewish) leaders felt the Play needed to be revised, that the anti-Jewish stereotypes had to go. There were threats of boycotts of the Play from the U.S. and U.K. Perhaps the loss of revenue from the hundreds of thousands of tourists who pilgrimage to Oberammergau to see the Play each decade was a factor in wanting to revise the Play.

Contemporary Church leaders were not alone in recognizing the incendiary nature of the Play. For example, Passion Plays incited so much violence against the Jews that "in 1338, the councilors of Freiburg [Germany] banned the performance of anti-Jewish scenes of that town's Play." For

the same reason, "the Frankfurt Jewish ghetto was protected in 1469; and in 1539 a Passion Play was forbidden in Rome because of the violent assaults against the city's Jewish residents in previous years."

Thus, even in the Middle Ages, Christian authorities recognized the lethal dangers to Jewish communities caused by the Play. This information from Rabbi Rudin's chapter stunned me. Christian authorities in Medieval Europe actually protected Jews by preventing violence against them.

I wondered how conservative Christians will feel about altering the story of the Passion. I remember speaking with Louise, a Catholic and dear family friend. For decades, Louise worked as office manager and medical assistant to my dad, a family doctor. I was visiting from university the winter break after Vatican II. In our discussion, she expressed concern about the loss of the Latin mass. I can still see the scorn on her face when she explained, "We might as well become Protestants."

Thanks to input from students, I altered the way I presented the Longest Hatred to my Holocaust class. It was early in my 25-years of teaching the Holocaust in a Catholic university. To myself, I called them, "Colleen and Calleen" (not their real names; they were Irish and proud of it). Seated in the front row, they paid attention and took

copious notes. Such students are usually the most serious and successful.

One day, I entered my tiny office to find them in the two available seats. It was shortly after the "Longest Hatred" lecture. "We want you to know that we disagree with you. You are telling us that to be good Catholics, we have to hate Jews. We both went to Catholic school for 12 years. That's not how we were raised."

I learned the hard way that one cannot teach about the history of Church-sanctioned anti-Judaism to today's students without including the reforms of Vatican II. As a result, I included variations of, "No student alive today has been inculcated with this venomous hatred, thanks to Vatican II."

Ten years prior to this event, in 1985, Dad attended a retrospective on Vatican II at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Ind. He explained to me that he accompanied a contingent from St. Anthony's Hospital in Terre Haute, Ind. (my home town), where he had staff privileges. Dad was interested only in the sessions about the changes in Church teachings about the Jews.

After the conference, he reported to me the main finding. Surveys found that the new teachings about Jews had not filtered down to parish levels. Academic nuns and

(see Zimmerman, page IN 12)

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## ZIMMERMAN

(continued from page IN 11)

priests, like the ones I hung out with, knew all about the reforms. But that level of knowledge needed to be better disseminated to the parish level. For years, I used handouts that he had obtained in South Bend, written by Rabbi Michael Cook, for my class.

If “Colleen” and “Calleen” are representative, by 1995, 30 years after Vatican II, such teachings have, indeed, filtered down to everyday Catholic catechism. Unfortunately, Dad passed away in 1990, five years before I started teaching the Holocaust class at NDNU, so I could not inform him of this evidence of the success of Vatican II.

I was reared in an atmosphere of “It can happen here,” with “it” being the Holocaust. The demonstrated effectiveness of Vatican II might have reassured him that he need not fear another Holocaust. For reasons listed above, I feel personally connected to Vatican II. That the Play’s producers want to bring the Play up to date in accordance with its teachings is the most compelling reason for me to see the Play for myself. For the Jewish community, 57 years is long enough to wait.

As I prepared for Passover *Seder*, while many of my friends prepared for Easter, I wondered how long will it take for the two faith traditions to honor and perhaps celebrate each other’s redemptive rituals, the Passover and the Passion. The power of story to redeem can reside in even the most disparate of circumstances. Each story is a spiritual reenactment that, on the one hand, helps every Jew feel redeemed from slavery; the other story redeems Christians from sin.

Rabbi Rudin informed me that the man most responsible for changes in the play was its director, Christian Stückl. Herr Stückl is the hero, he declared, “the prime mover behind the changes.” He told me to say “hi” to him. The two had worked together for many years to implement the reforms of Vatican II.

But the changes in the 2010 script did not go far enough. Would the director be successful in satisfying the Jewish community in this new production of the Passion story? I certainly hope so. Herr Stückl, I wish for you all the success possible in this historic endeavor. I am on your side.

For more about the Oberammergau *Passionsspiele*, browse to <https://www.passionsspiele-oberammergau.de/en/home>.

See Miriam Zimmerman’s bio on page IN 9. ✨



# Simcha Announcements

## Mazel Tov to...

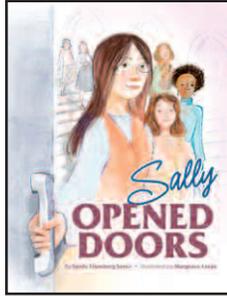
**Mira and Yoni Schreiber**, on the birth of their son, **Isaac** (below), on March 24, 2022 in Teaneck, N.J. Mira is the daughter of **Mark and Colleen Shere** and Yoni is the son of **Alan and Judy Schreiber**.



**Samuel Charles Katz** (below), son of **Donald Katz and Lori Katz**, on his marriage to **Malka Batsheva Newman**, of London, England, in Jerusalem on April 1, 2022.



**Rabbi Sandy Sasso** on her new children's book, *Sally Opened Doors: The Story of the First Woman Rabbi*, a hardcover, picture book illustrated by



Margeaux Lucas, to release on June 1, 2022.. Sally Priesand, the first American woman to be ordained a rabbi, opened doors for Jewish women's full participation in Jewish life. This is the third book by Rabbi Sandy about courageous women from Jewish history.

**Naomi Cohen**, eighth grader at HHAI, for winning first place in the state for her submission to Letters About Literature. She wrote to Sara Leicht-Weinstein, the author of *The Power of Hatred, The Strength of Love* to win top prize in the 7th and 8th grade category. See Naomi Cohen's award-winning letter on page IN 7.

**Evan Lubline** (below, center), CEO of Hooverwood Living, on receiving the Young Executive of the Year award on April 5th at the 2022 Association of Jewish Aging Services (AJAS) Annual Conference.



Evan exemplifies forward-thinking innovation in the senior care industry and is motivated to continue making Hooverwood Living the best multi-service care provider in Indianapolis. The Hooverwood family is so proud to call him their fearless leader! In the photo with Evan are Hooverwood Board President Stacy Segal and National President and CEO of AJAS Don Schulman of Rockville, Maryland ✨



*Dr. John (above) and Diane Abrams are very proud to sponsor the virtual reality tour of Auschwitz narrated by Eva Kor at the Indiana Historical Society (IHS) exhibit, "Eva Kor: From Auschwitz to Indiana." They attended a nice preview on March 10, 2022, which included inspiring words from their friend and Eva's son, Alex Kor, and the First Lady of Indiana, Mrs. Janet Holcomb. The exhibit opened March 12th and is well worth the trip downtown. Dr. Abrams remarked, "Eva comes to life in the Hologram where you can actually ask her questions. Amazing technology and exhibit!" Dr. Abrams is referring to the USC Shoah Foundation's Dimensions in Testimony, brought to IHS in partnership with CANDLES Holocaust Museum.*

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# Hooverwood Living Announces New Home Care Business Line

“Meeting the needs of our community has always been our main focus, and right now, the community needs more personalized care options at home. Our board of directors thought now is the time to add to our growing portfolio of services with the addition of private duty home care.” stated Evan Lubline, Chief Executive Officer of Hooverwood Living.

Board approval came in March 2022. “This new service line will allow us to not only meet our needs of our residents within our facility on a daily basis but also provide services to wherever an individual calls home. I am excited about the expanded business opportunity, and how we are able to benefit a larger population.” said Stacy Segal, Hooverwood Living Board President.

In an article titled, “The Future of Home Health Care” they cited that in order to meet the needs of patients evolving in the U.S health care systems private duty home care will be expanding. According to the U.S. census, “Starting in 2030, when all boomers will be older than 65, older Americans will make up 21 percent of the population, up from 15 percent today. By 2060, nearly one in four Americans will be 65 years and older, the number of 85-plus will triple, and the country will add a half million centenarians”.

“The board of directors saw the vision we were developing here at Hooverwood



## HOOVERWOOD LIVING

and decided it was time to bring this much-needed service to the greater Indianapolis community. We can now offer another service line that supports seniors prolonging their independence while also ensuring their well-being. We will continue our partnership with Senior Options to develop the private duty home care service offering,” said Evan Lubline. The Home Care business is expected to start by July 2022.

Hooverwood will be collaborating with Senior Options, LLC. a nationally recognized organization, headquartered in Virginia Beach, Va., that brings experience and expertise to assist in bringing Home

and Community Based Services to non-for-profit, LeadingAge member organizations. They will guide A.R.N. Hospice care to focus on private duty home care. “Senior Options is proud to continue their partnership with Hooverwood Living to bring home care services to the greater Indianapolis area. CEO Evan Lubline and the Hooverwood board have embraced the concept of serving more seniors and understand the importance of this line of business for the people they serve.” adds Nancy King, President of Senior Options, LLC.

*Hooverwood is a well-regarded, not-for-profit skilled nursing facility in Indianapolis, specializing in rehabilitation, dementia care, and adult day services. While upholding the values of Judaism, welcomes residents and families of all faiths and backgrounds. Hooverwood is committed to building premier services for seniors on their campus and in the greater Indianapolis community. ✨*



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# Obituaries

## Howard Herschel Krakovitz, 84,

life-time resident of Indianapolis passed away on Feb. 20, 2022, after a prolonged illness. He was born on July 26, 1937, to the late Arthur and Tina Krakovitz. He was a graduate of Shortridge High School and Butler University.

Howard is survived by his daughters, Alicia (Brendon) Buckley and Andrea (Brad) Roseboom; and grandchildren, Brandon, Gracie, Ava and Connor. Memorial services were held at **Aaron-Ruben-Nelson Funeral Home** on February 27th.

## Myra (Klugman) Fried, 85,

passed away on March 1, 2022. She was born on Feb. 13, 1937 in Detroit as one of six children born to Harry and Tillie Kay (Klugman). She was married to the love of her life, Andrew, a holocaust survivor from Hungary, for 42 years. Together, they built a home full of fun, laughter and joy.

“A woman of valor who can find...?” asks King Solomon. He goes on to describe her as one who her husband relies upon, works from morning to night to provide nourishment and comfort to her children, offers sound advice to all and is praised by all throughout the land.

The woman of valor he described was fulfilled in the life of Myra Fried. She was a woman who showered her love, not only on her own husband and four children and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren, but upon all of the many people she came in contact with, sharing with them her good cheer, love of life and wisdom. Many of her family, friends, and acquaintances regularly sought out her sage advice and wisdom.

After running a child day care business in her home for 42 years, Myra retired. She loved “her kids” and was affectionately known as “Auntie Mye” by the hundreds of children she cared for and their families.

In the later years, many of her charges were second generation children of parents she had cared for as young children, who sent their own children to “Auntie Mye” because of the love and respect they had for her.

One of Myra’s passions was spending time with her friends, especially playing Mahjong, which she did in multiple groups for over 55 years. Myra was also instrumental in teaching Mahjong to a large group of younger women so that the next generation could continue her passion.

Myra and Andy gave so much love to their children, Randy (Rabbi Yerachmiel) and his wife Marcy, Keith and his girlfriend Angel (and ex-wife Karen) and Ricky (Rabbi Yechezkel) and his wife Rivka, as well as their 31 grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Her family was her true joy in life. Myra would quote her mother, who, although not a wealthy woman, would point to the pictures of her children and grandchildren and exclaim: “there’s my million dollars!” Myra would say about her son’s wives, “they’re not my daughters-in-law, they’re my “daughters-in-love”.

Myra is preceded in death by her husband Andy, sisters Rita Levitt, Lanore Stone and Norma Hess. She is survived by her sister Bernyce Heller and brother Dennis Kay as well as her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews who she so adored.

Myra also cared deeply about Jewish traditions and did her best to always make sure the family was together for all of the Jewish holidays, where she prepared the most delicious meals. She raised a family proud of their Jewish heritage.

In her final weeks, what brought her joy was seeing the smiling faces of her beloved family, whether in person, on the phone or on Zoom calls from around the world.

The family wishes to express their heartfelt appreciation to two amazing, selfless women, Trina Johnson and Robin Rogers, who took loving, tender care of Myra for the past seven years, as well as to the many dedicated health care professionals who did so much for her health and comfort.

In lieu of any flowers, donations can be made to DATA-Dallas Area Torah Association; 5840 Forest Ln, Dallas, TX 75230, (214) 987-3282. Funeral services were March 3, 2022 at **Aaron-Ruben-Nelson Funeral Home**.

## Rae F. Pitzele, 94,

of Indianapolis, passed away March 4, 2022 surrounded by her loving family. Rae was born to Pearl (nee Schwartz) and Eugene Friedman on June 14, 1927 in McKeesport, Pa. The family moved to New York City while she was young. Rae

attended Emerson High where she graduated in 1945. Shortly after that she met and married Melvin Pitzele in 1947. Rae was active for years in both Hadassah and Sisterhood.

She is survived by her younger brother Milton Friedman and children, Keith and Perry. Also, her grandchildren Adam Pitzele (Meytal), Aaron Pitzele (Amanda), Jordan Tauber (nee Pitzele) (Jon), Joel Pitzele and Rachel Pitzele. Her daughters-in-law Rita (nee Silverman) and Wanda (nee Norris) were always treated like they were her own daughters. Also she greatly loved her nine great-grandchildren and other family and friends.

A graveside service at Elmwood Cemetery in Hammond, Ind., was held on March 10th. The family asks that donations be made in lieu of flowers to either Hadassah or Woman’s League or the charity of your choice.

Rae always put her family first and considered them her treasures. She will be missed by all her family and friends. As it says in Proverbs 3:15 “She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her.” Arrangements entrusted to **Aaron Ruben Nelson Mortuary**.

## Feyga Kofman, 99,

beloved wife, mother, grandmother, and great grandmother passed away March 5, 2022, just days before her 100th birthday. Feyga was born in Krivoy Rog, a town in central Ukraine, to Boris and Gann Medvedosky, on March 14, 1922. Her early life was marked by the hardships of antisemitism causing her family to seek shelter and safety, first in Moscow and later to St. Petersburg, as they fled the pogroms that devastated their towns in Ukraine.

During World War II, once again they were persecuted, but she was able to survive the Nazi siege of St. Peterburg. Following the war, Feyga graduated from university with a degree in chemistry and married Naum Kofman, who died in 1983 in Russia.

In 1988 Feyga bravely immigrated to the United States with her daughter Esther and family. In 1993 Feyga became a US citizen. She was a proud, longtime member of Congregation Beth-El Zedeck.

Feyga is survived by her daughter, Esther, son-in-law, Michael Zhivov, granddaughter, Olga (Carl Chapman) and great-granddaughter, Alize.

Funeral services were held on March 10th at **Aaron-Ruben-Nelson Funeral Home**. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Hooverwood Nursing Home, Jewish Federation of Greater Indianapolis or to Congregation Beth-El Zedeck.

(see Obituaries, page IN 16)





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**OBITUARIES**

(continued from page IN 15)

**Rose Franco Alt, 90**, beloved wife, mother and grandmother passed away on March 9, 2022. She was born in Indianapolis on March 21, 1931, to Jack and Rachel Franco.



A lifelong member of Etz Chaim Sephardic Congregation, Rose was an active member in the Etz Chaim Sisterhood. She was an avid baker and contributed to the hugely successful annual sisterhood bake sale. Rose was known for her *taralikoos* (Sephardic cookies) and *burekas*, especially. She was also a member of the IHC Mitzvah stitchers, knitting beanies for the infants at Riley hospital. She worked for many years as a manicurist.

Rose loved dancing, playing mahjong and canasta, trips to the casino and dressing up for the annual Halloween costume contest at her retirement community. She cherished her grandchildren and family, and was loved by everyone who knew her.

Rose is survived by her devoted daughters, Hollie Gossett, Shelly (Michael) Katz and Laura (Nathan Steiner) Alt; and her grandchildren, Isabel Gossett, Cece Katz, Ethan Katz, and Josh Steiner. Her husband, Monroe Paul Alt, preceded her in death.

Graveside services were March 13th in Etz Chaim Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to Etz Chaim Sisterhood or to Hooverwood Living. Arrangements by **Aaron Ruben Nelson Mortuary**.

**Lev "Leo" Ringo, 73**, passed away on March 11, 2022 after a long health battle. Born in Riga, Latvia Dec. 20, 1948, Leo immigrated to the United States in 1980 searching for a better life for his family; plus, his wife said he had to.



After moving, he continued his trade of being a meat cutter. Leo made it clear there was a difference between a meat cutter and a butcher, and he was definitely the former. He was very meticulous, took great pride in his work, and his work ethic was unmatched and something he taught his daughters by example.

At all times, family remained Leo's first priority, and his grandchildren were the light of his life. Not a day went by that he didn't require at least twice-a-day conversations with his children so he could ask about his grandkids. After all, spoiling the grandkids, as well as all dogs (he was always sure to set food aside for his best dog friend and bring special treats to his grand-dogs), was his specialty. Leo was often perceived to be a "lion" on the outside, but really, he was a softie on the inside, particularly when it came to all his girls and his "bootinka."

Despite his physical ailments, Leo's mind always remained sharp. He could remember the exact date, often down to the day of the week, of any major event in his family's life. He loved sports (particularly soccer and hockey), throwing fancy birthday parties, beach vacations with his family, babies, and he likely knew more about U.S. politics than most elected politicians.

At the end of the day, Leo will be remembered most for being a wonderful husband, father, brother, son, and friend. He was the type of guy to keep in touch with family and friends, near and far, and the glue to hold people together. He leaves a big hole, but many great memories.

Leo is survived by his love of 55 years, Maria; two daughters, Anna Ringo (Mark Ullom) and Renay (Adam) Pegg; his three beloved grandchildren, Darren (Bootinka), Camryn (Goosey), and Quinn (Quinny); and his brother, Alex Ringo. He is preceded in death by his parents, Naum Ringo and Khaya Semes Ringo, both of Latvia.

Services were held graveside at Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation Cemetery North, on March 14, 2022. Arrangements by **Aaron Ruben Nelson Mortuary**.

**Albert Passo** died March 15, 2022, on his 90th birthday. Earlier that day he had enjoyed a Zoom celebration with family and friends from



his room at Hooverwood Living. Despite failing health, he was joking and lively. He proudly lived his entire life in Indianapolis.

Al was the seventh and only male child of Samuel and Sophia Passo. He outlived all of his 6 sisters. He met the love of his life, Lee, in high school and they eloped when he was 17. They had 3 sons by the time he was 21.

Al worked as a grocer, moved on to owning a tavern, and ultimately as a building contractor. He never met anyone he couldn't make his friend; he was known for having a big heart and great sense of humor. Together, Lee and Al enjoyed golf, playing cards of all kinds, and ballroom dancing. He was a devoted husband, father, and friend.

Al was predeceased by his wife of 69 years, Lee, and middle son Rick. Survivors include son Samuel (Karen), son Michael (Kate), 6 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to Jewish Family Services ([jewishindianapolis.org/jfs](http://jewishindianapolis.org/jfs)) or Etz Chaim ([etzchaimindy.org](http://etzchaimindy.org)).

**Steven Romer, 72**, lifelong resident of Indianapolis died on March 15, 2022. He was born on March 12, 1950, to the late Robert F. and Muriel Tadman Romer. He was a 1968 graduate of Harry E. Wood High School and then joined in the family business, Romer Lighting Center, which had locations in Indianapolis and Carmel. Steve was a life member of Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation (IHC) and a 42-year member of the Lions Club.

Steve is survived by his wife of 23 years, Sheryl Meshulam Romer, his sisters, Sunny and Karyn and many cousins.

Funeral services were held on March 21st at IHC and burial followed in IHC Cemetery South. Memorial contributions may be made to Indianapolis Washington Township Lions Club, c/o Patricia Bingham, 1849 Randall Court, Indianapolis, IN 46240, The Michael J. Fox Foundation, <https://www.michaeljfox.org/donate>, or IHC. Arrangements by **Aaron Ruben Nelson Mortuary**.

**Devera Rose (Frankovitz) Gurvitz, 84**, loving wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother died on March 18, 2022, in her home in Florida. She was born on July 14, 1937, in Indianapolis to David and Sarah Lena Frankovitz. She was co-owner of Hoot Package Liquors and Gurprop, a real estate business.

Mrs. Gurvitz was highly educated and a life-long learner. She graduated from Indiana School of Nursing in 1960. She went back to school and earned a Nursing (see Obituaries, page IN 17)

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**OBITUARIES**

*(continued from page IN 16)*

Practitioner License. In the early 1970's she earned a three-way master's degree in nursing administration, OBGYN and Community Health. Mrs. Gurvitz worked as the Chief Nurse Consultant for the State of Indiana, the Veterans Hospital and Indiana University to name a few.

Mrs. Gurvitz was very active in the Jewish community, serving on the board of directors for B'nai Torah, B'nai Torah Sisterhood, Hadassah and Americans & Canadians of Children Living in Israel (Florida Chapter). Mrs. Gurvitz along with her husband Ronald opened their home to many cancer patients that came to Indiana to seek treatment at Indiana University Hospital, aided in the relocation of Russian Immigrants and advocated for anyone seeking help. The Gurvitz home was always open to guests especially for the holidays.

Her greatest legacy was her husband, who preceded her in death in 2020 and her family. Her husband of almost 62 years, Sidney Ronald Gurvitz; children; Stanley Gurvitz, Sherry Gantz Schwartz (Robert), Marcia Dadon, Seth Gurvitz, and Joshua Gurvitz (Rena); 8 grandchildren; 17 great grandchildren and siblings, Bernard Frankovitz (preceded in death), Treva Silverman (preceded in death), Helen Goldstein, and Herbert Franovitz (Barbara).

Graveside services were held March 22nd at B'nai Torah Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to Congregation B'nai Torah or the American Cancer Society. Arrangements by **Aaron Ruben Nelson Mortuary**.

**Dr. Ann (Herman) Lowenkron, 79**, award-winning nurse educator and beloved wife, mother and grandmother died peacefully surrounded by her husband and daughters on March 26, 2022. She was born July 20, 1942.

A New Yorker born and bred; Ann graduated from Taft High School in the Bronx winning a New York State Regent's Scholarship for college. She graduated from Alfred University's baccalaureate program in nursing in 1964 and completed a Master of Science in Nursing from Columbia University. Years later she earned a PhD from Indiana University's School of Nursing while teaching full-time and raising her family.

Ann was admitted into membership of the International Honors Society in Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau, and was a Founding Faculty member at IUPUI's University College, a program that helps develop successful first-year college learners. She was awarded "Outstanding Teacher of the Year" multiple times by her IU baccalaureate

graduates, truly a reflection of the student support and advocacy that was her hallmark.

Ann and her husband moved to Indianapolis in 1977. She is a long-time member of Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation, its Sisterhood, and B'nai B'rith. She was an avid Colts fan who never missed watching a game and enjoyed Mah Jong and reading. But most of all, Ann loved her family.

She is survived by her husband of 51 years, Henry "Hank" Lowenkron; daughters, Rosemary Lowenkron Borek and Tara Lowenkron Kamm (Justin); and grandchildren, Megan Kamm, Amanda Borek, Zachary Kamm, Sara Borek and Kayleigh Borek. She was predeceased by her parents, Reuben and Sara Herman; and her brother, William (Billy) Herman.

Funeral services were held March 29th at **Aaron-Ruben-Nelson Mortuary**. The service was be live-streamed. To access the link please visit Ann's obituary at [www.arnmortuary.com](http://www.arnmortuary.com).

In lieu of flowers, please send memorial contributions to the Goldman Union Camp Institute (GUCI) in Zionsville, Ind., for camper scholarships: GUCI, 9349 Moore Road, Zionsville, IN 46077.

**Karyn Sue Romer, 66**, lifelong resident of Indianapolis died on April 1,

2022. Karyn was born on Aug. 28, 1955 to the late Robert F. Romer and Muriel (Tadman) Romer. Throughout her life she was a social worker in the city of Indianapolis. Karyn was a member of Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation (IHC).



Karyn is survived by her sister Sunny Romer; numerous cousins including Scott and Cindy Romer and the Tadman's from Chicago; nephews and two great nieces. She was recently preceded in death by her brother Steven Romer who passed March 15, 2022.

Karyn loved her family and friends, she loved her pets and to travel. She worked for the Department of Education and she volunteered. She was loyal, humble, gracious, and kind. Her mother was the Educational Director at IHC for many years.

A Memorial Service was held on April 4th at IHC. Arrangements entrusted to **Aaron Ruben Nelson Mortuary.** ✨



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# Media Watch



BY RABBI ELLIOT B. GERTEL

## Throwaway Jewish Characters on TV?

Two prominent new TV series seem to have offered throwaway “Jewish” characters.

### Abbott Elementary

One of the brightest spots in TV sitcoms is the new and understandably popular ABC series, *Abbott Elementary*, which focuses on faculty efforts to improve educational resources and methods at an inner city Philadelphia school.

The series is the brainchild of lead actress and writer Quinta Brunson, who plays newbie teacher Janine Teagues.



In the pilot episode, written by Brunson, all of the teachers have their struggles except for two veterans – an elegant African American woman, Barbara Howard (Sheryl Lee Ralph), who easily trains her class to remain in respectful single file even when waiting in the corridor, and a gritty and resourceful Italian American woman (who will boast about mob acquaintances), Melissa Schemmenti (Lisa Ann Walter).

The only teacher who cannot cope at all is a Miss Tina Schwartz (Kate Peterman, also a writer on the series), who whines in her first appearance that one kid told her to “mind my six” – that is, to watch her back. (The usual expression is “watch your six,” so Schwartz may be depicted as being ignorant of the expression.) Tina cries, “I’m not Miss Howard,” and later, Barbara Howard notes behind Tina’s back that “Miss Schwartz’s hair is falling out.”

Next thing we know, a student is wailing because Miss Schwartz kicked him. She childishly rationalizes, “He hit me first.”

Frivolous principal Ava Coleman (Janelle James), who, we subsequently learn, got her job through a sexual affair with a school official, tells the faculty that “Miss Schwartz was out of line and clearly didn’t know how to handle her class.”

When a teacher reminds the principal, “You hired her,” Ava responds, “And fired her.” Hence the shortest-lived suggested Jewish character in a TV series, with the exception of some corpses in murder mysteries. A throwaway Jewish character?

### Good Sam

CBS’s medical soap opera, *Good Sam*, takes a repulsive premise and executes it repulsively. The chief of surgery at a prestigious hospital, Dr. Rob “Griff” Griffith (Jason Isaacs) is hard on his daughter, Dr. Samantha (“Sam”) Griffith (Sophia Bush), who is considering transferring to another hospital because of her father’s arrogant criticisms. Suddenly, the father falls victim to a disgruntled shooter, and is in a coma for months with no signs of recovery. Sam is made interim chief. But Dad suddenly awakens from his slumber and must retrain under his daughter’s supervision in order to reclaim his former position. The only problem is that the daughter wants to be made permanent head of surgery, so the nasty rivalry is on even as the daughter is in charge of her father’s professional rehabilitation.

This scenario is already distasteful enough, but the writers add to the mix that Sam soon discovers that her father was sleeping with her best friend before he was shot. For her part, Sam embarks on an affair with the hospital’s new Director of Finance, the son of the hospital’s leading benefactor, a close ally of her father’s, while working with her ex-boyfriend who is trying to win her back. In other words, the soap opera premises are souped up to the umpteenth degree. One wonders whether the producers intended this series to be temporary because its premises, when prolonged, become increasingly unpleasant.

At any rate, a Jewish name is dropped in an episode (1-19-2022) written by Jen Klein. A philanthropist named Gerald Waxman intends to donate \$12 million to the hospital. Sam, of course, as interim chief of surgery, regards this as a feather in her cap.

One fine day, while making her rounds, Sam finds in a prominent hospital space \$2 million worth of “artificial butts” (yes, models of buttocks), that were purchased by a company for educational purposes regarding prostate and other anatomy. She insists that they be returned to the manufacturing company, which refuses to accept them back. Sam then finds a way to threaten the company into accepting them back.

As it turns out, her father had set up a deal with Mr. Waxman, who made the pledge of \$12 million in order to raise the profile of his company by including \$2 million for use of his buttocks-model



products. Counting on his daughter’s cancelling the order for the sake of fiscal responsibility, Dad knew that she would come across to the hospital board as losing a major donation. He tells her that when she cancelled the “donation” (the \$2 million product that she did not realize was part of a “donation”) she cancelled the contribution.

Waxman was never shown. But the assumption was that he would not attempt to reach out to Sam (or to her father!) to find out what transpired, if only to protect his objective!

Similarly, the lead donor father of Sam’s boyfriend, an African American, is depicted as not being interested in finding out what actually happened.

In any case, the contributor with the Jewish-sounding name is not mentioned again, thus becoming, perhaps, a throw-away Jew.

But are there more throwaway Jews in this series? Soap opera that it is, this series has to feature other family members of Sam and Griff. So why not Sam’s mom, Dr. Vivian Katz (Wendy Crewson), who happens to be the hospital’s Chief Medical Officer? Sam’s parents are long divorced, and mom is remarried to a New Age guru type, a sharp contrast to her calculating surgeon ex-husband. But the parents maintain a real though uneasy bond, reinforced by Dad’s months in a coma. Mom also has to contend with a scheming female African American plastic surgeon, who is after her job.

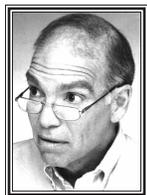
Is Mom a Jew, throwaway or otherwise? After all, Mom’s last name is “Katz,” usually a Jewish name and abbreviation for the Hebrew, “Kohen Tzedek,” or “righteous priest,” denoting a member of the priestly families that trace their origins back to the Temple of old and to Aaron, brother of Moses. (I’ll leave it to another critic to confirm that Jews and African Americans are not sympathetically depicted here.) And Jason Isaacs, who plays Sam’s father, is a British Jewish actor.

So where is this all going? Personally, I hope that the series mercifully ends before we find out.

*Rabbi Elliot Gertel has been spiritual leader of congregations in New Haven and Chicago. He is the author of two books, What Jews Know About Salvation and*

(see Gertel, page IN 19)

# Shipley Speaks



BY JIM SHIPLEY

## A Day At The Museum

As many of you know, almost two years ago Rachel and I moved to New Orleans. As you also probably know, we lost her a little over a year ago to Dementia. And, the “Let the Good Times Roll” city shut down shortly after we arrived due to Covid.

Well, times change. For the first time in two years the town opened up for Mardi Gras and the Good Times are rolling once again. The question for me again was, okay – what now?

I had that same question when we came to Orlando from Cleveland. My first project was to build and create a radio station, which with help, we did. Called it “Mellow” as it played music by pop stars from Sinatra to the Doobie Brothers.

But, where was our Jewish Connection? The “Federation” in the 1970’s was a shadow of what it is today. Then along came a new Federation professional, Paul Jeser. A New York Jew in every sense of the word. He descended on the sleepy Jewish Community in Orlando like a whirlwind.

Seemingly overnight the “Old Guard” of Orlando Jews gave up their tenacious hold on the Community and I was suddenly taking the Jewish point of view to Kiwanis, Rotary, Elks – anywhere in the Gentile Community we could get a speaking date. I took a role in the Annual Fund Raising Campaign and was even speaking at Temples. I think it worked.

Then we moved to New Orleans. I had been away from the Speaker’s Podium for years. I really thought I was done. An overall look at this “Small Market” showed that it was a tourist haven, especially at Mardi Gras time. It is the smallest market with an NFL team which they wear like a badge. Out of some 230,000 residents, there are maybe 10,000 Jews – that we can count. I am trying to breathe life into the Federation which, in terms of Community Outreach is pretty well absent.

The one place I could find where there was a true Jewish approach is the fairly new “Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience.” It is right downtown and really well done.

So, I am a “Volunteer Guide” at least twice a week. It gives a really well thought out chronological journey through the Jewish Experience in the South. From the first Jew arriving here in the 1500s through the Southern struggle in the Civil War and up to today’s Jewish life in the South. The

emphasis is on the overall Southern Experience as opposed to strictly New Orleans.

As I take guests through this chronological journey, we come to the Civil War and the fact that many Jews owned slaves in the South. There is an explanation on the wall that states, “it was a way of life.” I have never been happy with that explanation.

Last week, I was accompanying guests through the museum who happened to be Jewish. As we got to the Civil War section of the displays, I looked at that “excuse” and realized how lame it is. I stopped and told the guests that I was sorry, but I just could not get my head around that explanation. I said to them “Soon it will be *Pesach*, Passover, where the whole point is that God took us out of Egypt where we were SLAVES.”

I got a lot of positive head shakes. I asked, “Can we really tell this story without admitting that what Southern Jews did in that time was wrong and as anti-Jewish as you can get?”

In modern times, Jews have been at the forefront of every Civil Rights drive that has been organized. Jews went South to make sure that Black People had the same rights as everyone else when it comes to voting.

As we come closer to the mid-term elections, it looks like there is a real brand new effort to suppress the vote of minorities. I read an article that stated that the Republican Party had stated to “Insiders” that the only way they can win in today’s noxious atmosphere is to keep minorities away from the polls. I cannot say for sure that this has actually happened, but from what we see here in the State of Florida and elsewhere it sure makes sense.

Meanwhile, the best I can do is my best to try and shake life into the local Jewish Federation, tell the story of Southern Jews at the museum, and write what I can where I can.

My time here has solidified my belief that Orlando is not the South – might have been once with its segregation and “Division Street” and other signs of the “Old South” – but they have disappeared. Not quite as easy here in the “Big Easy”.

*Jim Shipley has had careers in broadcasting, distribution, advertising, and telecommunications. He began his working life in radio in Philadelphia. He has written his JP&O column for more than 20 years. He can be reached at shipleys954@gmail.com. ✪*

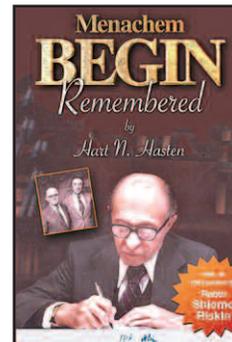


# Book Review

BY JIM SHIPLEY

## A Unique Look at Historic Leader

*Menachem Begin Remembered* is the story of the relationship of the author, Hart N. Hasten and the former Irgun head and Israeli Prime Minister, Menachem Begin. Through personal contact and historical reference, Mr. Hasten recounts a remarkable friendship beginning shortly after Begin became Prime Minister of Israel.



Mr. Hasten recounts how they met, how he and his wife became friendly with this historic figure and his wife. Based on my own relationship with Menachem Begin and his family, I found the book to be right on with the history and the personality of this historic figure. He leads the reader through the trials and tribulations of a truly humble man trying to lead the State of Israel through some harrowing times.

The personal approach gives the reader a different look at the man who will go down in history as the one who gave Israel its proper place on the world stage and his later years in reflection.

Begin, while historic, was a family man and a philosopher as well as a gifted orator, author and a leader who brought the Jewish nation through so much. *Menachem Begin Remembered* will give the reader a unique look at the man Begin, the leader, Begin and the historic figure in his later years. For a unique look into the life of one of the most iconic figures in Jewish history – this book is a good read.

*Shipley and his late wife Rachel met Menachem Begin and his wife on their first trip to Israel in 1986, and they remained friends for the rest of Begin’s life. ✪*



**GERTEL**

(continued from page IN 18)

Over the Top Judaism: Precedents and Trends in the Depiction of Jewish Beliefs and Observances in Film and Television. *He has been media critic for The National Jewish Post & Opinion for more than 40 years. ✪*

# Seen on the Israel Scene



BY SYBIL KAPLAN

## Recent Israeli Entertainment

### The Soviet Jewry Struggles for Freedom: A Play

How ironic that the Women's Performance Community of Jerusalem has chosen this time to present a new and exciting historical musical, *Whisper Freedom: The Soviet Jewry Struggle*.

This epic musical, for women only, depicts how the Soviet Jews were rediscovering their Jewish identity and desiring to move to Israel. The KGB and Soviet regime rejected applications for exit visas to Israel.



Photo credits: Beth Lanin Photos.

This musical also honors the refuseniks and their supporters who joined them with "Let my people go."

The Women's Performance Community of Jerusalem, founded by four English-speaking women in 2016, returned to the stage after a two-year pause for the pandemic, in conjunction with the OU Israel, the Orthodox Union's branch in Israel. Proceeds will fund an OU Israel Center initiative for at-risk teens.

The Performance company provides an outlet for women who want to express themselves with other women for an all-female audience. This is the fourth historical musical written by two of the women.

The play, with a cast of 60–70, is set in Moscow of the 1970s and depicts, in a musical style, the struggle to free the Soviet Jews. The story revolves around Elena Ivanova, a Moscow stage star who conceals her Jewish identity. Her sister Sofia, a refusenik, turns up in Moscow to plead for her freedom, but Elena is arrested and imprisoned in Siberia while Sofia rallies the cast and audience on behalf of her sister.

At one point in the second act, the audience is asked to join the actresses and hold up a sign in their program, "Free Elena now from Siberia."

The Women's Performance Community of Jerusalem aims to unite women through the common language of performing arts and joined with a natural partner, OU Israel, to run monthly events at the OU Israel Center, located in the heart of Jerusalem, not far from the majestic walls of the Old City. Several performances were given during March.



### A Folk Music Night in Jerusalem Transitioning from Pandemic to Almost Normalcy

A few weeks ago I received a flyer that my synagogue was having a "Folk Night Sing Along" and with my background in folk music, I could hardly wait. Background? I have always loved folk music and when I moved from Missouri to New York, my second job was as a receptionist at one of the largest folk music record companies in New York.

Although I favored the Israeli folk music and performers, it didn't take me long to acquire a great record collection and to meet many well-known folk singers and attend their concerts. Singing and listening on Sundays in Washington Square Park also became a fun thing to do.

Now that we are trying to deal with the pandemic and return to some semblance of normality, it was exciting that my synagogue had chosen this for a gathering.

At Moreshet Avraham Synagogue in East Talpiot, a "House Band" was formed some years ago. For this evening program, the House Band performed first: Eitan Cooper, originally from New York City and currently Vice President of the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies was on guitar; Alan Abbey, from New York City, formerly a research fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute, currently a retired journalist and academic, played guitar; and David Brinn, formerly from Portland, Maine, currently managing editor of *The Jerusalem Post*, played tambourine and Israeli drum.

They were followed by the featured performers, "The Arava Riders," from *Kibbutz Ketura*, (31 miles north of Eilat, 3-1/2 hours from Jerusalem). Two men were friends from the age of nine, Bill Slott, originally from Bethesda, Maryland, a tour guide, came to live at *Kibbutz Ketura* in 1981; Alon Tal, originally from North Carolina, made *aliyah* in 1980 and came to live at *Ketura* in 1989; he became a member of the *Knesset* in June 2021.

They both had an interest in music, and would attend the annual Jacob's Ladder Folk Festival (a musical and social event for lovers of folk music, founded in 1978, which will be held this June on *Kibbutz Kfar Blum*).

In 2000, they formed the Arava Riders, specializing in Folk and Blue Grass which does two to three performances a year. The group is comprised of about six members who all have a connection in some way to *Kibbutz Ketura*.

On the Folk Night at Kehilath Moreshet Avraham, Bill Slott and another member played guitar and banjo and the female singer, Naama Cooper, is the daughter of KMA Band member, Eitan Cooper.

Watching this group perform took me back to 1974, late January, when I was with Carol, an American photographer-friend, on a four-hour bus trip, 160 miles, with Hadassah women and others to see "their *kibbutz*," *Ketura*. We were on assignment from Jessie Lurie (z"l), editor of *Hadassah Magazine*. The article was called "Tasting a Dream, The Founding of *Kibbutz Ketura*."

We arrived a few days before the two-month anniversary of the birth of this *kibbutz*. Many of the members were former Young Judaeans, my own youth movement, who had been part of several year courses then counselors at *Tel Yehudah*, the National Camp.

They had decided to form a group to return to Israel together. They entered the Israeli army for basic training then continued at several *kibbutzim* for additional learning. Ultimately they chose this location and moved to the spot Nov. 22, 1973.

We brought them goodies and a rocking chair for the first Young Judaea couple to marry on *Ketura*. At the time, there were about 30 members with others as candidates, some helping out before going into the army, and still others in *Nachal*, the army branch which combines military training and *kibbutz* work.

Today, *Ketura* is a community of 400–450 members and residents. A third are from the United States, Canada, Britain and South America. The rest come from France, Latin America, Switzerland, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Russia. Students are also involved with the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies (which was founded by Alon Tal), doing a year of community service before the army, a post-army work study program and other activities.

Members work in palm tree orchards or experimental orchards; bookkeeping and accounting; *kibbutz* service roles; and guest houses and educational center. The *kibbutz* is pluralistic and is not affiliated with any one movement. ✨

# Book Review



REVIEWED BY  
RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

## Israel: Where It's Been, Where It Is, and Where It Might Go

**Beit Shlishi – Meam Lishvatin Leam** (*The Third Commonwealth – From a Nation to Tribes to a Nation*). By Ari Shavit. Miskal-Yedioth Ahronoth Books and Chemed Books. Rishon LeZion, Israel. 2021. Pp. 221. In Hebrew.

The English title given to this original and essential book, *A New Israeli Republic*, is an inspiring contribution within the praiseworthy *Beit Yotzer Yisraeli* (Israeli Creator's Association) of distinguished thinkers along with movers and shakers on the Israeli scene who are deeply concerned about, as well as sincerely committed to, the state of the State of Israel's well-being. Their guiding thesis is the Jewish state's internal disintegration as its major challenge, that if continued unchecked might lead to catastrophic consequences and even to the destruction of the Third Jewish Commonwealth and the cessation of a Jewish future.



What an ominous and far-reaching conclusion, perhaps designed to shock us into action. The thorough analysis of Israel's fragmentary ailments offers a way out based on the founding of a centrally broad Zionist stream that will serve to unify the disparate tribalism threatening the state's very survival that early on David Ben-Gurion feared and thus insisting on a framework of *Mamlachtiyuot*, proper statehood structure and conduct based on majority rule and state interests.

Veteran Israeli author and journalist Ari Shavit, a graduate of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, whose 2013 best-seller *My Promised Land* was translated into many languages and won him the National Jewish Book Award for history, shares with both over-flowing pride and painful apprehension, "For me, the State of Israel is a miracle performed by human beings. No other country did what we have done. No democratic country has

prospered like ours in such a hostile environment. Despite all the enemies, wars, troubles, failures and mistakes, the Zionist dream is fulfilled. Our sons and daughters have in their forefathers' land what our grandfathers and grandmothers lacked: sovereignty, liberty, honor, pride, and progress. However, in recent years we all sense that something has gone awry. Though Israel is a rare success story, Israel is also torn, wounded, hurting and bleeding. It lost its way." (p.12).

The author points out that while the roots of modern Israel are in a secular worldview that consciously removed itself from the traditional underpinnings of past Jewish believing, living and survival, we witness a growing and promising synthesis between the embrace of the benefits of the contemporary technological revolution and becoming a start-up nation with a yearning to creatively reconnect to the past treasures of Jewish learning and the supportive warmth of its communal expression, the *Kehilah* in a modern context of voluntary affiliation in pluralistic settings.

An important by-product of this trend is easing the alienating tension between secular Zionism and Religious Orthodox Zionism. "It is somewhat alike a culture of children who turned their back to all their parents' worlds, spontaneously founding a new improvised world of their own. A world that doesn't obey the *Shulchan Aruch*, and doesn't fulfill Herzl's vision, and doesn't realize Ben-Gurion's master plan. But a world that the *Shulchan Aruch*, Herzl and Ben-Gurion are folded within it. A world that fully lives the inner contradictions of the Zionist enterprise and the Israeli reality. Trying to turn forced limitations into springboards, weaknesses into strengths and disasters into opportunities, using materials found on the beach to which it was swept to create an improvised something complicated, confusing and colorful that is full of magic that is the Israel of the third millennium" (p.129).

The early British influence on the Zionist movement gave way with Israel's establishment to the French one and then to a dominating American culture which Shavit, while acknowledging its pervasive impact also offers critical reservations on its full suitability to a beleaguered small country in the Middle East. From a necessary strategic alliance with the United States, the author questions the degree to which Israel is imitating all things American. In the process, I believe that his blanket condemnation does not do justice to the American system with its magnificent accomplishments, rather focusing on shortcomings glaringly made manifest recently and the failure to fully live up to the glorious promise of the American

dream. After all, the still young and noble American experiment is a work in progress. Shavit does not mince words, arousing the suspicion that his over-reaction of an analytical mind hides some personal misgivings.

"The American worship has become the new Israeli religion. Without a conscious decision, Israel actually replaced its disintegrating old model with the American one. It has attempted to build a state based on the individual (now turned king), on the financial markets (now turned into a sacred church) and on the constitution (advanced by Israel's basic laws and supreme court chief justice Barak's revolution). A new world of American ideas replaced the old Israeli one. An American value system replaced the Zionist-Israeli one. The Americanization radically changed Israel's character. But the American model doesn't fit the Israeli situation. It lacks mutual responsibility along with social justice, communal cohesiveness, human warmth, sense of family and trust." (p.135). What a list of misleading and exaggerated woes leading to wrong evaluations!

Shavit rightly and enthusiastically lauds Israel's pioneering success in its admirable response to the Corona crisis that illustrates the country at its best. He recommends and urges that this kind of exemplar service to the individual and society should become a model for all other societal aspects that the Israel government provides and is responsible for. Yet, he does not hesitate to designate the current Israeli capitalistic state as a "Sinful state – *Medinat Avlah*" (p.162), given the growing dangerous gap between a very wealthy minority of mostly high tech beneficiaries and the struggling rest of the country facing a tough economy that fails to match the high cost of Israeli living, exacerbated during the Corona attacks with the disastrous layoffs of significant numbers. These economical and societal extremes contribute to a fragmentation that Israel can not afford, given its existential dilemmas.

Looking forward to Israel's 100th anniversary in 2048, the author calls for replacing Ben-Gurion's foundational framework of centralized rule favoring the East European *Ashkenazim* and demoting the Arab countries' *Mizrachim* with a kind of hyphenated citizenship acknowledging and celebrating all those living in the Jewish and democratic Israel – that should thus retain its Jewish majority with the variety of traditions represented, allowing for an inclusive and heterogeneous Israeli culture to flourish, the one that Ben-Gurion resented in the early stage of nation-building.

(see Zoberman, page IN 22)

## Hatzaad Harishon, A “First Step” Love Story

In February 1965, Sybil Kaplan became the first youth leader of the first youth group of black Jewish youth in New York. Previously, an interracial adult Jewish organization, *Hatzaad Harishon*, the first step, had been formed. Here is the human interest, deep-felt love story with people, with youth, with a cause, with a community, with an organization.

How did the youth group get started? In what direction did it go? How did it evolve to become the “public relations arm” of the organization? How did it fit into the mainstream of American Jewish life?

Here is the story of what it was like to be a teenager and be identified as both black and Jewish. How did a small group of youngsters gain national repute for an almost unknown movement? Here is the story of the birth and almost demise of a group which came to represent a movement. Here is the story of these young people ... as told by their youth leader of five years.

Greer Fay Cashman, the popular “Grapevine” gossip columnist for *The Jerusalem Post* wrote in her March 25 (weekend) column: “Journalist and author, Sybil Kaplan, is best known for editing, writing and reviewing cookbooks, but she has a few other strings to her bow. In her younger years, she was the first leader of *Hatzaad Harishon*, a youth group of black Jewish youth that was formed in the [1960s] in New York by white and black Jews. She led the group for five years. At some stage in the 1970s, the organization ceased to exist.

“Because she regards it as an important chapter in American-Jewish history, Kaplan has written a book about *Hatzaad Harishon* but would like to augment it with the memories of some of its former members from the 1960s. She is hoping that some of them may have moved to Israel, but if not, she hopes they correspond with her by email to share some of their recollections. She would love for anyone else familiar with *Hatzaad Harishon* to be in contact with her at sybilkaplan1938@aol.com.”

To order a book sent to US or Canada: Send \$25 (US dollars) check made out to Sybil Kaplan with your address and if you want it autographed to whom: M. Kaplan, 3909 W. 101 Terrace, Overland Park, Kansas 66207. Available soon in paperback.

**Sybil Kaplan** is a Jerusalem-based journalist, food writer, lecturer, author, and book reviewer. Her biography is in *Witness to History: Ten Years as a Woman Journalist in Israel*; she has contributed or written nine cookbooks including *What’s Cooking at Hadassah College*. She lived in Israel from 1970-1980; she and her late husband, Barry,

## ZOBERMAN

(continued from page IN 21)

The new complex hyphenated Israeli identity will include one and all: A *Charedi* Israeli, an Arab Israeli, a *Mizrachi* Israeli, a gay Israeli, a liberal Israeli, a conservative Israeli and so forth with full equality for women. Israel will also assist in gradually, stage by stage, providing for a Palestinian state, one that will not undermine Israeli’s security.

The author calls for establishing a joint Israeli-Diaspora peace corps in which the Jewish youth from the two interdependent Jewish centers will collaboratively engage in projects promoting and enhancing Jewish and universal values in Israel, the United States and around the world. A great, ambitious idea indeed! This constructive and demanding approach, “thus, in the eyes of liberal Jewish youth in the Diaspora, Israel will no longer be identified with occupation, oppression, fanaticism and reactionism, rather with human rights, social justice and environmentalism, allowing the Z-generation to combine its universal values with an open Judaism and enlightened Israel.

The Jewish peace corps will become a somewhat new *Taglit* project that will try to turn the world into a better place while connecting the Israeli youth with its Diaspora counterpart on the basis of meaningful voluntary work along with serious Jewish study and *Ahavat Yisrael*, naturally loving fellow Jews” (p.209). Overall, Shavit perceives Israel as a better equipped partner in this grand enterprise since the Diaspora, particularly its non-Orthodox and liberal segments, is in the throes of assimilation and rapid decline. Granted, there is bias in this over-simplified perspective.

The author’s fruitful vision, with a prophetic dimension, is a tall order but a necessary one. Even if only some of it will be fulfilled, it would be a significant accomplishment. Worthy projects that bring closer Jewish youth at risk of growing apart, thus granting an indispensable service in furthering Jewish unity and guaranteeing the Jewish future. At stake, quite convincingly claims the author, no less than Israel’s very survival for a Fourth

came to live in Jerusalem in 2008, where she works as a foreign correspondent for North American Jewish publications, lectured to senior citizen residences, leads walks in English in *Machaneh Yehudah*, the Jewish produce market, and wrote stories about kosher restaurants on *Janglo.net* from 2014-2020 for which Barry photographed. She has written book reviews exclusively on Jewish books for more than 40 years. ✨

## Albert Bourla Awarded \$1 Million Genesis Prize

On Jan. 19, 2022, The Genesis Prize Foundation announced Dr. Albert Bourla, Chairman and CEO of Pfizer, as the 2022 Genesis Prize Laureate. Dr. Bourla received the largest number of votes in a recently concluded global campaign, during which 200,000 people in 71 countries voted online. The choice of the voters was unanimously endorsed by the nine judges on the Genesis Prize Selection Committee.



The Committee commended Dr. Bourla for his leadership, determination, and willingness to assume great risks in delivering a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine in record time: months instead of years. Dr. Bourla has asked The Genesis Prize Foundation to direct his \$1 million prize award to Holocaust education, particularly with the emphasis on the tragedy suffered by the Greek Jewish community.

(Photo by Joshua Jordan) ✨

Jewish Commonwealth is not an option.

Indeed, this arousing book is a lover’s quarrel for Israel and the Jewish people’s sake. In a way Israel is a victim of its own success. Shavit’s semi-utopian plan for Israel includes a new leadership that is removed from sectarian politics following the Biblical Levites model, whose transcendent concern for their people is sought by Shavit to create an Israeli society that is a guiding shining lighthouse also for humanity at large. He concludes on a realistic, yet sobering note, “I am optimistic I believe in the Israeli person and the Israeli spirit. In our beloved land there are countless human treasures and forces of light that can be actualized. But the time has come to tackle it seriously, earnestly, for there won’t be a fourth commonwealth. Israel is the last opportunity – and a wonderful one – of the Jewish people” (p.220). Amen.

**Rabbi Dr. Israel Zoberman** is founder and spiritual leader of *Temple Lev Tikvah* in Virginia Beach, Va., where he is honorary senior rabbi scholar at *Eastern Shore Chapel Episcopal Church*. ✨



# It's not manna from heaven, but this Passover, provide something just as crucial to the survival of the Israeli people.



Whether it's a missile attack, a new Covid variant, or serious car crash, your gift to Magen David Adom ensures its 30,000 emergency medical technicians and paramedics have the supplies and resources they need to save lives. So this Passover, while you recount the story of the Jews' redemption from slavery, your gift will help modern-day Israelis survive the threats they face today.

**Make a gift to Magen David Adom today. *Pesach kasher v'sameach.***



**Saving lives. It's in our blood.**

[afmda.org/passover](https://afmda.org/passover)

By JENNIE COHEN

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## Hits at Every Seder

When I was the cook in the kitchen back in my days at the Indiana University Hillel in Bloomington, I oversaw the meals for Friday night and holiday meals. Rabbi Mark Shrager was the director, and a fellow student, Steve Sander from St. Louis, helped with the meal preparations. Steve had several good *Kosher* for Passover recipes that he shared with me. One year for the first *Seder*, we had about 100 reservations but 180 students showed up. We were not going to turn anyone away so besides the dining room, we set up tables in the basement and the upstairs offices. The 400 *matza* balls we had made in advance for the two *Seders* got used up on the first night.

### Passover Veggie Kugel

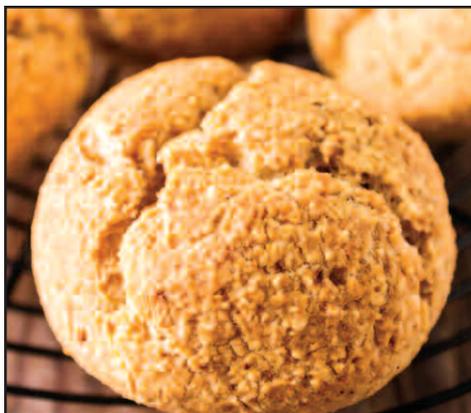
- 6 tsp. oil
- 1/4 cup chopped green pepper
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1/2 cup chopped celery
- 1-1/2 cup grated carrots
- 2 pkgs. frozen chopped spinach
- 3 eggs beaten
- 1-1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 tsp. pepper
- 3/4 cup *matza* meal

Saute peppers, onions, celery, carrots in oil. Cook spinach as directed and drain. Add to vegetables. Add eggs, salt, pepper, and *matza* meal. Spoon into well greased casserole. Bake 45 minutes at 350°. Allow to cool 10 minutes before removing from pan.



### Passover Rolls (Yields 12)

- 1/2 cup oil
- 1 cup water
- 1 tsp. salt



- 1 Tbsp. sugar
- 2 cups *matza* meal
- 4 eggs

Boil oil, water, salt, and sugar. Add matzo meal and mix together. Take off of heat and beat in eggs thoroughly. Let stand 15 minutes. Oil your hands and divide dough into pieces about the size of an egg. Roll in hands and put on well greased baking sheet. Bake 50 minutes at 375°. These can be frozen.

### Farfel Stuffing

- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1/2 cup sliced mushrooms
- 1/4 cup oil
- 4 cups *matza* farfel
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1 egg
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 1 tsp. paprika

In a large skillet saute the onion, celery and mushrooms in oil over low heat until tender. Add the farfel and stir until lightly browned. Add the parsley. In a small bowl, beat the egg with the chicken broth, salt, pepper and paprika. Stir this into the *farfel* and continue to cook over low heat until the liquid is absorbed.

### Matza Balls

(Yields 9)

*My sister, Debbie, got this recipe from our mother 66 years ago and to the delight of our family and her friends she has been making them ever since.*

- 1 cup of boiling water (measure after it has come to a boil)
- 3/4 cup *matza* meal
- 2 Tbsp. *schmaltz* (rendered chicken fat)
- 1 beaten egg
- 1 tsp. salt (unless your *matza* meal is salted)
- 1/4 tsp. freshly ground pepper
- 1/8 tsp. freshly ground nutmeg
- 2 Tbsp. finely chopped fresh parsley



Pour water over the *matza* meal and stir until fully absorbed. Add fat and stir well. Add the rest of the ingredients. Mix well. Refrigerate for at least one hour. Overnight is best. Roll into golf ball size balls, moistening hands in cold water as needed. Drop into gently boiling water and cook, uncovered, keeping the water just gently boiling until done – about 10 minutes. Serve in rich poultry broth with slivered cooked carrots. ✨

