

# THE JEWISH WORLD

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# Holocaust survivors seeing anti-Semitism, war through the lens of experience

By **DEBORAH FINEBLUM**

JNS

For months, the news has been filled with some chilling events aimed at the Jews: Kidnap, rape, torture, murder and war with a brutal enemy that hides in schools, hospitals and an endless network of underground tunnels. And from around the globe, rising anti-Semitism on college campuses, protests and marches down city streets, news broadcasts in the media—not to mention getting a thumbs up from global agencies like the United Nations and the Hague's International Court of Justice.

For Holocaust survivors, all of this seems déjà vu. The three who spoke to JNS are news of the Hamas initiated war with Israel closely—a war that came out of pogroms on Oct. 7 inside Israel's borders.

## I Remember

“When I think of the captives being burnt alive, I think of my mother and brothers whose bodies were burnt in crematoria,” says Rena Quint, an 88-year-old survivor living in Jerusalem. “And when I think of the hostages living on

half a pita and a bit of rice, I remember how we nearly starved and how towards the end in Bergen-Belsen, we drank water from puddles. I completely understand how they must feel.”

Since Oct. 7, survivor Bronia Brandman of Brooklyn, has kept her computer tuned to the news of the war in Israel. “I can see how the media is really giving Israel a bad name and social-media platforms, too,” says the 93-year-old. “They're totally distorting what's happening there. It's a myopic view that reminds me so much of the Nazis, like a repetition. And, if the Jewish bigwigs think they can close their eyes and it will go away, they are very much mistaken.”

David Frenkel, a survivor living in Jerusalem who is a 58-year veteran of the Israel Defense Forces, as well as a retired judge, is equally concerned. “In schools with tunnels under them, our soldiers found books including the ideology of Hitler,” he says. “Every country has to stand up against this horrible hatred; it needs to be stopped before it goes any further.”

He adds, “the kind of inhuman cruelty we're seeing now against men, women,



PHOTO COURTESY OF SANDRA MATIC/SHUTTERSTOCK

*Close-up of a Magen David, that Jewish citizens were forced to wear from the years of World War II and the Holocaust.*

children and even babies sounds very familiar.”

## Reminiscent Of 1930s

These survivors are also watching with concern the steep increase in anti-Semitism around the world. It transports them back to their childhoods.

“In 1933, Jews were already experiencing restrictions, and in 1938, you already had Kristallnacht,” says Quint. “Today, there are Jews who are afraid to wear a Magen David” (a “Star of David”), and, she notes, she read that “nearly 20 percent of people in New York say they believe Jews caused the Holocaust.”

This triggers early memories for the mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. Born in 1935, the only thing Quint recalls of her first three years was her two big brothers pulling her on a sled in their hometown of Piotrków, in central Poland. The happy childhood ended on Sept. 5, 1939, when after the country was invaded by German Nazis on the first of the month, they rolled into her town in tanks and airplanes, throwing grenades into Jewish homes. When they were rounded up in the town synagogue, a stranger shouted at her to run and she did, never seeing her mother or brothers again.

Eventually reuniting with her father

and uncle, she was disguised as a boy and put to work with them in a glass factory until they were shipped to Bergen-Belsen, where a series of women took her under their wings.

Quint was on a death march at the time of liberation and then sent to Sweden to recover from typhus, eventually landing in America, where she was adopted. “My life ended at 3 and began again at 10,” she says. In 1984, she moved to Israel with her husband and children.

Of the more than half a million Hungarian Jews who were murdered, 100 of them were Frenkel's family. “So when some Germans came to ask for forgiveness, I said I don't have the right to grant forgiveness on behalf of the 6 million,” he says. “No one gave us power of attorney to do that.”

Before his ninth birthday, Frenkel's childhood took him from his native Hungary through the Budapest ghetto and to Bergen-Belsen after most of his family perished in Auschwitz. He was 9 in the fall of 1945, on his way by himself to pre-state Israel through the Youth Aliyah program.

## Left Without Tears

Like Quint and Frenkel, Brandman grew up fast. She was 8 when the Nazis

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# ‘Hostage Square’: Epicenter of the movement to #BringThemHomeNow

By AMELIE BOTBOL

JNS

“I’m fasting. Ask me why,” reads a sign on a chair at “Hostage Square” in Tel Aviv.

Judaism, fasting allows us to correct wrongdoing. I am very fearful for those who are currently in captivity. I am worried that they might not return home. I am fasting to avoid this horrific scenario,” Dubi Avigur from Rakefet, a village in the Lower Galilee, explains to JNS.

“We are a big group. Each one of us fasts once a week. We have been doing it now for a month,” he a Nearby, five people sit silently in a circle, their legs crossed in the lotus yoga position, fasting too but quietly with their eyes closed. Signs around their necks read, “I am fasting in solidarity with the hostages and all the others starving in Gaza.”

## Compatriots In Pain

At the center of the plaza near the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, which has been nicknamed “Hostage Square,” a Shabbat dinner table is divided into two sections. The first 100 places are replete with plates, glasses and cutlery as well as a neat tablecloth and a sticker on each plate that reads, “How good is it to have you here!” The second section is filled with rugs, bottles of undrinkable brown water and bits of pita bread. No plates or cutlery. Instead of chairs, there are cement blocks and barbed wire.

“We are here to remind the Israeli government of the Jewish moral obligation to bring back the 136 hostages who are still in Gaza and who have been there for 100 days. Every minute counts,” Allie, 45, from Tel Aviv, holding a megaphone and a poster of the Bibas children, tells JNS.

## “You Are Not Alone.”

“All of us, mothers, Israelis and cit-



Dubi Avigur, who is fasting for the return of captives from the Gaza Strip, at “Hostage Square,” Jan. 12, 2024.

izens of the world were touched by the Bibas family as we watched, on October 7, Shiri holding [9-month-old] Kfir and [4-year-old] Ariel in her arms covered by a sheet, petrified being abducted from her safe room in her kibbutz by Hamas terrorists,” Allie says.

A black, silent piano was brought to the square by the mother of Alon

Ohel, 22, a talented pianist who was kidnapped on Oct. 7 at the site of the Supernova music festival. On top of the piano, a yellow sculpture reads: “You Are Not Alone.”

## What Does It Feel Like?

Dozens of people wait in line to enter a dimly lit tunnel simulation

designed by artist Roni Levavi, who told *AFP* that he wanted to create “the most faithful reconstruction” of the Gaza tunnels and relied on images from the media. On the walls of the narrow passage, words of love and support were written by visitors, family members and former captives, in solidarity with those still being held in Gaza’s terror tunnels. The sound of shelling and explosions can be heard inside the tunnel.

“We decided to enter the tunnel, even though we knew that the experience was difficult and unpleasant. I was fearful of feeling suffocated, confined and claustrophobic,” Gila, 64, from Ramat Gan, tells JNS. “While I know that this does not come even close to the suffering of the hostages who have now spent 100 days underground with no air, no food and no contact with the outside world, coming here was the minimum that I could do,” she says.

Inside a tent where merchandise including T-shirts, hoodies, yellow ribbon, dog tags and posters of the hostages are being sold by volunteers, two teens hold a banner portraying Agam Berger, 19, whom the terrorists abducted from the Nahal Oz IDF base on Oct. 7; she recently appeared in footage released by Hamas, wounded and terrified.

In a nearby tent, at the entrance of which is written: “My home is Nahal Oz,” survivors of the attacks respond to queries from reporters.

“We are survivors of the Oct. 7 massacre. Hundreds of our friends and our friends’ family members were killed. Others close to our heart are currently held in Gaza,” Ela, from Kibbutz Nirim, tells JNS outside the tent as she held a sign calling for the release of the hostages that she would not let go of throughout the interview.

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## Hamas rejects offer of two-month ceasefire for release of all hostages

By CHARLES BYBELEZER

JNS

Hamas recently rejected an Israeli proposal for a two-month ceasefire in exchange for the staged release of the 136 remaining hostages being held in the Gaza Strip, a senior Egyptian official told the *Associated Press* on Tuesday, Jan. 23. The official said Hamas leaders also rejected a demand to leave Gaza and are insisting that the Israel Defense Forces withdraw from the coastal enclave and allow the terrorist organization to regroup.

Israel transferred the proposal to Hamas through Qatari and Egyptian intermediaries, according to an Axios report on Monday, Jan. 22. The report, citing two Israeli officials, said

that Israel’s War Cabinet approved the far-reaching parameters of the proposal 10 days ago.

## No Agreement

In the first phase of the deal, civilian women, men over the age of 60 and hostages in critical condition would be freed, according to Axios. The subsequent phases would see the release of female soldiers and male civilians under the age of 60, and then male IDF soldiers and the bodies of hostages who have been killed.

In return, Israel and Hamas would agree in advance on how many Palestinian security prisoners would be exchanged for each Israeli hostage in every stage. Parallel negotiations would then take place to determine which prisoners are released.

The agreement also called for the redeployment of some IDF soldiers from major population centers in Gaza and allowing the gradual return of Palestinians to Gaza City and the northern Strip.

Meanwhile, *CNN* reported on Monday, Jan. 22, that Israel has also proposed that senior Hamas leaders leave Gaza as part of the agreement. The prospect has been discussed at least twice recently; last month when Mossad Director David Barnea met in Warsaw with CIA Director William Burns and Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, and then again during U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken’s visit to Doha this month.

## Hamas Demands

Earlier on Monday, Israeli Prime

Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reported that Hamas had failed to offer any serious proposal for a deal to free the captives.

On Sunday, Jan. 21, the prime minister confirmed that Hamas during negotiations had demanded that the Israel Defense Forces retreat from Gaza and end its war against the terrorist group, in addition to “the release of all the Nukhba [terrorist commando] murderers and rapists, and leaving Hamas intact. He went on to say, “If we agree to this, our soldiers will have fallen in vain. If we agree to this, we will not be able to guarantee the security of our citizens. We will not be able to return the evacuees safely to their homes, and the next October 7 will only be a matter of time.”

# In the wake of war: Facing the tough new realities

By STEVEN WINDMUELLER

(January 11, 2024 / Jewish Journal)

We are in a moment of darkness that began infamously, on the single most murderous day in Jewish history since 1945. But is this the darkness before night or before dawn?

The statement “Everything has changed since Oct. 7th” is no mere slogan. As we reflect, we are experiencing a fundamental repositioning of not only how Jews see themselves but also how they are perceived by others, including former partners and lapsed political allies. No doubt, the impact of these last several months has created various ripple effects in our community. But as we move beyond these immediate events, I believe that we are likely to see a fundamental recalibration of the American Jewish communal experience.

This is a new moment in time for Jews.

Let us unpack what has transpired since Oct. 7 to define the nature and scope of changes unfolding over these past three months.

## The Stages:

Since early October, we have moved through a series of emotional and political experiences, with each phase being distinctive and challenging:

- Trauma and shock after the first several weeks following Oct. 7.

- Mobilization and unity, culminating in the demonstration in Washington on Nov. 14.

- Questions and challenges since the Nov. 23-30 ceasefire.

- Uncertainty and concern: Some of the glue of unity is now coming undone as the possibility of a wider war may be on the horizon.

## Psychological Impact:

As we step back, we realize the profound imprint that this moment has had on each of us. As we unpack our emotions and reactions, only now are we able to identify the scope of what this ultimately may mean. We continue to experience along with Israelis the trauma of the events surrounding Oct. 7, as we remind ourselves: More Jews were murdered on Oct. 7 than any single day since the Holocaust.

**Are We One People?** As the events of Oct. 7 unfolded, we were reminded about the centrality of peoplehood, as Diaspora Jews reconnected with Israel and as Israelis embraced the global Jewish community. Are we prepared to create the tools of reconnection, exploring Zionist thought and Israeli history, as well as introducing other avenues of Jewish learning and engagement? Can we preserve this sense of the collective as we move further away from Oct. 7?

**A Financial and Cultural Break-**



PHOTO COURTESY OF YONATAN SINDEL/FLASH90.

*Freed hostage Ofir Engel and families of Israelis still being held by Hamas terrorists in the Gaza Strip attend a press conference for the foreign media in Kibbutz Be'eri, Dec. 20, 2023.*

**through:** The Jewish community raised more money in support of Israel over these past three months than at any point in the history of the state. Further, we are experiencing an outpouring of poetry, music and liturgy designed to provide context and comfort as this war unfolds.

**The Awakening:** Similar to June 1967, we are experiencing a “return” as significant numbers of unaffiliated and

disaffected Jews are seeking to reconnect with the Jewish people. Whether out of concern for Israel or born out of their own fears concerning the rise in anti-Semitism, this phenomenon ought not to be dismissed. Community leaders are reporting inquiries by folks seeking to connect, learn and engage. Are we prepared to embrace these individuals?

**Political Homelessness:** While

**Continued on page 6**

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## The revival of an ancient calumny?

By MELANIE PHILLIPS

JNS

There's an unmistakable drumbeat to the anti-Semitism that's erupted across the West in the wake of the Oct. 7 pogrom. In response to the genocidal Jew-hatred fueling Hamas and the Palestinian Arabs, an even older form of the oldest hatred has surfaced—Christian hostility to the Jews. The wholly unwarranted Western condemnation of the Israel Defense Forces for causing an allegedly disproportionate death rate among Gaza civilians echoes the ancient Christian calumny that the Jews are killers motivated by revenge and blood lust. The churches themselves are fueling this demonization.

### Mistake Or Slander?

In December, the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem claimed in a statement that “a sniper of the IDF murdered two Christian women inside the Holy Family Parish in Gaza, where the majority of Christian families has taken refuge since the start of the war. No warning was given, no notification was provided. They were shot in cold blood inside the premises of the parish, where there are no belligerents.”

This incendiary allegation was repeated uncritically as fact across the Western media.

The following day, however, Fox News reported an IDF statement that an incident had taken place “near the Latin Church in the Shejayia area,” a different



PHOTO COURTESY OF STABLE DIFFUSION.

*A Christian cross on top of a cathedral.*

church altogether in another part of Gaza where IDF troops had “operated against a threat that they had identified in the area of the church.”

The Elder of Zion website reported that this didn't stop **The Christian Post** from claiming the IDF had “confirmed” it had shot and killed the two women “on the grounds of Gaza City's only Catholic church.” Yet confusingly, the paper also said the IDF had “confirmed” to Fox News that the incident took place near the church in the Shejayia area of Gaza during an operation against Hamas terrorists.

**The Christian Post**, whose report has been removed from the web, may have been confused by the IDF mistakenly referring to the Shejayia church

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# Restaurant of Leah Adler, culinary star (mom of Steven Spielberg, star director) reopens in L.A.

By **ETHEL G. HOFMAN**  
JNS

It was more than 20 years ago when Leah Adler gave me a tour of her Los Angeles restaurant, the Milky Way. As we talked, one of her comments remains lodged in my memory: “My food has to be exceptionally good—and it just happens to be kosher.”

## Comfort Food

The Milky Way. In astronomy, it means the stars that meld together into a single band of light. Maybe that was the inspiration for Leah and her second husband, Bernie Adler, to combine the very best in a strictly kosher dairy restaurant. When the restaurant opened in 1977, Leah was determined to introduce fine comfort food, redolent with spices and fresh flavors, to the Orthodox Jewish community.

And it took off. Dining at the Milky Way was an experience—kosher food with zip and a dash of ethnicity served up in a cozy atmosphere where family photos and Leah’s paintings lined the walls. Then there was the added attraction of a feisty, petite Leah flitting between tables. She was like the Energizer Bunny. A slash of bright red lipstick and swanky denim reflected her adventurous, bold spirit. She talked to everyone, schmoozing with celebrities equally with the not-so-famous. Everyone was welcome, no matter their faith or background. People loved it. She was the family matriarch of the place (and being Steven Spielberg’s mother didn’t hurt).

Adler reached outside culinary norms. Forty years ago, who would have ever thought that chimichangas could be made kosher? Under the direction of a mashgiach (a Jew who supervises food so that it is prepared according to the laws of kashrut), she encouraged Latino cooks who made LA their new home to prepare dishes they had grown up with. Sure, there were still the mouthwatering kugels, blintzes and kreplach on the menu that catered to the traditionalists,

but the multi-ethnic dishes quickly attracted a growing clientele.

When Adler passed away at the age of 97 on Feb. 21, 2017, the restaurant closed. Could the Milky Way be the same without her dynamic personality?

The Spielberg family—Steven and his sisters, Nancy, Sue and Anne, decided to reopen—with a facelift. They reached out to Phil Kastel, the founder of PK&J Hospitality, a group that provides strategic guidance and leadership in culinary development.

Bright, innovative and with years of experience as an executive corporate chef, Phil was ready to work with the family to lead the Milky Way into a new era. The red carpet was replaced by glossy wood floors and the blue booths were reupholstered, while framed family photos still hang on newly painted walls. A three-minute video of Leah and her family is shown all day. Although the staff is small (only one chef and three cooks in the kitchen), everyone pitches in. On any given day, you might find a cook passing out menus, the mashgiach may be rinsing fresh herbs, and Phil or Stephanie, the general manager, are delivering plates to the table. The Milky Way has expanded its repertoire with Sunday brunch and special events, such as dinner and a screening of short, award-winning movies.

## Sophisticated Kosher Diners

Milky Way’s “Classic Kosher Cuisine” is a combination of contemporary flavors and eye-appealing dishes. Phil notes that “with travel, tastes have become sophisticated and that extends into the kosher culinary world.” Plenty of classics like Adler’s own cheesecake remain, but you’ll find dishes like Salmon Piccata Linguine, the “Impossible” (plant-based) Cheeseburger and Carrot Cake with Toasted Coconut on the menu; Leah Adler would be proud. It’s a fitting testimony to a multi-talented woman.

The recipes here include Leah’s famed chimichangas, printed with



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SPIELBERG FAMILY.

*Leah (Spielberg) Adler, the mother of Steven, Nancy, Sue and Anne Spielberg poses with the family.*

permission from the Spielberg family. Guacamole, Blackened Halibut and Carrot Cake are my interpretation of some of the menu items.

## Leah Adler’s Chimichangas (Dairy)

*Makes 14 chimichangas; 4 cups of filling at 2 oz. of filling per chimichan-*

*ga (Printed with permission from the Spielberg family)*

### Ingredients:

- 2 cups canned black beans (pulse in a food processor until broken up)
- ¼ cup onions, diced ¼ x ¼ inch
- 1 cup mozzarella cheese, shredded
- ¾ cup cooked brown or white rice

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COURTESY PHOTO.

*The exterior of the Milky Way.*

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## In the wake of war ...

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American Jews were already concerned about the rise of anti-Semitism on the political right, as reflected by the 2017 gathering in Charlottesville, in the fall of 2023, we confronted anti-Zionist assaults on Israel and anti-Semitic attacks on us driven by the progressive left. Our alleged whiteness now defines us as privileged; our Zionist credentials make us unwelcome; and our Judaism labels us as “the other.”

Where we embraced DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) as a formula for engaging minorities, this equation continues to be employed against Jews. Intersectionality, critical race theory and woke culture identify us as “colonialists,” “occupiers” and supporters of so-called apartheid.

### Allies?

Not only are we experiencing a world that has limited room for Jews, but also we are feeling that politics has rapidly become a zero-sum game: A person is either with us or, more readily, they are against us. There appears to be no middle ground.

Suddenly without allies, Jews in this country have been taken aback by the absence of support for us, or Israel, in some cases by longstanding friends, and in certain settings, the outright hatred that these former allies are projecting onto Israel, Zionism and American Jew-

ry. When it comes to finding legitimate partners, how do we move forward from this moment?

All these outcomes are occurring against the backdrop of what will be the most challenging political year in modern American history. So, where do we go politically as we confront these new realities?

**The Jewish Voices Outside:** Even beyond the notions of “Jewish unity,” we are confronting those Jews who sit today “outside,” blaming Israeli politicians and policies for all of this, and who, in some cases, feel that in this moment they have no real “Jewish” home. This includes some of our college kids and other Gen Z and Millennial constituencies, as they push back against Israel and in turn direct their anger at us. In some settings these critics feel we have failed them, having provided them with what they now view represents a false, problematic narrative of Zionism and Israel.

**The Day After, Victory or Push-back:** What if this war does not produce all the outcomes that Israel has articulated? Should this war be “called” at some point, what will be the response of Israelis and diaspora Jews? Will some see this as the failure of the IDF to achieve its goals or will there be a great psychological relief? What will be the potential fallout should the hostages not have survived this ordeal? And finally, what if this war is expanded beyond

Gaza?

**Jewish Trauma:** We acknowledge that some of our community members are scared, uncomfortable or possibly unwilling to be in Jewish public spaces. A new type of Jewish angst appears now to be present. For some, the negative pushback and acts of hate that we are experiencing have generated a feeling of being under assault, moving them to adopt a militant position where the need for self-defense has become apparent as they fear for their security and that of their community.

**The Economic Fallout:** In the aftermath of Oct. 7, numerous communal, synagogue and organizational groups delayed or even cancelled their fund-raising initiatives, realizing that this was not the moment to seek support from their traditional donors. As a result, a portion of the American Jewish infrastructure is experiencing serious financial pressures. In the wake of this war, as donors shift their giving priorities to meet the humanitarian crisis facing Israel, some of our social service, educational and religious organizations are being economically challenged.

Jewish nonprofit execs celebrate this outpouring but are quietly anxious. As priorities shift to the defense of and support for Israel, what will happen to the bottom line of the schools, social services agencies, cultural centers and other Jewish institutions that don’t have an obvious Israel portfolio?

Our religious and communal institutions must weigh the issues of security

and the associated costs of managing the safety for those who enter our Jewish spaces.

**Reflections:** In the end, we are reminded how these past several months have profoundly altered our lives, beliefs and actions. Just as Israel is undergoing a significant transformation, the Jewish institutions around which we have built our lives are experiencing profound disruption and change.

We are encountering a very different moment in our Jewish consciousness. Physically and emotionally, we find ourselves in an uncomfortable and uncertain place, as we awaken to the full impact of this tsunami of hate and disruption that is transforming the Jewish people.

Originally published by *The Jewish Journal*.

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# Not an international crime to kill soldiers, UN's Francesca Albanese says of Oct. 7

By MIKE WAGENHEIM  
JNS

Francesca Albanese, the United Nations special rapporteur for Palestinian rights, has courted controversy among Israel supporters for her one-sided faulting of Israel for its conflict with the Palestinians and comments she has made which have been widely interpreted as anti-Semitic. The latter includes frequent comparisons of Israel to the Nazis for the Jewish state's policies toward the Palestinians.

In a rare extended interview that Francesca Albanese conducted with Jewish media, Albanese sat down with JNS recently in New York City and in a video interview.

Albanese made clear that Hamas's attacks on civilians on Oct. 7 violated international law. JNS asked her repeatedly whether the terror organization was justified in invading Israel and in killing Israeli security forces. "Why is this so unbelievable?" Albanese said. "You seem to be puzzled by this. What is the right to resist?"

The U.N. official also said that Israel and American evangelical Christians weaponize anti-Semitism in order to silence her and other critics of Israel. Jews who see Israel as a state of the Jewish people have an "obligation" to ensure it "behaves according to international law," she said.

Below is JNS's interview with Albanese, lightly edited for style.

**Q: You have been very clear in public statements, internationally and to Palestinians directly, that they have the "right to resist the occupation." On Oct. 7, specifically, where did that right start and end?**

**A:** There is no question that people like the Palestinians, who are deprived of their right of self-determination, have the right to resist. The U.N. General Assembly recognized the right of the Palestinian people in particular to resist, but in line with international law.

We have no doubt whatsoever that what Hamas did on Oct. 7 is not in line with international law, because the moment Hamas targeted civilians, by killing, by taking hostages, by brutalizing and injuring civilians—these are crimes and cannot be justified.

This is not legitimate resistance. Now, I know that many Palestinians would pick an issue with that. However, an illegitimate act of resistance doesn't delegitimize the resistance itself.

**Q: Does that extend to the soldiers that were killed on Oct. 7? Does that extend to the police forces that were killed on Oct. 7? Does that extend to any cross border activity where—**

**A:** The limit is clear. Killing a militant, killing a soldier is a tragedy under international law, but when there is an armed conflict, like in this case, killing

a soldier is not illegal. Pretty straightforward.

**Q: So according to international law, and in your view, Hamas is justified in crossing the delineated border, going over to Israel's side and killing soldiers on Israel's side of the border?**

**A:** Killing soldiers is not an international crime. I mean, why is this so unbelievable? You seem to be puzzled by this. What is the right to resist for the Palestinians? No one wants to live under oppression.

**Q: You say that as if Gaza is occupied. There's been a blockade, and it magically got named an occupation.**

**A:** You talk of the blockade as if it was a standalone entity, which it's not. The blockade is part of a legal framework. A blockade can happen within the context of an occupation, because there is control. So already saying that there is a blockade is recognizing that the law of occupation applies.

**Q: There have been blockades throughout history. Just a few years ago, there was a blockade on Qatar by Saudi Arabia by other countries. No one said for a second that Qatar was occupied. There have been other blockades. Nobody calls those occupations. A blockade does not necessarily imply occupation, correct?**

**A:** Everyone who's against the idea that Gaza is occupied, everyone who challenges this—which is enshrined in the law, and there are U.N. resolutions and even the International Committee of the Red Cross, which is very conservative, agrees that this is still an occupation.

Why? Because in order to have an occupation, the determining factor was effective control under article 42 of the Hague Regulations. When the Hague Regulations were written, effective control was just something that could be exercised through military boots on the ground.

Israel does have effective control over the Gaza Strip, and it's manifested by the blockade. [Note: The U.N. Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights interprets article 42 as requiring "the unconsented-to presence of foreign forces" to determine an occupation. Israeli forces evacuated Gaza in 2005.]

Not only that, Israel determines the control of natural resources and who enters and exits Gaza. The currency is determined by Israel, and it's forced to be the shekel, because Israel also administers the tax revenues in the Gaza Strip. [Note: A provision of the Oslo Accords mandates that Israel administer tax revenues.]

Do you realize what life is like for the Palestinians under occupation? You asked me a question that made me think that you really don't see what is life



PHOTO COURTESY OF YOUTUBE/ABC NEWS (AUSTRALIA). | YOUTUBE/ABC NEWS (AUSTRALIA)

*Francesca Albanese, U.N. special rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories, speaks at the National Press Club of Australia on Nov. 13, 2023.*

under occupation.

**Q: Your public statements might suggest that you're unaware of what life has been like for Israelis. Israel has made peace with Egypt and Jordan. Israel has normalized relations with many of its Arab neighbors. Israel has accepted peace plans that were put forth multiple times by the international community. Still, the Palestinians have turned Israel's hand away every single time. Yet, you seem at a loss to understand why the Israeli populace has drifted further to the right. Israel has made peace or has peaceful relations with many neighbors. Why not the Palestinians?**

**A:** You're talking of the Egyptians, who have their own state. You're talking of Jordanians, who have their own state while Israel occupies the land that belongs to the Palestinians to have their own state.

Israel annexed east Jerusalem in 1980. Israel has occupied east Jerusalem, together with the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, since 1967. In east Jerusalem, Israel takes down house after house after house on the ground for which there are no building permits or licenses. During the so-called peace process, Israel has doubled if not tripled the number of colonies [settlements].

These are the facts on the ground, Michael. I don't care about the peace agreement with Jordanians and Egypt, because this has nothing to do with the occupied Palestinian territory.

**Q: You mentioned Egypt. As you know, Israel controlled the Sinai—a huge swath of land that gave Israel a massive buffer zone vis-a-vis Egypt—after the 1967 war. Israel turned that over to Egypt for peace. Why is it so**

**difficult to fathom that if the Palestinians offered peace to the Israelis, rather than slapping away their hand every time, that Israel would be willing again?**

**A:** What is the peace you're talking about? I don't understand.

**Q: Land for peace.**

**A:** Look, Israel must withdraw its military presence from the occupied Palestinian territory, as it had to do from the Sinai and as it has to do from the Golan.

**Q: It seems you think Israel should have to live with neighbors who threaten it, who are within striking distance at any time—whether it's from Judea and Samaria, Gaza or the Golan Heights. That Israel should just have to live with that instead of creating guarantees of its security.**

**A:** Israel has been creating the conditions for its insecurity for this generation and the next generations to come. Frankly, we are still thinking and talking in the pre-Oct. 7 mentality.

I have no idea how Israel will manage to secure itself after what it has done to the people in Gaza, because with 16,000 people killed—Israel claims that in these operations as of Oct. 7, it has killed from 1,500 up to 2,000 Hamas combatants. It means that 90% of the people that Israel has killed in the Gaza Strip alone are civilians. Tell me how this is going to make Israel more secure.

**Q: According to you, Israel has no right to defend itself. This is what you've said about Oct. 7.**

**A:** No. No. No. No. No. I didn't say that. Israel has the right to protect itself, to protect its territory, to protect the citizens. But there are two issues. One is that I don't think that Israel can claim the right of self-defense in the territory that it occupies, including the West Bank, where it has troops on the ground.

It keeps on building colonies after colonies in east Jerusalem, which it continues to annex and Judaize to fulfill this goal of establishing a Jewish majority everywhere, which is, for me, insane. It is eliminatory of the "other."

I agree with many Israelis on this issue. The basis should be the recognition of the other, the recognition of the humanity of the other and the equality and freedom of the other.

So you're telling me Israel should have this right [of self-defense], but in fact it's the Palestinians living without rights between the river and the sea. What are you talking about? I mean, I understand your fear, understand the Israelis' fear, but we are talking about the people who are dying. They are being slaughtered day after day. Can we find a solution that allows everyone to live?

**Q: It's obviously more complex**  
Continued on page 10

## Calendar of Events



### FRIDAY, JAN. 26

**Beth Emeth Erev Shabbat Service** – 5:30 p.m. in-person at 100 Academy Rd., Albany, or via live-stream at [www.BethEmethAlbany.org](http://www.BethEmethAlbany.org). Info. – 518-436-9761, [Info@BethEmethAlbany.org](mailto:Info@BethEmethAlbany.org).

### SATURDAY, JAN. 27

**Ohav Shalom Havdalah, Tu B'Shevat Dinner** – 6-8 p.m. 113 New Krumkill Rd., Albany. Info., Res. 519-527-1163.

**Beth Emeth Torah Study** – 9:30-10:30 a.m. 100 Academy Rd., Albany. Discussion of the Torah portion **BeShalach**, in-person and via Zoom, led by facilitator Susan Kushner. Zoom link: <https://Us02Web.Zoom.us/j/89304372729>. Password: CBE. Info. – 518-436-9761, [Info@BethEmethAlbany.org](mailto:Info@BethEmethAlbany.org).

### SUNDAY, JAN. 28

**SJCC Tu B'Shevat Community Seder** – 3 to 4:30 p.m. Center, 2565 Balltown Rd., Schenectady. Focus on the almond tree. Activities will include planting seeds, making almond-flavored treats crafts. Reg. required by Jan. 25, <https://www.schenectadyjcc.org/arts/celebration-series/>

or by calling the Center. \$5 for members, \$10 for guests and free for children 13 and under. Info.–Judy Ben-Ami, [judyb@schenectadyjcc.org](mailto:judyb@schenectadyjcc.org).

**Beth Emeth Jewish Basics** – 10-11 a.m. in-person at 100 Academy Rd., Albany or via Zoom. Second in a twice-monthly class. Led by clergy Rabbi Greg Weitzman, Cantor Emily Short and Director of Lifelong Learning Rabbi Shara Siegfeld with guest speakers. Open to all learners—Jews, Jewishly adjacent or Jewish seeking. Free for B.E. members. \$72 for non-members (covers materials). Reg.–[www.BethEmethAlbany.org](http://www.BethEmethAlbany.org). Info. – 518-436-9761, [Info@BethEmethAlbany.org](mailto:Info@BethEmethAlbany.org).

### WEDNESDAY, JAN. 31

**Beth Emeth Youth Group** – 5:30-7 p.m. 100 Academy Rd., Albany. Weekly meeting for high school students. Info. – [CBEYouthGroup@gmail.com](mailto:CBEYouthGroup@gmail.com).

**Beth Emeth Learning: Understanding Israel's Military** – 7-8:15 p.m. 100 Academy Rd., Albany. Info. – 518-436-9761, [Info@BethEmethAlbany.org](mailto:Info@BethEmethAlbany.org)

### THURSDAY, FEB. 1

**SJCA: The Braid, I Loved Jew, I Loved Jew Not** – 7 p.m. Zoom performance. What is anti-Semitism? Info., Res.–518-594-8730 or <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/cu/Db0ZvTj/SJCA-HomePage>.

### FRIDAY, FEB. 2

**Beth Emeth Ruach Shabbat** – 5:30 p.m., in-person at 100 Academy Rd,

Albany, or via live-stream at [www.BethEmethAlbany.org](http://www.BethEmethAlbany.org). Featuring students from kindergarten and grade 1. Info. – 518-436-9761, [Info@BethEmethAlbany.org](mailto:Info@BethEmethAlbany.org).

### SATURDAY, FEB. 3

**Beth Emeth Torah Study** – 9:30-10:30 a.m. 100 Academy Rd., Albany. Discussion of the Torah portion **Yitro**, in person and via Zoom, led by facilitator Susan Kushner. Zoom link: <https://Us02Web.Zoom.us/j/89304372729>. Password: CBE. Info.– 518-436-9761, [Info@BethEmethAlbany.org](mailto:Info@BethEmethAlbany.org).

**Beth Emeth Sisterhood Walk** – 1 p.m., parking on Hilton Rd., Slingerlands. Shabbat hike at the Bender Melon Farm. Reg. [www.bethemethalbany.org](http://www.bethemethalbany.org). Info.–Jacki at [CBESisterEvents@gmail.com](mailto:CBESisterEvents@gmail.com).

### SUNDAY, FEB. 4

**Beth Emeth Soup Kitchen** – 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. **Sister Maureen Joyce Center, 369 Livingston Ave., Albany. Volunteers cooking and serving meals.** [www.bethemethalbany.org/event/soup-kitchen.html](http://www.bethemethalbany.org/event/soup-kitchen.html). Info. – **Andrea McNellis** at [AMCNellis@BethEmethAlbany.org](mailto:AMCNellis@BethEmethAlbany.org) or **518-436-9761 ext. 236**.

### WEDNESDAY, FEB. 7

**Beth Emeth Youth Group** – 5:30-7 p.m. 100 Academy Rd., Albany. Weekly meeting for high school students. Info. – [CBEYouthGroup@gmail.com](mailto:CBEYouthGroup@gmail.com).

**Beth Emeth Learning: Israel at 75** – 7-8:15 p.m. 100 Academy Rd., Albany. Info. – 518-436-9761, [Info@BethEmethAlbany.org](mailto:Info@BethEmethAlbany.org)

### FEB. 7-18

**Number the Stars Play:** various dates various times. Schacht Fine Arts Center Theater, 65 1st St., Troy Based on e book by Lois Lowry. Danish Christians help Jewish family to escape to Sweden during WW2. \$12 for students, seniors or children, \$15 for adults. Theatre Institute, 518- 244-2000.

### THURSDAY, FEB. 8

**Beth Emeth Mah Jongg Tournament** – 9 a.m. – 4 p.m., play begins 9:30 a.m. 100 Academy Rd., Albany. Various levels: Tournament with timed games and cash prizes or relaxed play. Reg. – at [www.BethEmethAlbany.org](http://www.BethEmethAlbany.org). Info. – 518-436-9761, [Info@BethEmethAlbany.org](mailto:Info@BethEmethAlbany.org).

### FRIDAY, FEB. 9

**Bethlehem Chabad Kiddush, Cocktails** – 6 p.m. 393 Delaware Ave., Delmar. Shabbat dinner. \$20 – Adult / \$10, Child. Info., Res. – [www.bethlehemchabad.com/kiddushcocktails/](http://www.bethlehemchabad.com/kiddushcocktails/) [info@bethlehemchabad.com](mailto:info@bethlehemchabad.com), 518-439-3310.

**Beth Emeth Youth Shabbat Service** – 5:30 p.m. in-person at 100 Academy Rd., Albany, or via live-stream at [www.BethEmethAlbany.org](http://www.BethEmethAlbany.org). Co-led by youth group members. Info. – 518-436-9761, [Info@BethEmethAlbany.org](mailto:Info@BethEmethAlbany.org).

### SATURDAY, FEB. 10

**Ohav Shalom Disability And Inclusion Shabbat** – 9:15 a.m. – 2 p.m. 113 New Krumkill Rd., Albany. Info. – 518-527-1163.

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## Holocaust survivors seeing ...

Continued from Page 2

invaded her hometown of Jaworzno in southern Poland. “We heard their booming, threatening voices—just to hear those voices made your blood curdle,” she recalls. “We knew that life would never be the same.”

From a family of eight, only she and one brother survived Auschwitz. One moment particularly haunts her: Staying with a sick sister in the camp infirmary, she was warned that all patients would be killed the next day. Though she felt terrible leaving her sibling, Brandman fled the infirmary. Like Quint, she, too, was sent on a death march before liberation.

Brandman did not speak of her Holocaust experience for 50 years, nor did she really laugh for 25. “The Nazis left me without any tears,” she says. In the end, she and the one brother were among the 17 Jews who survived the war out of the 2,000 who once lived in their hometown. They made it to America in 1950, where she married and had a family.

### Fatalistic Thought

From this, Brandman has a theory explaining why anti-Semitism keeps resurfacing: “I think people have that streak in them always, and when it’s unveiled, we’re scapegoated again and again.”

Of course, survivors like these are increasingly a rarity: Of the 3.5 million

alive at liberation in 1945, an estimated 250,000 remain today as International Holocaust Remembrance Day draws near on Jan. 26-27.

One of them is Sheryl Ochayon’s 88-year-old mother, who was hidden for two years by non-Jewish friends in southeastern Poland near today’s Ukrainian border. “She’s very disturbed by what she’s seeing in the media about Israel; she finds it shocking and depressing,” says Ochayon, a project director at Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center. “And the more we learn about what happened in Israel on Oct. 7, the more it reminds her and all of us of the sadism of the Nazis.”

### Education Is Key

Ochayon adds that “the more we hear about the world looking the other way, including the Red Cross refusing to help the Israeli hostages, the more familiar this is sounding. It’s especially shocking to those of us who have always thought that the world is a much better place than it was in 1939.”

“Educating the next generation, including Holocaust education, is more important than ever now,” says Ochayon. “They need to know what ‘from the river to the sea’ really means for Israel and the future of the Jewish people.”

Indeed, survivor Brandman says to-

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# Trees sing to the heart as we note Tu B'Shevat

BY MARILYN SHAPIRO

On a beautiful, chilly January morning, my family and I made our way up the path in Muir Woods National Monuments of California. As part of a planned family reunion, my children had made early morning reservations. A weak sun shone through the trees, a small creek caught the light and the redwoods soared above us. I was in the woods again—an absolutely pristine national woods that had survived fires and earthquakes to awe us with its beauty.

## History Under Construction

Muir Woods, managed by the National Park Service, is located on Mount Tamalpais near the Pacific coast in southwestern Marin County, Calif. It contains 240 acres of old growth coast redwoods, formally known as *Sequoia sempervirens*. Although ancestors of these trees covered much of the United States millions of years ago, the majority of Sequoia trees are now found on this narrow, cool, damp strip of land.

About halfway through our adventure, I stopped to observe unusual signage. With its large caption, “History Under Construction,” the board told the background of the monument as it was first written and later updated to reflect not only the contributions of its original supporters but also the hereto unmentioned role of the Native Americans, whose stewardship had started thousands of years before the original timeline and ended when they were literally wiped out by disease and public policies. Updated information also included the role of the women who were critical in saving Muir Woods from commercialization and logging.

Most importantly, the updated board unblinkingly took an honest look at the complex legacies of the park’s founders, many who believed in white superiority that extended beyond the park’s borders. John Muir, for whom the park was named, used racist language when writing about Native Americans. William Kent, championed as a conservationist for donating the land to the federal government as well as authoring the legislation that established the United States National Park Service, also led



Muir Woods, United States

PHOTO BY CALEB JONES ON UNSPLASH

an anti-Asian policy and rhetoric, He and the other “champions,” Gifford Pinchot, Madison Grant, and Theodore Roosevelt, were all proponents of eugenics, the set of beliefs and practices which aimed at improving the genetic quality of the human population, in part by forced sterilization the members of disfavored minority groups.

“The role of the National Park Service is to preserve history — the good, the bad, the ugly, and everything in between,” stated in 2023 article on the U.S. National Parks Service website, “History Under Construction.” “It’s not our job to judge what history is worth telling, but to share an accurate and comprehensive history.”

I appreciated the way in which Muir Woods had not “cancelled” history but revised the way it was presented to show a more realistic, seemingly unbiased view of the park.

## Trees In Judaism

It was not until my husband Larry and I were flying home from our California trip that I realized the timing of our visit was also significant on the Jewish calendar. Tu B'Shevat, known as Israel's Arbor Day, is held on the 15th of the month of Shevat. This year, it occurs on Jan. 25th, a day that **The Jewish World** is published.

The importance of trees and the environment dates back biblical de-

scriptions of the Garden of Eden and its reference to a tree of life. Post-biblically, Tu B'Shevat started out as an agricultural festival that helped farmers mark the passing seasons, one of four “birthdays” in the Jewish calendar. Based

on, in my opinion, a fairly complicated connection to taxes and tithing, the holiday disappeared after the destruction of the Second Temple. In the 16th century, the Kabbalist Rabbi Yitzchak Luria of Safed and his disciples revived it by instituting a Tu B'Shevat seder in which the fruits and trees of the Land of Israel were given symbolic meaning, with the belief that prayers offered at the ritual meal would bring humans and the world to spiritual perfection.

## Environmental Connection

On Tu B'Shevat 1890, Rabbi Ze'ev Yavetz, one of the founders of the Mizrahi religious Zionist movement, and his students planted trees in the agricultural town of Zikhron Ya'akov in Israel. The Jewish Teachers Union adopted it in 1908. It was later taken over by the Jewish National Fund (JNF) established in 1901 to oversee land reclamation and afforestation of the Land of Israel.

Modern Jews view the holiday as the opportunity make a Jewish connection.

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- <https://forward.com/life/439413/the-forwards-guide-to-tu-bshvat-judaisms-most-underrated-holiday>
- [https://issuu.com/hazon/docs/2021\\_tu\\_b\\_shvat\\_haggadah\\_\\_2\\_](https://issuu.com/hazon/docs/2021_tu_b_shvat_haggadah__2_)
- [www.jnf.org](http://www.jnf.org)
- <https://www.reformjudaism.org/tu-bishvat-history>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muir\\_Woods\\_National\\_Monument](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muir_Woods_National_Monument)
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tu\\_BiShvat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tu_BiShvat)

## Release sparks of growth on Tu B'Shevat

...Kabbalists imbued Tu B'Shevat (Jan. 25 this year) with new religious significance and created elaborate symbolic rituals. According to Isaac Luria, all physical forms—including human beings—hide within them sparks of the Divine Presence. Many fruits and nuts similarly hide within them seeds of new life and growth. In Jewish mysticism, human actions can release these sparks and help increase God's presence in the world. On Tu B'Shevat, kabbalists eat fruits associated with the land of Israel as a symbolic way of releasing these divine sparks.

Tu B'Shevat has become a symbol of Zionist attachment to the land of Israel, and an example of Jewish sensitivity to the environment. Early Zionist settlers to Israel planted trees to restore the ecology of ancient Israel, and as a symbol of renewed growth of the Jewish people in our homeland. One can hold a kabbalistic Tu B'Shevat seder, or send money to the Jewish National Fund and other groups devoted to reforesting Israel.

from *My Jewish Learning*  
<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/tu-bishvat-ideas-beliefs/>

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## Not an international crime ...

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than that, or you wouldn't be in the role that you're in. Again, you have said Israel only has a right to defend itself within its own territory. When questioned on what Israel's proper response should have been to Oct. 7, you laid out two potential scenarios.

**A:** What I said is that Israel cannot claim the right of self-defense under the U.N. Charter, which is different from the right to protect itself.

It's a completely different question. Israel doesn't have the right to wage a war against the people it maintains under belligerent occupation.

**Q:** Article 51 of the U.N. Charter only deals with states versus states, and since Hamas is not a state, then Israel can not cite the U.N. Charter in that particular instance.

**A:** It's not only that Israel cannot claim the right of self-defense. There is an advisory opinion, based on established jurisprudence of the International Court of Justice, which is the supreme judicial organ of the United Nations.

While recognizing the security threats emanating from the occupied territory, the Court of Justice said that Israel needs to operate within the framework of international law, meaning international humanitarian law, securing order, establishing and maintaining order and public life and not invoking the right to wage a war. This is the difference.

**Q:** You're effectively saying that there is no recourse for Oct. 7. According to you, Israel should turn to the United Nations to somehow demilitarize Hamas. The United Nations is completely toothless.

The United Nations Interim Force In Lebanon doesn't even have any power. The United Nations can't even condemn Hamas in the General Assembly for the atrocities on Oct. 7. Yet you suggest that one recourse is to have the United Nations go demilitarize Hamas.

Respectfully, that's simply not reasonable. You also suggested in an interview to turn to law enforcement. Law enforcement simply doesn't apply here. Investigators can track down every piece of information in the world. That won't make the threat from Hamas go away. You cite international law, but in effect, in practice, in the real world—not in scholarly or legal volumes—Israel has no recourse for Oct. 7.

**A:** Israel has recourse. Israel occupies the Palestinian territory illegally, continuing to colonize the land, to brutalize the people, to let its armed settlers go around and terrorize everyone. The Palestinians have no recourse to justice, because the Israeli army is not there to protect the Palestinians. It is there to protect the settlers, who are illegal.

In Gaza, Israel has established an illegal blockade. Israel has also prevented a connection with the outside world that would allow for real change, a political change. Hamas has been considered an asset by [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu and to the Israeli government to maintain the status quo of no war, no peace.

So excuse me, what did the Palestinians have to do? I'm not justifying what Hamas has done. I'm just asking what they are left with.

**Q:** Hamas has control over Gaza, because Hamas doesn't need to take care of its people. Because the United Nations is more than happy to go in there, take international money, have their jobs bank in Gaza and provide for the people through international contributions instead of demanding that Hamas take care of its own people.

The United Nations says, "No, don't worry about that. You build your rockets. You build your military machines. You prepare to attack Israel. We'll take care of your people for you."

**A:** There is no evidence for that. It's



PHOTO COURTESY OF YOUTUBE/UNITED NATIONS | YOUTUBE/UNITED NATIONS

**Francesca Albanese, U.N. special rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories, speaks at a U.N. press conference in October 2023.**

so false.

The United Nations does the utmost to ensure peace and stability in the region, despite what the Israeli government says. I know because I've worked for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and I've engaged with the Israeli government.

The Israeli government is very happy to have the United Nations managing the conflict, managing the humanitarian costs without taking political responsibility for it. The moment you have any U.N. official saying something that is vaguely critical of Israel, and so perceived as political, the criticism starts. But this attack against the United Nations is absolutely disingenuous. It's totally baseless.

**Q:** The people in Gaza and in Judea and Samaria would say their governments don't take care of them and the money is going elsewhere. They would say that their governments are corrupt, and therefore the United Nations fills the void. It's a fact that the United Nations is happy to fill the void that Hamas and the Palestinian Authority don't because they are too corrupt and militant.

**A:** Is this a real interview? The United Nations doesn't work on happiness. The United Nations works based on

mandates.

Each U.N. agency has a mandate, and UNRWA in particular has a General Assembly mandate, so it doesn't operate in a vacuum. It follows certain rules and doesn't fill in the gap for anyone if the government is corrupt.

Let's have elections. Can the Palestinians have elections? Free elections? No, they can't. It is because of Israel. The peace and security of Israel cannot happen at the expense of all of the others, first and foremost, the Palestinians who are under their military rule.

**Q:** You have often said that your critics have not really talked about the facts or international law and instead they smear you directly. In a recent interview, you said there has been "a weaponization of anti-Semitism, which is shocking in recent years. That's dangerous for the Palestinians. It's also dangerous for Jewish communities, because it increases their resentment." You went on to say, "Frankly ... we have to let the dogs continue to bark at the airplane a little bit." What did you mean by "dogs barking at the airplane?"

**A:** These continuous accusations of anti-Semitism were very distressing for me, because I come from a country—I feel very strongly about my country's anti-Semitic past. And I have so much respect for the Italian—and also beyond—for the Jewish communities for what they have gone through. I always denounced the fact that the Shoah wouldn't have been possible without the centuries of discrimination.

So being accused of anti-Semitism, because of my views of the state of Israel—I'm not against the state of Israel. I'm against Israeli policies with the Palestinians. I remember when I was still very upset by these attacks against me, there was an Israeli friend of mine, a lawyer, who reassured me: It looks like it's dogs barking at an airplane. Eventually you will have to deal with it, in the sense that you are the airplane. Let them bark.

Continued on page 15

## 'Hostage Square': Epicenter ...

Continued from Page 3

"We are asking the world to do everything necessary to release the hostages from Gaza. They are civilians who were taken in underwear and pajamas from their beds on Oct. 7 at 6:30 a.m. We have to get them out of Gaza before there is no longer anyone to take out," she cries.

### Alive Or Dead?

JNS met with families and co-workers of the hostages, including the brother of Naama Levy, 19, who was taken captive at the IDF base at Nahal Oz on Oct. 7 and who appeared shortly afterward in a Telegram video—her hands tied, the bottom of her pants covered in blood, as she was pulled out of a pickup truck by her hair and pushed into the back seat.

"Every day could be her last. We want to emphasize the sense of urgency and how important it is to bring her back now. The love we get from Israeli citizens is incredible and we feel like one big family," Naama's brother Amit, from Ra'anana, tells JNS.

Many Israelis and foreigners have visited "Hostage Square" over the past 100 days and taken part in demonstrations of support every Saturday evening and on other occasions, calling for the release of those abducted into Gaza. "There isn't much that citizens like us can do aside from coming here and showing how much we care, together with the families of the hostages and the Israeli people," Lilach, 45, from Moshav Nevatim near Beersheva, tells JNS.

Lilach came in support of her co-worker Carmel Gat, 39, an occupa-



PHOTO COURTESY OF AMELIE BOTBOL

**Chairs tied together in front of a sheet with messages of hope addressed to the hostages in Gaza and prayers for their return, at "Hostage Square" in Tel Aviv, Jan. 12, 2024.**

tional therapist from Tel Aviv, who was visiting her parents in Kibbutz Be'eri when Hamas terrorists abducted her into

Gaza. "Carmel would have been the first to be here, so we are here for her," Lilach says.

**Beshalach**


By Rabbi SHLOMO RISKIN

**EFRAT, Israel** – The miracle at the Re(e)d Sea was expressed through song: the song sung by Moses and the Children of Israel and the song sung by Miriam with all of the women, amid drumming and dancing.

The miracle of the revelation at Sinai was expressed through words: *And Moses descended to the nation and he said unto them, 'And God spoke all these words, saying...' (Exodus 19:25, 20:1).*

**Of Prophets And Sages**

Song and music enter the heart and soul, whereas speech and words speak to the mind, the brain. Song and music create emotions, feelings; while speech and words create understanding and cognition. Song and music develop spirituality and faith; speech and words develop intellect and knowledge. Song and music lead to the wisdom of the heart; speech and words lead to the wisdom of the mind.

Song and music produce religious prophets; speech and words produce learned sages. Song and music can touch every individual deeply and profoundly. Speech and words can only move those with an intellectual background and innate ability.

**Response To Music**

Song and music reach out to all — as a group experience, inclusive, with everyone joining in. Speech and words — meant for one who understands — are a teaching experience, an exclusive experience in which the most learned dominate.

Hence, Moses sings at the Red Sea, but it is a song-speech; Moses is a master of words and speech, not of music and song. Hence, our sages delay the timing of his song to the Messianic Age. Only then, “Moses will truly sing” (**Talmud, Sanhedrin 91b**). Now, at the Red Sea, Moses speak/sings and he, the teacher, speaks alone, after which everyone repeats the lesson in unison.

But Miriam sings with the beat of the drums. She responds to the miracle together with, and at the same time as, all the other women, in the united group experience of ecstatic joy. *And Miriam responded along with them, 'Sing all of you unto the Lord...' (Exodus 15:21)*

Song and music lead to movement, dance and human embrace. Words and speech lead to meditation, books and authoritative judgments. Song and music lead to the drum of the rhythmic heartbeat.

**Music In The Commandments**

Words and speech lead to the staff of the ruler and judge. Hence, Moses left a legacy of a book of books and a

# Singing unto the Lord comes from the heart's wisdom and is understood from the heart

code of laws and commandments, while Miriam left a legacy of a well from which poured living spring waters of regeneration and rebirth.

As the sea is song-speech, the mountain is the speech-song. The entire nation saw the sounds of Sinai; they saw the words, they saw the cantillations and the musical notes, and they heard the music within the commandments, and they felt the love within the laws.

**Yiddishe Neshama**

A story is told that at a bitterly cold seuda shlishit (third meal of Shabbat), the Alter Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi (1745-1812) was sitting with his Chasidim when he instructed his beadle to go outside into the snow and bring in a teenage boy who was looking and listening through the icy windowpane. “But he is only a young Russian peasant,” said the beadle. “He is a Yiddishe neshama [Jewish soul],” the rebbe replied.

The young man was seated next to the rebbe. When the rebbe asked him who he was and where he came from, the boy explained that his Russian-Christian parents had found him one morning on their doorstep.

They had brought him up as their son and taken him to church every Sunday — but he had always felt drawn, as if by a magnet, to Jews and Judaism. “You were left by Jewish parents escaping a pogrom; you are a Jew with a Yiddishe neshama,” explained the rebbe.

**Combination?**

The rebbe began to speak words of Torah, transporting his Chasidim to exalted, supernal heights. “Do you understand?” he asked the boy in Russian. “No, I don't understand,” the boy replied. The rebbe began to give an involved analogy, a story within a story within a story. “Do you understand now?” he asked. “No, I don't understand,” the confused boy replied.



*The Songs of Joy, c. 1896-1902, by James Jacques Joseph Tissot (French, 1836-1902), gouache on board, 7 7/8 x 10 1/2 in. (20.1 x 26.7 cm), at the Jewish Museum, New York City.*

Whereupon the rebbe began to sing a nigun — a tune without words. He sang, his Chasidim sang, he clapped his hands and his Chasidim clapped their hands.

Then they all rose, clasped hands, linked arms and danced rapturously around the holy ark. The boy also sang, danced and clapped his hands. With tears streaming down his face, he cried out, “Now I understand, I understand everything, the Torah and the analogy too!”

We must join the staff of Moses to

the drums of Miriam, the song-speech of the sea to the speech-song of the mountain, the loving-kindness of Miriam's well to the laws of Moses. Moses' commandments, the wisdom of the heart, must be joined to the hermeneutic interpretations of the mind. Then everyone will understand everything.

**Shabbat Shalom.**

*Rabbi Shlomo Riskin is chancellor emeritus of Ohr Torah Stone and chief rabbi of Efrat, Israel.*



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## Restaurant of Leah Adler ...

### Continued from Page 5

1 cup roasted and seeded Anaheim chilies, diced ¼ x ¼ inch

1 teaspoon ground cumin

½ cup cilantro, roughly chopped

1 ½ tsp. kosher salt

1 tsp. black pepper

14 each wonton wrappers, 3.5" x 3.5"

#### Directions:

Caramelize onions in a sauté pan with a small amount of butter and oil.

Mix all ingredients until combined.

Place ¼ cup of mixture into a wonton wrapper, secure the edges with water and fold until tightly sealed.

Heat the oil in a heavy-bottomed pot on the stove until it boils to 325 degrees to 350 degrees (use a food-safe thermometer). Gently place tightly sealed chimichangas in oil and fry until golden brown, turning over once.

Remove from the fryer. Place on a paper towel to absorb some of the excess oil, and sprinkle with additional kosher salt.

Serve chimichangas with guacamole, sour cream, chopped tomatoes, olives and additional cilantro on top.

### Quick, Easy

#### Guacamole (Pareve)

Makes 2 cups

#### Cook's Tips:

•When made ahead, drizzle guacamole lightly with freshly squeezed

lemon juice or lime juice and cover with plastic wrap. Make sure to press the wrap down with your fingers to prevent air from getting into the mixture and causing the surface to brown. ^

• May add chopped tomato, finely minced chilies or bottled salsa.

•**To cut avocados:** Run a knife around the outside of the avocado horizontally and carefully twist it in half. Discard the pit and remove the flesh with a spoon or finger.

#### Ingredients:

3 ripe avocados, peeled and pit removed

juice of 1 large or 2 small limes

½ to 1 teaspoon bottled minced garlic

pinch kosher salt (and pepper) or to taste

#### Directions:

Place avocado flesh in a medium bowl. Add the lime juice, ½ teaspoon of minced garlic, and salt (and pepper, if using).

Mash gently with a fork to a coarse consistency. Add a little more garlic (up to another ½ teaspoon, if needed) and salt to taste.

Best served immediately.

#### Blackened Halibut With Avocado (Pareve)

Serves 4

#### Cook's Tips:

• May substitute salmon or cod.

• Halibut is a white fish, fresh-tasting with a dense, firm texture. Most halibut now comes from the Pacific.

• Substitute ¼ cup of Mediterranean spice mix for garlic, oregano and thyme.

#### Ingredients:

2 tablespoons powdered garlic

1 tablespoon sumac

1 tablespoon dried oregano

1 tablespoon dried thyme

1 tablespoon paprika

2 teaspoons cayenne pepper

2 teaspoons freshly ground pepper

3 tablespoons vegetable oil

4 halibut fillets (4 oz. to 6 oz. each)

4 tortillas, warmed

sliced avocado and arugula salad to plate

#### Directions:

In a large shallow dish combine the seven spice ingredients. Add the fillets, tossing to coat all sides. Pat spice mixture lightly to press into fillets.

In a large heavy skillet, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Add the fillets in one layer. May need to cook in two batches. Cook for 3 to 4 minutes on each side, or until the coating is charred and the fish is opaque and flakes easily. Check in the thickest part with a sharp pointed knife, or when inserted, a meat thermometer should register 145 degrees.

**To serve:** Place each fillet on a warm tortilla. Top with half a sliced avocado and arugula salad on the side.

#### Carrot Cake With Toasted Coconut (Dairy)

Serves 10-12

#### Cook's Tips:

• May use yellow or white cake mix for carrot-cake mix.

• Save time. Buy store-bought grated carrots.

#### Ingredients:

1 box carrot-cake mix (about 15.25 oz.)

2 cups grated carrots

½ cup water

3 large eggs

½ cup vegetable oil

¾ cup raisins or dried cranberries  
½ cup canned crushed pineapple, undrained

1½ teaspoons cinnamon

2 teaspoons coffee granules

½ cup coarsely chopped nuts  
orange frosting and coconut (recipe and ingredients follow)

#### Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Spray two 8-inch round cake pans with nonstick baking spray. Set aside.

In a large bowl, place cake mix, carrots, water, eggs and vegetable oil. Beat until the batter is smooth. Add the remaining ingredients. Stir with a wooden spoon to mix well. Divide the batter equally between the two cake pans.

Bake in a preheated oven for 35 to 40 minutes. After 35 minutes, insert a toothpick in the center of each cake. If it comes out clean, the cakes are done. Let cool for 10 minutes in pan before inverting onto a wire tray.

Cool completely before frosting.

**Orange Frosting:** Beat together 1 (8 oz.) package of softened cream cheese and 1 stick (½ cup) of softened butter until smooth. Gradually add 1 box (16 oz.) of confectioners' sugar, beating well after each addition. Add ¼ teaspoon of orange extract (can use vanilla instead, if that is handy). Beat well until the frosting is smooth and fluffy.

Spread about a ½ cup of frosting between cake layers. Spread the remaining frosting over the top and sides of the cake. Sprinkle with toasted coconut. Chill for at least 2 hours before serving.

• **To toast coconut:** Spread a ½ cup of unsweetened coconut on a small baking sheet. Place under broiler until golden brown, 2 to 3 minutes. Watch carefully; coconut scorches quickly. Use as needed.

*Ethel G. Hofman is a syndicated American Jewish food and travel columnist, author and culinary consultant.*

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## Braid presentation to highlight anti-Semitism during February Zoom theater program

**SARATOGA SPRINGS**—Saratoga Jewish Community Arts (SJCA) will present the first of three “live on Zoom” programs from The Braid on Thursday, Feb. 1, at 7 p.m. The Braid, formerly Jewish Women’s Theater, is a Jewish story company with a 15-year legacy of advancing Jewish culture, according to SJCA organizers. The first program reviews anti-Semitism with true stories that have been written for presentation and is entitled, “I Loved Jew, I Loved Jew Not.”

“What does it mean to be to be subject to anti-Semitism today,” asks Phyllis Wang, coordinator of SJCA, “when someone is black and Jewish on campus, or when encountering a Nazi in this day as a Jew, or being persecuted for being born Jewish in Iran?”

What does it mean to be Jewish at this moment?

“More than a dozen contemporary writers, both Jews and their allies, attempt to answer these questions with a curated collection of true stories of anti-Semitism and the strength to stand against it, brought to life in this powerful new work of theater,” Wang continued.

Registration for The Braid’s “I Loved Jew, I Loved Jew Not” is required on the SJCA Home Page, (<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/cu/Db0ZvTj/SJCAHomePage>). Patrons must register for each program from The Braid separately. A playbill and Zoom link will be sent a few days before the program.

# Local boys Ya'ir Sasson, Joshua Marx return from the Buenos Aries Maccabi with medals

**Y**a'ir Sasson and Joshua Marx recently returned from the Pan American Maccabi Games in Buenos Aries, Argentina. The Games were Dec. 27, until Jan. 5. Ya'ir and Josh were both part of the Maccabi USA team, and this was the first international competition for both of them. Ya'ir competed in U16 swimming, and Josh in U18 tennis. Ya'ir Sasson earned seven medals. He won Gold in the 4 x 100 Meter Freestyle Relay, Silver in 50 and 100 Meter Backstroke, and Bronze in 4 x 50 Meter Freestyle Relay, 50 Meter Freestyle, 100 Meter Butterfly and 200 Meter Individual Medley.

The Pan American Maccabi Games was Joshua Marx's first tournament, and he received a bronze medal for tennis doubles.

The Pan American Maccabi Games are a celebration of Jewish unity, culture, and heritage through world athletic competition and occur every four years. This year there were more than 4,000 athletes from 20 countries: including 70 athletes from Israel.

**Sasson** is a 16-year-old junior at Albany High School. He is the son of Laurie Sasson and Idan Sasson. He has been swimming competitively since he was 6 years old. He swam in the 2019 Jr Maccabi Games in Philadelphia and in the 2022 Maccabi Games in San Diego, where he medaled in all 12 events. He has also been swimming with Albany High's varsity team since 7th grade. Last year, alongside three of his teammates, Ya'ir qualified for the New York State Championship meet for the 200 Medley Relay, swimming the 50 fly. The team placed 13th overall, out-placing several rival teams that they had been trailing throughout the season. He is a scholar athlete, earning principal's list for every marking period throughout high school. When he is not in the pool he often surrounds himself with music. He has played the piano for 10 years



*Ya'ir Sasson and Joshua Marx show off their medals after return from Pan American Maccabi Games in Buenos Aries.*

and has been playing saxophone and singing for four years.

**Marx** is a 17-year-old senior at Albany High School. He is the son of Rogerio Marx and Naomi Falk. Joshua has been playing tennis since his freshman year of high school. He plays for the Albany High School varsity tennis team. He is an honor student at Albany High School and was inducted into the National Honor Society. Outside of school, Marx works at Retina Consultants where he is an ophthalmic imaging technician. In his free time, Joshua volunteers with the ALERT Organization (Albany Law Enforcement Resolution Team). This organization works on building better relationships between the community and Law Enforcement. He is on the planning committee for the Albany Sports Challenge June 29, 2024, at the MVP arena.

Both boys report that they enjoyed their experiences in Argentina. They had an opportunity to compete against other Jewish athletes and form relationships with them.

"This year's games were especially meaningful after the October 7 attacks. Our strength is in our unity and in our youth," said Laurie Sasson, mother of Yair.



*Joshua Marx practices his tennis skills.*



*Ya'ir Sasson in the swim.*



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## Obituaries

### BARBARA "BOBBIE" FEINBERG CANTOR

93, Jan. 13, 2024; widow of Stanley Cantor; survived by son Larry (Tracey) Cantor; daughter Diane (Scott) Tenenbaum; and grandchildren Max, Zachary and Sam Tenenbaum.

### HELEN KAPLAN

78, of Selkirk, Jan. 16, 2024; survived by husband Allen Kaplan; sister

Sara Wolpin; daughters Nancy (Kevin) Wolken and Anita (Noah Fiedel) Kaplan; son David (Danielle) Kaplan; and grandchildren Madelaine, Mallory, Sam, Jack and Leo.

### FRANCES R. LEWIS

84, of Colonie Village, formerly of Albany, Jan. 11, 2024; widow of Howard Lewis; sons Alex Lewis and Jesse Lewis; daughter Erica Lewis; grandchildren Lindsey, Matthew and S.F.C. Lewis.

*The Jewish World publishes obituaries containing age, date of death, spouse and immediate family survivors at no cost. For other options, contact Jim@JewishWorldnews.org*

## Local musician "As Iz" releases new EP



*Izzy Singer, "As Iz," pictured, a one-man band, plays guitar, harmonica, and sings while simultaneously playing bass drum and snare with foot pedals.*

Israel Singer, a regular contributor to **The Jewish World** with his Iz-Visions cartoon, has released a new six song EP (extended play) entitled "Under The Radar." Singer performs and records under the moniker "As Iz", a one-man band, playing guitar, harmonica, and singing while simultaneously playing bass drum and snare with foot pedals. As Iz began as a recording project in 1989, with the release of a self-titled cassette EP.

Singer (As Iz) writes, performs, and records all tracks himself. A featured song "No Words" was written the week-end of October 7, 2023 in reaction to the Hamas attacks on Israel. The new release, which is available to purchase and stream via Apple Music, Spoti-

fy, Bandcamp, and other digital music platforms, will also be available on CD. Information, including songs and videos, may be found on Singer's ReverbNation page, [www.reverbnation.com/theizz](http://www.reverbnation.com/theizz).

Singer performs throughout the region in music clubs, breweries, and restaurants, as well as in healthcare and senior facilities. He is a member of the American Federation of Musicians Local 14.

Singer and his wife Margo are members of Congregation Berith Shalom and the Nassau Synagogue, where Izzy Singer serves as vice president. Residing in Castleton, they are enthusiastic supporters of various local and national music acts.

## NYSSBA General Counsel Worona to review First Amendment and Higher Education at Ohav

**ALBANY**— Jay Worona, deputy executive director and general counsel for the New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA), will present, "First Amendment and Higher Education: Responsibilities and Limitations" on Friday, Feb. 16, at Ohav Shalom Synagogue, 113 New Krunkill Rd., Albany. The program begins with Kabbalat Shabbat at 6 p.m.



**JAY WORONA**

followed by dinner at 7 and then Worona's presentation at 8 p.m. The dinner program is open to the community.

According to organizers, the presentation and discussion will focus on how colleges and universities balance freedom of speech under the First Amendment with protecting the safety and welfare of students who may feel threatened on campuses of higher learning; the role of institutions of higher education to help students discern fact from fiction; whether or not free speech is unlimited; whether or not there are or should be limitations on faculty members' rhetoric both personally and professionally.

Worona, who is a long-time Ohav Shalom congregant, represents NYSS-

BA and its approximately 750-member school districts in both direct and friend-of-the-court litigation on legal topics related to New York's public schools. In 1994, Worona successfully argued and won a case involving the separation of church and state before the United States Supreme Court entitled Board of Education of Kiryas Joel Village School District

v. Grumet. Worona has been a Fellow of the New York State Bar Association. He is a member of the National Association of Parliamentarians, and also serves as an adjunct professor at the School of Educational Administration and Policy Studies at the State University of New York at Albany. In 2003 and again in 2014, he received the Excellence in Part-Time Teaching Award for his service. He lectures at conferences throughout the nation on a range of legal topics regarding public education.

Registration may be obtained online at <https://www.ohavshalom.org/get-involved/events/> and is due by Feb. 9. The cost for this event is \$18 per person and includes dinner.

## Schenectady J.C.C. to celebrate Tu B'Shevat; Community seder and other related activities

**SCHENECTADY**— The Schenectady Center (SJCC) will celebrate the holiday of Tu B'Shevat, New year for trees with a community seder and other holiday-related activities on Sunday, Jan. 28, from 3 to 4:30 p.m. The community is welcome to attend.

Those attending participants will have an opportunity to take part in a Tu B'Shevat seder, at which they will get to eat various fruits and foods to note the important role trees play in life. This year's celebration will focus particularly on the almond tree, which is the first tree to bloom in Israel. Other activities will include planting seeds, making almond-flavored treats and crafts.

This year, the SJCC is also hosting a tree-themed art creation opportunity to celebrate Tu B'Shevat. Those who wish to be involved are encouraged to create and submit a tree sculpture or picture to be featured at the event and exhibited through February. Submissions started

Jan. 15 and are ongoing.

Registration for the event is required and may be obtained before and during the holiday on Thursday, Jan. 25, at <https://www.schenectadyjcc.org/arts/celebration-series/> or by calling the Center.

Admission for the program is \$5 for Center members, \$10 for guests and free for children 13 and under. Judy Ben-Ami at [judyb@schenectadyjcc.org](mailto:judyb@schenectadyjcc.org) can provide details.

According to organizers, Tu B'Shevat was originally to mark the age of a tree for the purpose of harvesting and tithing its fruit. The tithes were then given to the priests who served in the Temple and did not own any land. After the Jewish people were scattered in the diaspora and were no longer primarily involved in agriculture, Tu B'Shevat became a holiday symbolizing the connection between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel.

## CGOH lists weekly Shabbat Torah study

**SCHENECTADY**—The Congregation Gates of Heaven Shabbat Morning Torah Study group meets from 9–10 a.m. and is led by Rabbi Matt Cutler, spiritual leader of the congregation.

The weekly gathering offers an enriching opportunity for individuals of all levels of expertise to come

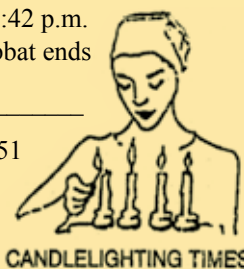
together and delve into the wisdom of the Torah, according to organizers.

The program for all adult study is in-person or virtual. Zoom link is: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/92566894395>. **Information may be obtained by calling the synagogue at 518-374-8173.**

**Friday, Jan. 26, 16; Shevat.** Shabbat candle lighting at 4:42 p.m.  
**Saturday, Jan. 27, 17; Shevat.** Sedrah: Beshalach. Shabbat ends at 5:46 p.m.

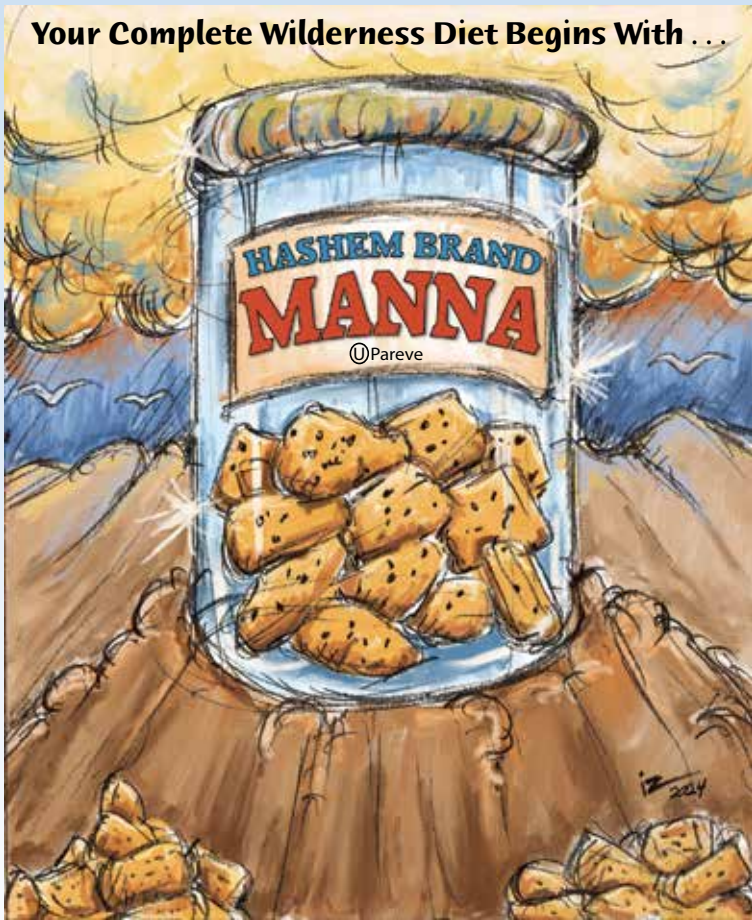
**Friday, Feb. 2, 23; Shevat.** Shabbat candle lighting at 4:51 p.m.

**Saturday, Jan. 27, 24; Shevat.** Sedrah: Yitro. Shabbat ends at 5:55 p.m.



## Iz Visions A Look at Parshat B'Shalach

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## Holocaust survivors seeing ...

Continued from Page 8

day's Jews need to "teach their children and grandchildren about our Jewish story before they get to college, where they're exposed to anti-Semitism and a flood of progressive causes. These kids often lack the knowledge to argue with it, and they don't realize that if things happen like they did in Germany, it could

be them, too."

One glaring difference between then and now, though, is the existence of the State of Israel, Quint maintains. "When we were children, Jews had nowhere to turn—no one would take us in. But now, even with anti-Semitism on the rise, we have a country with our own army, a place where every Jew can find rescue."

## Trees sing to the heart ...

Continued from Page 9

tion to contemporary ecological issues, including responsible stewardship of our planet and ecological activism. This was most clear to me in Hazon's **Tu B'Shvat Haggadah**. Along with the explanation and prayers for the four glasses of wine and four fruits, the booklet (available online) offers way in which one can get involved in climate action, food sustainability, soil advocacy, and educational resources focusing on the environment.

### For Tomorrow

Meanwhile, we can continue the custom Rabbi Yavetz and his students started 133 years ago: planting trees. Since 1901, JNF has planted over 250 million trees, created and built over 240 reservoirs and dams, developed over 250,000 acres of land, and established more than 2,000 parks. As suggested on Clifton Park's Congregation Beth Shalom website, trees can be planted in support of the hostages, in support of Israeli troops, in memory of a loved

one, or just because you would like to plant a tree in Israel. In addition, JNF is providing extended services since the October 7 attack on Israel physical, medical, and emotional support as needed. Furthermore, the organization gives the communities devastated by the war "the promise of rebuilding for tomorrow."

For those of us who care about our planet's future we need to continue to visit and support beautiful places like Muir Woods and celebrate beautiful holidays like Tu B'Shevat. Chag Sameach!

*Marilyn Shapiro, formerly of Clifton Park, is now a resident of Kissimmee, Fla. **Keep Calm and Bake Challah: How I Survived the Pandemic, Politics, Pratfalls, and Other of Life's Problems** is the newest addition to her line-up of books. It joins **Tikkun Olam, There Goes My Heart** and **Fradel's Story**, a compilation of stories by her mother that she edited. Shapiro's blog is [theregoesmyheart.me](http://theregoesmyheart.me).*

## Theme of February Clifton Park Chabad course to feature advice for a more meaningful life

**CLIFTON PARK** – Clifton Park Chabad has slated, "Advice For Life — The Rebbe's Guidance For Leading A More Meaningful Life," a six-session course beginning on Thursday, Feb. 8, at 495 Moe Rd., Clifton Park. The first of the Thursday evening sessions is free. The course will also be offered on Zoom.

"Advice for Life is centered on the personal struggles of big-name leaders and ordinary people who turned to the late Lubavitcher Rebbe—perhaps the most influential rabbi of the 20th century—for advice. This course tells their

stories to show how the rebbe applied Jewish values to provide unique, impactful guidance for navigating ordinary life," said Rabbi Yossi Rubin, who will conduct the course of the Rohr Jewish Learning Institute (JLI).

Cost for the course is \$59 and the textbook price is \$22. According to the rabbi, scholarships are available; and no one will be turned away for lack of funds. Details may be obtained by calling 518-495-0772 or e-mailing [clifton-parkchabad@gmail.com](mailto:clifton-parkchabad@gmail.com). Registration is at [www.myjli.com/learn/cliftonpark](http://www.myjli.com/learn/cliftonpark)

## Not an international crime ...

Continued from Page 10

This is the thing. In every country where I go, I meet with Jewish communities—not all of them. I mean, not all Jewish communities are happy to meet with me, because of a number of reasons. But those who meet with me, we are always on the same page in the sense that I stand against any form of racism against anyone.

I will always speak in defense of any Jews, including those who feel very strongly about the State of Israel. It's their right. I don't judge. I totally understand what it means for a Jewish person to see the State of Israel as the state of the Jewish people. I don't judge it. I don't question it. It's their obligation to make sure that Israel, as a partner of the international community, behaves according to international law. That's it. **[Note: Albanese has compared Israelis to Nazis, among other anti-Semitic comments.]**

**Q: Who is weaponizing anti-Semitism?**

**A:** The state of Israel, first and foremost. And a number of people,

who are not even Jews. Christian evangelicals in the United States, and the right—like what I see in France—are weaponizing anti-Semitism, or the extreme right, which is anti-Semitic itself.

It's no different from my own country. It's incredible that, in my own country, parties in the government that have been historically anti-Semitic, and have never regretted the anti-Semitic legacy of their parties, have this stance with the State of Israel, which doesn't mean standing with Israeli people.

**Q: The next time you're in**

the United States, I invite you to my home borough in Brooklyn to visit some of the Jewish neighborhoods, where Jews are assaulted on a regular basis. And to some of the college campuses, including Columbia University and the City University of New York, to talk to Jewish students and get their thoughts on weaponization of anti-Semitism. I think they will have a very different view, and possibly an angry one, toward those accusing them of weaponizing anti-Semitism.

**A:** I accept the invitation. Next October, I will make sure that we have these plans on my agenda.

The second thing is that I'm 100% convinced that anti-Semitism is an issue. And I'm 100% convinced that whatever has happened as of Oct. 7 has made many less secure, more isolated, more fearful. But this is why we need to have this dialogue, because for me, anti-Semitism is discriminating against Jews because they are Jews. This has nothing to do with the appraisal of Israel's performance as a member state of the United Nations. But again, I accept your invitation and consider it done.

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## The revival of an ancient calumny?

Continued from Page 4

as Latin. Shejaiya is the location of a Greek Orthodox and an Episcopalian church; the Holy Family church, in Rimal, is the only Gaza parish under the Jerusalem Latin Patriarchate.

### Israel Corrects Misinformation

Then Israel ended any such confusion when the prime minister's office stated categorically: "There was no fighting in the Rimal neighborhood where this Catholic church was located."

Yet that same day, the pope's message-board Vatican News not only repeated but even embellished the original accusation. The Israeli military, it said, had "entered the compound of the Holy Family Catholic Parish in Gaza, shooting at anyone leaving the church." On top of this fresh and unsubstantiated allegation, which ignored the Israel's flat denial that they had been operating anywhere near this church, the Vatican then upped the ante and framed this as a religious war by claiming: "Israelis have opened fire on Gaza's Christians." This hysterical and vicious misrepresentation of Israel's desperate battle to destroy Hamas reflects the moral bankruptcy of Pope Francis himself. Not only did he claim that Israel was subjecting unarmed civilians to bombings and shootings and that "this even happened inside the parish complex of the Holy Family," he

has also repeatedly described Israel's war to destroy Hamas as terrorism.

### Morality Questions

In October, he reportedly held a fraught phone call with Israeli President Isaac Herzog, whom he told: "It is forbidden to respond to terror with terror." Equating the attacks by Hamas with the attempt to destroy its capacity to repeat them is to strip Israel of the legitimacy of its defense against genocide.

The church has simply lost its moral compass. Although it condemned the Oct. 7 pogrom, it has rendered this worthless by attacking the victims of Hamas's genocidal agenda. This inevitably calls to mind the shocking record of the Catholic church during the Holocaust, when Pope Pius XII turned a blind eye to Nazi atrocities.

The same prejudice has been on copious display in the liberal Protestant churches led by the Church of England. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said: "The relentless bombardment of hospitals and civilians in Gaza is intolerable. It's against international humanitarian law—it must stop and stop now. The misuse of hospitals by Hamas does not justify attacks by Israel. Two wrongs don't make a right."

Welby conspicuously failed to acknowledge that that under international law a hospital can be attacked if it is being used as a terrorist command center or ammunition store, as Gaza's hospitals

have been. Moreover, for the leader of Anglicanism to represent the battle between civilization and barbarism as "two wrongs" reveals a church that has lost all claim to moral authority.

### Upending Of Truth

Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, blamed what he described as "this new cycle of violence" on "decades of occupation." Even though Israel left Gaza in 2005, both the Catholic and liberal Protestant churches believe that Israel is illegally occupying the disputed territories of Judea and Samaria.

Totally ignoring the brainwashing of the Palestinian Arabs to hate and murder Jews and drive them out of the whole of Israel, and refusing to acknowledge the relentless attacks on Israelis who live in the disputed territories in accordance with international law, the churches have swallowed the view that the Palestinians are victims of Israeli oppression.

This unholy upending of truth and morality results from the synthesis of an ancient Christian calumny with Palestinian propaganda.

Some Christians are among the most committed supporters of Israel in the world.

Nevertheless, the deepest root of many churches' hostility to the Jewish state lies in the resurrection of the previously discredited doctrine of "replacement theology," also known as "supersessionism."

### "Liberation Theology"

This doctrine, which holds that because the Jews denied the divinity of Jesus they were stripped of God's favor so that Christians became the "new Israel" while the Jews were damned, was the source of centuries of Christian atrocities against Jews until the Holocaust drove it underground.

It was given new life by Palestinian Christian "liberation theology," which falsely states that the Palestinian Arabs were the original possessors of the Land of Israel. This invested the Palestinian claim to the land with the status of Christian writ, turning Israel into an ungodly interloper and its defenders into God's enemies.

It is a variant of liberation theology, the doctrine propounded in the 1960s to

suggest that socialist revolution was the proper fulfillment of the Christian duty to the poor—a doctrine of which Pope Francis is a leading exponent.

In its anti-Israel iteration, Jesus becomes a Palestinian persecuted by the Jews while Jesus's "descendants" become today's Palestinians, crucified in the very land that was supposedly promised to them. Their liberation would, of course, require the dissolution of the Jewish state.

### Christianity Under Assault

This ludicrous and lethal fiction has been pumped out for decades by the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem. Its founder, Father Naim Ateek, is a close friend of many senior Anglican bishops. Sabeel, used as a major resource by Anglican clergy, aid agencies and pilgrimage companies, is a crucial source of systematic, theologically based lies and libels about Israel.

Meanwhile, Christianity is under actual assault all over the world from radical Islam. Last April, churches in Pakistan and Uganda were attacked and burned by Muslim mobs. In the same month, dozens of Christians were murdered in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The vicar of Babwisi parish said: "In one night of unfathomable horror, men, women and children were slaughtered like chicken." In Nigeria, more than 52,250 Christians have been butchered or hacked to death since 2009.

Yet on this worldwide Christian persecution, the churches are all but silent. Israel is the only country in the Middle East where Christians are safe. Yet the churches dump on Israel while genuflecting to Islam.

In this terrible war against the forces of evil in Gaza, the Christian church is once again tragically turning on its Jewish parent while embracing its Islamic assassin.

*Melanie Phillips, a British journalist, broadcaster and author, writes a weekly column for JNS. Currently a columnist for The Times of London, her personal and political memoir, Guardian Angel, has been published by Bombardier, which also published her first novel, The Legacy, in 2018. her work may be found at melaniephillips.substack.com.*

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Why look at page 2?  
or,  
How to answer Hillel's paradox

*If I'm not for myself, who will be?  
If I'm only for myself, what am I?  
And if not now, when?*

In three pithy lines, Hillel presents us with a paradox central to being Jewish: my individuality is sacred; so is sharing human joys and sufferings. If I don't serve others, am I truly human? And he says, Solve this puzzle—now!

The prophets told us God wants us to take care of other people, and most of us believe this is our duty.

If you want to do good, you have to be alive. If we're thrown into cattle cars, smashed with rockets, raped and disfigured, we can't do any good for anybody!

Job One is self-preservation, survival. Become stronger, more aware, and potent! Join together with the Jewish people, your bulwark for 4000 years, your shield for the future.

**See page 2.**

*Check renewal date on page 1, fill in and send us the form on page 2.*