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Cover art: Happy Hanukkah © by Shelley Werner



Over 500 community members and allies rallied on Nov. 14 for the safe return of the hostages who were kidnapped in Israel last month.

Community rallies to bring home the hostages

Illuminated by candles and a glowing “bring them home” marquee, over 500 community members and allies gathered at the Paperny Family Calgary JCC field on the evening of November 14 to call for the safe return of Israeli hostages who were kidnapped in southern Israel during the brutal massacre by Hamas on October 7. They are believed to be held captive in Gaza by Hamas terrorists.

From songs of peace performed by Dror Pery, Elliott Steinberg, and Greg Storzakov to Adam Hartwick’s testimonial from his time living in Kibbutz Be’eri, Israelis and Calgarians came together to bring light and hope into the community. Lisa Libin and Ortal Luzon shared words of solidarity and inspiration, with Jordan Balaban and Zoe Polsky leading a prayer in Hebrew and English for those in captivity.

Calgary Jewish Federation thanked everyone who attended and showed their support, and todah raba to Calgary Police Service and Commissionaires for providing security for the event.

That same day, two hundred thousand people gathered at a pro-Israel rally in Washington DC to lobby for the return of the hostages. Israel’s President Isaac Herzog virtually addressed the crowd from the Western Wall in Jerusalem.

“Today we come together, as a family, one big *mishpacha*, to march for Israel. To march for the babies, the boys and girls, women and men viciously held hostage by Hamas,” Herzog said.

“To march for the right of every Jew to live proudly and safely in America, in Israel and around the world. Above all, we come together to march for good over evil, for human morality over blood thirst. We march for light over darkness,” he added.

“Eighty years ago, Jews came out of Auschwitz and vowed ‘never again.’ As the blue and white flag was hoisted over our ancient homeland, we vowed ‘never again.’ Forty days ago, a terrorist army invaded the sovereign State of Israel and butchered hundreds upon hundreds of Israelis in the largest massacre since the Holocaust. Let us cry out, together: never again. Never again is now.”

“We, the people of Israel are grateful to President Biden, his administration, and so many members of Congress on both sides of the aisle. The moral clarity and bold actions of our American allies, demonstrate the depth of the US-Israel alliance, which is stronger than ever before,” the president continued.

“Once again in Jewish history we demand: Let our people go. Whilst our loved ones are held captive in Gaza, and our soldiers are fighting for our beloved Israel – Jews all over the world are assaulted for being Jewish. The hatred, the lies, the brutality, the disgraceful outburst of ancient antisemitism are an embarrassment to all civilized people and nations.”

Herzog emphasized that Jews all over the world must be safe.

“To paraphrase the Prophet Zecharia: Boys and girls

shall once again play in the streets of Be’eri and Sderot and the elderly shall sit peacefully by the walkways of Nahal Oz and Ofakim. And when the sounds of life and laughter return to the villages, the kibbutzim and the cities, our constant yearning for peace will return as well,” he concluded.



Rallying in Calgary to increase awareness of the plight of the hostages. Photos courtesy Calgary Jewish Federation.



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The miracle of Hanukkah

By Rabbi Russell Jayne



Rabbi Russell Jayne

This year, as we gather to celebrate the Festival of Lights, we find ourselves standing at the intersection of history, faith, and the many challenges that continue to confront us as a people. For us Jews of this modern era, grappling and struggling with the challenges of living and thriving in this world, Hanukkah has in many ways served as a guiding

star illuminating our path toward hope, resilience, and freedom. Yet, beyond the flickering flames and the warm glow of family and community, lies a profound wisdom that speaks to the essence of our faith and our connection with Divinity itself.

In our mystical tradition, the Hanukkah lights are seen as a metaphor for the *Aur Ein Sof*, the infinite divine light that pervades the whole universe, and is the source and energy that sustains and permeates every aspect of existence. Each candle we kindle represents a step in our journey toward understanding and connecting with that infinite light of the Divine. It is a reminder that even in times of darkness, we can be bearers of light, agents of hope, and instruments of divine love for all creation. When you kindle your Hanukkah lights, you are not merely commemorating a historical event but tapping into this eternal and boundless wellspring.

Our world, at the moment, seems overwhelmed by challenges and uncertainties. Yet, the Hanukkah lights beckon us to reflect on those miraculous moments in our lives when the divine light has shone brightly, dispelling the shadows of doubt and despair; and to be

beacons of compassion, justice, and kindness not just for our people, but still, for the whole world. They challenge us to confront both the darkness within ourselves and within society so that we may bring about a moment of positive change and healing that we all so desperately need.

My beloved community, I deeply pray that by embracing a mystical understanding of Hanukkah we may be guided on a path of both spiritual enlightenment and social responsibility. In the glow of our festival lights, may we be inspired to advocate for the release of those held hostage by oppressive forces, remembering that our commitment to justice and freedom is an integral part of our spiritual journey. May our hearts open to the infinite light of the Divine, allowing it to illuminate both our lives and the lives of those around us. In doing so, may we contribute to the ongoing miracle of Hanukkah, bringing warmth, hope, and healing to a world in need.

Rabbi Cantor Russell Jayne is the spiritual leader and Kol Bo at Beth Tzedec congregation.

It's official: Israel approves deal with Hamas to free at least 50 hostages in exchange for pause in fighting

By Philissa Cramer and Ben Sales

(JTA) — When it attacked Israel on Oct. 7, killing 1,200 people and wounding thousands, Hamas also took an estimated 240 people hostage. Following weeks of breathless advocacy, protest and anxiety that spread across the world, some of those captives are about to be released in a deal between Israel and Hamas.

The hostages range from Israeli soldiers to the elderly to small children. The deal announced on Nov. 21 will free children, women and some of the oldest hostages in exchange for women and youths held by Israel on national security charges and would trigger a pause in the war between Israel and Hamas. It would be Israel's first prisoner exchange with Hamas in more than a decade and by far the largest in history.

The agreement is a milestone in what has become a worldwide campaign, led by the captives' relatives, to raise awareness of their plight and push for their release. The movement has seen cities across the globe papered with posters bearing the hostages' faces and names (many of which have been taken down) and empty Shabbat dinner tables set up from Tel Aviv to

New York City's Times Square to represent the captives. A call to release the hostages was a central demand of the rally that brought more than 200,000 Jews to a rally in Washington, D.C. last week.

And the deal may be just the first stage in ongoing negotiations to bring the six-week-old war to an end. Here's what you need to know about the impending agreement, what it might mean and what we still don't know.

How many hostages will be released and who are they?

Under the reported deal, 10 to 12 hostages will be released each day during the initial pause, likely starting on Friday. Afterward, Hamas can extend the truce by releasing an additional 10 hostages a day. Up to 80 hostages could be released.

The first tranche of hostages to be released will include children held by Hamas — a number Israel estimates at 40. They include a 10-month-old baby and his 4-year-old sister, Kfir and Ariel Bibas; Abigail Mor Idan, 3, a U.S. citizen who is being held without anyone else in her family; Emily Hand, whose parents first believed her to be dead and who just turned 9 in

captivity; Erez and Sahar Kalderon, whose grandmother and cousin were murdered; and Yigal Yaakov, 13, who appeared in a hostage video released earlier this month.

Israel reportedly pressed hard for mothers to be released with their children, and Israeli reports suggest that demand is being met. Elderly women who are held hostage are also expected to be released as part of the deal.

What about the rest of the hostages?

About a month ago, Hamas released two women, ages 79 and 85; the husband of one of them is still being held by Hamas. Hamas also released an American mother and daughter last month. Neither of

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CJA students gathered in a special assembly to honour and commemorate Remembrance Day.

Honouring Remembrance Day at the CJA

By Joseph Tappenden

On November 10th, the Calgary Jewish Academy (CJA) gathered to honour and commemorate Remembrance Day with a meaningful assembly led by our grade 4 students. In the days leading up to November 11th, teachers provided students with meaningful learning experiences that extended beyond textbooks, delving into the history, sacrifices, and significance of Canadian soldiers' contributions to Canada.

One unique approach that the CJA does on Remembrance Day is fostering open discussions among students about the freedoms earned through wartime sacrifices, and in particular religious freedom. Through open dialogue, students explore the concept of earning religious freedom not only through historical events like Hanukkah, Purim and Passover, but now also from a modern-day perspective. They discovered that Canada's fight for freedom united people from diverse backgrounds, a realization that filled them with nachas and gratitude.

CJA students also embarked on an additional

heartwarming project. Teaming up with the Ministry of Veteran Affairs, they crafted heartfelt postcards that were later distributed to veterans residing in various care facilities across the City of Calgary. On November 11th, veterans at places like The Trinity Lodge, Father Lacombe Care Centre, Providence Care Centre, and Chinook Intercare had the opportunity to read messages from the young minds at CJA, expressing sincere gratitude for their selfless service to the nation.

The impact of this project extended beyond the walls of CJA, reaching those who have dedicated their lives to safeguarding Canada's freedom. These postcards became more than just pieces of paper; they served as tokens of appreciation, connecting generations and bridging the gap between the sacrifices of the past and the gratitude of the present. The initiative not only honoured the veterans but also instilled a sense of empathy and understanding among CJA students, helping them appreciate the significance of Remembrance Day in a tangible and personal way.

This unique Remembrance Day has left a lasting impression on the hearts and minds of CJA students.



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Calgary Friends of Israel raising funds for CMDA

By Shael Gelfand and Sharon Fraiman.

You are invited to a special 10 course Chinese banquet on Sunday January 21 at the Regency Palace restaurant in downtown Calgary to raise funds for the Canadian Magen David Adom Ambulance Fund. The evening will also include live entertainment and a silent auction. Kosher meals will also be available.

The event is being organized by Calgarians who are encouraging the greater community to show their support for Israel and to showcase the long-standing relationship between Calgary's Jewish and Chinese communities. The guest speaker will be Shuvaloy "Shuv" Majumdar, Member of parliament for Calgary Heritage.

Magen David Adom provides emergency medical services throughout Israel and despite suffering many casualties, dedicated MDA professionals continue to

work wherever and whenever needed. There is a critical ambulance shortage and the banquet will raise funds for these life-saving vehicles.

Even in the midst of the current conflict, Hamas continues to relentlessly fire rockets at Israel, often seriously injuring Israelis just trying to return to some sense of normalcy.

But when that happens, Magen David Adom is there — with the fastest response time in Israel — to provide lifesaving treatment and medical transportation.

When you support MDA, you ensure that, no matter the emergency, our medics have the equipment,

training, and vehicles they need to save lives. Support CMDA by attending this important event. Kosher dinner upon request. Tickets are available at bit.ly/calgariansforisrael.



Richard Gotfried, Sharon Fraiman, Shael Gelfand and Danny Ng.

Magen David Adom saves lives in Israel

By MP Shuvaloy Majumdar

Every life is a world.

They burned ambulances, before they brutally slaughtered innocent lives, burned Kibbutz's, and evoked the Holocaust at every turn. Through their terror, their goal is to instil fear inside the hearts of every Jew.

But know this. This isn't 1938. Because the Jewish people have their State. And the Jewish State of Israel will prevail.

Israel has the right to exist, with Jerusalem as its eternal capital.

Israel has the right, the obligation, to defend itself, by itself. The Jewish State will defend the region's only democracy. The Jewish State will be a beacon of hope for humanity. In the face of peril, as mobs gather with hearts that have turned to darkness, know that the Jewish State of Israel is the light for all of us.

Because we know, Anti-Zionism is antisemitism. The masks have fallen in revealing the resurgence of the ancient hatred. On our streets today, is the resurgence of an evil enabled by the world's establishments, our academia, our media.

I want to let you know, that while I may not be your Member of Parliament, I will be your voice.

I want to let you know that the Leader of His Majesty's Official Opposition, Pierre Poilievre, will stand with strength, will never relent, and that together we will stand against terror in every moment — for freedom, for all eternity.

Our cherished Magen David Adom, which our beloved Fanny Wedro helped found here, is working shoulder to shoulder with the IDF.

When confronted by the glorification of brutality, she would have wanted us to choose to cherish life.

Sharon Fraiman, Western Director of the Canadian Magen David Adom, now carries the torch. My dear friend is a full-time humanitarian and warrior,

working 24/7 to raise funds for our brothers and sisters in Israel.

Working to support 32,000 dedicated volunteers on the ground whose ambulance teams are uniquely equipped for mobile intensive care, the only ones able to perform these life-saving surgeries.

Please donate generously to the Western Chapter of the Canadian Magen David Adom.

For medical equipment. For ambulances. For saving lives, and the worlds within them.

Let me close with this. For everything to come,

Hamas is responsible.

For the chaos and death across the State of Israel, for Gazans made into human shields, for Palestinians living under the yoke of tyranny and corruption — Hamas is responsible.

I thank you for everything you do. Every life is a world.

With iron will and unbreakable bonds, we stand with you in this terrible test. We will save worlds.

Because, Am Yisrael Chai.

Shuvaloy Majumdar is MP for Calgary Heritage.



Sharon Fraiman with Shael Gelfand.

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A Meticulous Mitzvah

By Rabbi Nachum Aaron Kutnowski



Rabbi Nachum Aaron Kutnowski

Many mistakenly view Halacha (Jewish Law) as an unchanging entity, devoid of evolution or nuance. This perception is challenged by the laws of Chanukah, shedding profound light on this misconception.

The Gemara states the following: “The Sages taught in a Braita: The commandment of Chanukah is to kindle a light for himself and his

own household. And the *Mehadrin* - the way to perform this more meticulously is to kindle a light for each person in the household. And the *Mehadrin min Hamehadrin* - the way to perform this even more meticulously is ... as Bet Hillel say: On the first day one light is kindled, and from there and on, add to the number of lights [until, on the last day, eight lights are kindled]”(Tractate Shabbat 21b).

In this rare mention within the Chanukah's laws, we encounter the concepts of *Mehadrin* and *Mehadrin min Hamehadrin*. To better understand these concepts, we turn to another Gemara: “It was taught in a Braita: “This is my G-d and I will glorify Him” This teaches us to beautify ourselves before Him in Mitzvot, which means to make before Him a beautiful Sukkah, a beautiful Lulav, a beautiful Shofar, beautiful Tzitzit, a beautiful Torah scroll, that His name is written in beautiful ink, with a beautiful quill, by an expert

scribe, and wrapped in beautiful fabric” (Tractate Shabbat 133b).

This Gemara introduces us to the concept of *Hiddur Mitzvah*, the beautification of a Mitzvah, which is linguistically connected to the word *Mehadrin*, as they both share the root Hebrew word *Hayh Dalet Reish*, meaning to beautify, and teaches us to do our Mitzvot in a beautiful form or fashion.

Returning to the Chanukah lights, the question lingers: Why such emphasis on *Mehadrin min Hamehadrin* by Chanukah? Moreover, why have the Jews universally adopted the meticulous approach in kindling the Chanukiah?

We begin with the dictum: “In accordance with the effort is the reward” (Pirkei Avot 5:23). The greater the effort invested in the Mitzvah of lighting the Chanukiah, the greater the anticipated reward. This notwithstanding, why is this principle highlighted specifically within the context of Chanukah?

The historical context of this Rabbinically instituted holiday provides a crucial reality. The miracle of Chanukah, detailed in the *Al Hanissim* prayer, happened when the wicked kingdom of Yavan sought to eradicate the Torah and Mitzvot. G-d's mercy prevailed, turning the impure over to the pure, the wicked to the righteous, and the sinners to those who toil in His Torah. The Hasmonean victory was not merely political, but specifically spiritual - a war between good and evil, light and darkness. The war waged by the Yevanim was more significantly a spiritual battle as can be seen by the fact that King Antiochus of Yavan decreed the following punishable by death; sacrifices in the temple, keeping the Shabbat and festivals, and disallowed circumcisions (see Book of Maccabees I 1:46-49).

To internalise the nature of the miracle of Chanukah, the meticulous performance of the Mitzvah is emphasised. The true significance of the rebellion waged by the Hasmoneans against Yavan was the spiritual battle, and Chanukah's practices serve as a



poignant reminder. It calls us to recognize that we are engaged in an ongoing war of good versus evil, light versus darkness, religious freedom versus religious subjugation.

In this light, *Mehadrin min Hamehadrin* takes on profound significance. It becomes more than a beautification; it becomes a declaration of commitment to illuminating the world with the light of G-d and His will. Each additional light symbolises a dedication to intensifying the radiance, echoing the triumph of the Hasmoneans over the forces that sought to extinguish the flame of Torah.

As Jews worldwide unite in the universal custom of lighting their Chanukiot in the fashion of *Mehadrin min Hamehadrin*, they partake in a collective act of defiance against the shadow left by the lack of Jewish expression. Chanukah, therefore, is not merely a historical commemoration but an ongoing call to infuse our lives with the radiance of Torah and an unwavering commitment to beautify the world with the brilliance of the Divine.

Rabbi Nachum Aaron Kutnowski is the Head of Judaic Studies at Halpern Akiva Academy.



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We thank all our caring family, friends, community members and Rebbeim for your incredible outpouring of support shown to us in memory of Merryl Doris Magidson z"l, beloved wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother.

The numerous expressions of love through Shiva calls, visits, making minyanim, phone calls, meals, cards and charitable donations, brought us much comfort.

With heartfelt appreciation, the Magidson, Green, Kalchman and Wolf Families.

Happy Chanukah!



DAVID AND TIBELE halpern akiva academy

Halpern Akiva Academy wishes you a safe and happy holiday!



Alberta Minister of Education Demetrios Nicolaides and MLA Shane Getson, with members of the Alberta Jewish community. Holocaust Education is mandated into the province's new curriculum.

Alberta announces mandatory Holocaust Education in new curriculum

Surrounded by members of the Edmonton Jewish community and leadership from both the Edmonton and Calgary Jewish Federations, Education Minister Demetrios Nicolaides announced that the Alberta government has mandated Holocaust education as part of the province's new social studies curriculum.

Minister Nicolaides made the announcement on November 9 prior to the Kristallnacht commemoration at Beth Israel Synagogue in Edmonton. Kristallnacht, also called Night of Broken Glass or November Pogroms, refers to the night of November 9–10, 1938, when the Nazi parties in Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia spurred violent mobs to attack Jews and Jewish property including synagogues, Jewish businesses and homes.

"This announcement comes at a time when antisemitism has spiked across Canada and around the world. It is crucial that the next generations learn about how hate surfaces. Whether it's distortion of Holocaust history or misinformation about Hamas' terrorist attacks, both are rooted in antisemitism, and today's announcement demonstrates that the Alberta government is dedicated to fight hate in all its forms," says Stacey Leavitt-Wright, CEO of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton.

"Creating an antiracist society starts at the school age level and Holocaust education is an important tool in helping our students learn about the underlying ramifications of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping. What is happening in our society today is an important warning around the need to teach the universal lessons of the Holocaust, and the consequences of bigotry and hate. We applaud the province for helping to ensure that our youth will not only learn from, but keep the memory of the Holocaust alive," says Adam Silver, CEO of Calgary Jewish Federation.

"I firmly believe we must do everything possible to combat rising antisemitism and educate young Albertans about the horrors of the Holocaust. Ensuring all students learn from one of history's darkest chapters will help us confront hate and prevent similar atrocities from occurring," says Minister Nicolaides.

Alberta Education is in the process of engaging with education partners, curriculum specialists and teachers on the development of new K-12 social studies curriculum. As part of this process, Alberta Education will engage with the Calgary Jewish Federation, Jewish Federation of Edmonton and other Jewish organizations. Feedback from these engagement activities will be used to solidify when and where students learn about the Holocaust in draft social studies curriculum before it is released for further engagement.

"Education is crucial to ensuring our children learn the lessons of the past and are ready to stand up against hate today. Implementing mandatory Holocaust education will create a safer Alberta for all. We want to thank Premier Danielle Smith, Minister Nicolaides, and the Alberta Government for supporting the Jewish community and fighting antisemitism and hate," says Shimon Koffler Fogel, CEO, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA).

"The Official Opposition supports the confirmation that Holocaust education will be part of the social studies curriculum review and that Jewish community groups will be part of that process, stated Rakhi Pancholi, Edmonton-Whitemud MLA and opposition critic for Alberta NDP.

"The history of the Holocaust is mandatory in the current senior high school social studies curriculum. In 2018, the Alberta NDP began a process to expand Holocaust education in the curriculum, and we continue to support that expansion. The persecution and murder of 6 million Jews by Adolph Hitler and the Nazis is a singular evil in world history. We must always guard against attempts to deny or distort this history. Young people must be educated about these terrible crimes to ensure they never happen again."

Alberta is one of the foremost leaders in Canada to stepping up against hate, especially antisemitism. The adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism in September 2022 was the first step. A firm commitment to action is being demonstrated by having Holocaust Education be mandated as part of the curricula and ensures this history will never be forgotten.

Calgary Jewish Federation and the Jewish Federation of Edmonton have been providing educational opportunities and programs for over 20 years and look forward to contributing to the development and implementation of these new curricula.

The decision makes Alberta the third province in Canada to announce mandatory Holocaust education. Last month British Columbia's Minister of Education announced the inclusion of mandatory Holocaust education in the province's K-12 curriculum. Ontario took this step in September for its Grade 6 curriculum and supported the development of Unlearn It, a free, bilingual online resource hub for educators and parents to support children in grades 6-8 in learning about antisemitism, how to identify it, and act to address it.



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The lessons of Chanukah

By Rabbi Ilana Krygier Lapidés



Rabbi Ilana Krygier Lapidés

“A Jew is asked to take a leap of action rather than a leap of faith.”- Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel.

Our sages ask an interesting question about Chanukah: We light candles for eight nights to acknowledge the miracle of the oil burning for eight nights. But technically (and let's be honest, our Rabbis were very concerned with these kinds of technicalities) the actual miracle only happened on nights two through eight. The oil was always going to last at least one night – so that first night isn't a miracle so much as an experiential reality. So, why do we light for eight nights instead of just seven? Seven would make sense: Seven days in a week, seven days to create the world, we wouldn't even have to make new menorahs! But, no, the miracle is eight days. Why?

Rabbi Jonathan Saks z"l postulates: “There was no reason to suppose that anything would have survived the systematic desecration the Greeks and their

supporters did to the Temple, yet the Maccabees searched and found that one jar. Why did they search? Because they had faith that from the worst tragedy something would survive. The miracle of the first night was that of faith itself, the faith that something would remain with which to begin again.”

For Rabbi Saks, the miracle begins not when the Jews found the oil and lit it that first day, but well before that when they demonstrated the faith to even look. To then go ahead and light the oil knowing that it could not possibly last, is an additional expression of faith that is reflected in our partnership with Hashem and with hope.

One of our central blessings during this holiday is *Al Hanisim*: “For the miracles and for the redemption and for the mighty deeds and for the victories and for the battles that You performed for our fathers in those days at this time.” It is a bittersweet prayer that expresses our reluctance to have to fight but understands that it's sometimes vital for our survival. As Rabbi Elisha Friedman says: “Winning a war against those bent on destroying one's way of life demands gratitude, but it is not a celebration. War is always unpleasant, even if one wins. It involves the loss of life and inflicting suffering on others. It is a moment to soberly reflect on the tremendous blessings surrounding us — including the painful and difficult victory over our enemies.”

This Chanukah brings many challenges amidst its usual blessings. We walk with heavy hearts, grief clutches at our throats when we wake in the mornings, our anxiety propels us through the day. We are traumatized and exhausted. Should we put a Chanukah in the window this year? Do we leave up our Mezuzah for all to see? Should I tuck-in my Magen

David necklace? No one can answer these questions for you – it's a personal question that must be faced by each of us; there are those of us who will be bold and brazen, there will be others who are more discreet. We must all do what we feel is best to stay safe, to survive, to see another day, to make sure our legacy and our light continues.

As we support our brothers and sisters in Israel, we pray and help bolster their spirits with our messages and songs. We also send resources and money, call out antisemitism when we see it, and attend community events to say, “we are here.” As Jews we must acknowledge that freedom is not free, and the cost is always much more than our hearts can pay. But it must be paid.

As per the quote from Rabbi Heschel z"l above, it is faith plus action that makes us who we are. One without the other leaves us powerless and without hope. Rabbi Rachel Barenblat says: “We are partners with God in making space for the miraculous. We must not expect God to perform miracles to redeem us while we sit back and wait.”

Chanukah teaches us that the miracle of the oil couldn't have happened without the military victory, and a military victory doesn't mean anything unless we stay true to who we are: Am Israel Chai.

From my family to yours, Chag Chanukah Sameach!

Rabbi Ilana Krygier Lapidés is the Assistant Rabbi at the Beth Tzedec Congregation, the Jewish Community Chaplain through Jewish Family Service Calgary, and has a small, independent Rabbinic practice through RockyMountainRabbi.com.

Register today for JNF Alberta Cup

The 6th Annual JNF Alberta Cup is around the corner and we're very excited to offer a new format that encourages mixing, focuses on fun, and attracts greater participation from hockey players in the Jewish community. Teams will be drafted by the team captains and assistants who volunteer to lead, with assistance from an advisory committee to help balance teams and

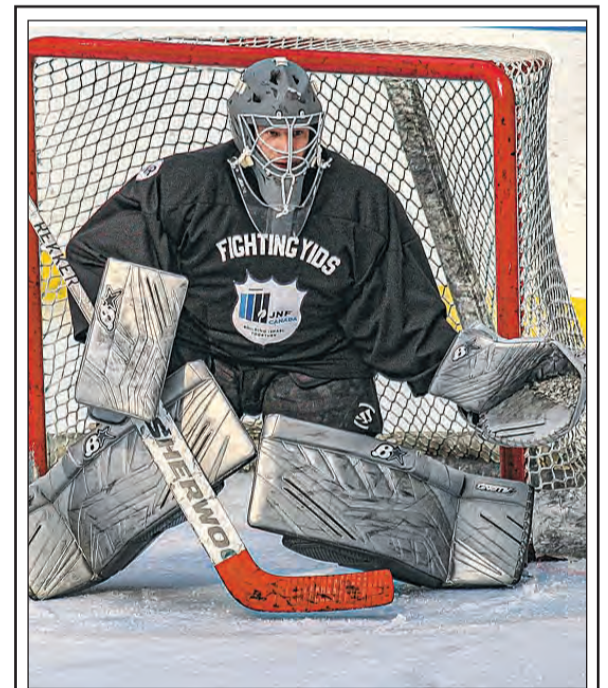
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Two artists show the strength of their craft at TBT Gallery



"Preparing for Shabbat" by Sandy Blass.

By Shelley Werner

As we enter into the winter season, a new show at TBT Gallery provides the warmth of intense colour and powerfully detailed designs. Sandy Blass' watercolours are vibrant and joyous as her palette expresses her inner passions. Sarabeth Carnat's jewellery and Judaica provide the perfect foil for these sweeping works as your eye is drawn into the intricate details.

Curator Jennifer Eiserman comments, "In these tumultuous times, when the war and rising antisemitism fills our consciousness, the beauty of art can remind us of the beauty that still exists in the world. Through her harmonious palettes and compositions, Blass' work reminds us of the peace and beauty accessible to us in the natural world. Carnat's innovatively designed Judaica and sensitively crafted jewelry demonstrates the beauty of our ancient traditions connecting us to each other throughout time, past, present and future."

Carnat comments that the show is truly a glimpse of the work she has been doing for a very long time. Her career stretches back many years and the show gives a small window into the variety of things she has created. Some of the most important pieces are her Judaica work, including a Havdallah set she did for her daughter's Bat Mitzvah. The piercing of the top of the spice container is a prayer that allows the smell of the spices to escape.

There are other pieces in the show that are also deeply personal. She has created "Shelf Broaches" which appear to be tiny vignettes of figures in a residential setting. Although they can be worn as broaches, they also are miniature sculptures that can sit on a shelf, and appear to be small shelves themselves. "These works are important - about relationships and people. They are specific to a frozen moment in time. The home we grew up in had a giant

picture window and that window appears in a number of my pieces and is truly representative of the family home," says Carnat.

There is another broach entitled "Entre Nous" (Between Us) in which five wires are used to join the two main parts. These represent the artist and her siblings. It's about relationships, and the emotional interaction between these relationships. On careful inspection you can see the wires are held in tension. She intentionally built the broach to represent her parents and the five children in the family. She says that much of her art has been therapeutic as she articulates her feelings through her materials.

About jewelry she comments, "Jewelry is worn on the body so there is a big interaction between the wearer, the viewer and the maker. When a piece is worn on the body there is movement; bodies aren't still." One of the things she loves about her field is that it is vast. "I could work five lifetimes and still not know all there is to know about my field."

Sandy Blass has entitled her show "Two Homelands" to reflect the affinity she feels to both Israel and Canada as her dual homes. The works in the show are all scenes she has seen personally, captured on her camera and reimagined in her studio. The colors become more vibrant as she brightens them up with multiple layers of paint. "I love playing with colour, wallowing in it when the brush is moving across the paper or the canvas. The intensity of the colour conveys the intensity of my feeling towards the subject. This reflects my intensity as a person."

The paintings will sometimes go in directions that she didn't plan. She will discover something in the process and the paint sometimes will "speak" to her and say "I'm going this way," and then she follows along with it. Her hope is that on viewing her work people come away the message that painting is a spiritual process for her. She finds within it a way to express peace, joy, and love; she wants viewers to perceive this at a soul level when they contemplate the works.

The piece in the show entitled "Preparing for Shabbat" is based on an experience in the Machane Yehuda market in Jerusalem. It was crowded with many orthodox Jews shopping in the stalls. "There was a man who was very intent on what he was doing and it was very special so I just had to have his picture. When I got home, I realized I loved that moment, so private and personal and innocent, yet so very communal, because he and I were in it together."

The approach to her art is highly personal and it's very much a picture of her relationship with Hashem. She has a sense that he's with her and that it is part of her calling and part of his journey for her. She says "it makes art unbelievably important to me; something I can't live without, something I can't stop doing; that he's always urging me on to do more and so it requires a lot of listening and just being willing to stay the course. Regardless of how the career goes in practical terms I have to put out there what I



Artists Sandy Blass and Sarabeth Carnat.

know I'm supposed to put out there."

Both artists are called to share their intense personal experiences of the materials, and their relationships, be they familial or spiritual. The sweeping areas of colour in Blass' art are the perfect backdrop for the small scale but intense work by Carnat in the showcase

"Reflections: A Glimpse into the Art of Sarabeth Carnat" and "Eretz: Two Homelands" by Sandy Blass can be seen until January 2, 2024 at TBT Gallery, Temple B'nai Tikvah, 900 47 Ave SW, Calgary. Monday to Thursday 9:00 am to 4:00 pm/ Friday 9:00 am to 2:00 pm or by appointment with the artists: blassart@yahoo.com and sarabethcarnat@gmail.com

Shelley Werner is the host of Art and Scroll Studio zoom series that celebrates the makers and creators of Judaica Art. Watch for the continuation of Season 4 in the winter 2024.



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Stay informed and stay connected

By Judy Zelkowitz



Judy Zelkowitz

When we look at our calendars – especially that darkest of recent days, Saturday, October 7, 2023 – it's hard to imagine that that now-infamous date is part of a millennia-long continuum.

About 2,200 years ago, the Maccabean Revolt against the Greeks controlling Judea succeeded in the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem. From this ancient victory, we celebrate Chanukah, lighting candles over eight nights to honour our brave ancestors then and those who have followed.

Now, more than two millennia later, we call on the Israeli Defence Force to protect Israel from Hamas who, on October 7, murdered 1,400 (mostly) civilians, injured 5,400, and abducted 230+ elderly women, men, children, and other civilians. Since that day, 170,000

Israelis have had to flee their homes and all in the entire country are living under constant threat of thousands of indiscriminately fired rockets launched by Hamas from Gaza.

Operation Iron Swords is the Israeli response fighting for the safety of its people and, in fact, for its very existence. Is it Israel's right to defend itself? Yes. But it's much more than that. It is Israel's *obligation* to its citizens, as it would be any country's that wants to call itself a state.

This operation, so necessary and yet so treacherous both on the ground and in the world of public opinion, has been used as an excuse for a disgusting surge in anti-Israel and – let's be truthful – *anti-Jewish* rhetoric, threats, anarchy, and vandalism. We've seen this before, in the May 2021 Gaza War and its aftermath, and we are seeing it again, only now the campaigns are emboldened and expanded by years of online Jew-hate that has made its way from the fringes to the centre.

What can we do? As descendants of the Maccabees – and generations more of intrepid survivors – we can rally, finding strength and comfort in our collective calls for civility, tolerance, and bedrock Canadian values.

We can stay informed and stay connected.

We can, as thousands young and old across Canada have done already, donate to our local federation's emergency campaigns supporting Israelis. How proud we can be that Canada's diaspora has already raised

more than \$100 million in response to the emergency. Federations have already sent millions to support victims of terror, evacuees, and those in need.

We can say something if we see something. CIJA tracks hate-based incidents at cija.ca/report_hate. If you witness an antisemitic incident, report as many details as you can remember and, if it's safe to do so, take pictures. If there is a threat or a crime, contact your local police. Many have officers specializing in this kind of report.

Just as we honour our forebears who protected our lives, our culture, and our values, we will honour those who were injured or died on October 7. We will keep the Canadians who lost their lives in our hearts and remember their bravery in saving the lives of others.

At our *Antisemitism: Face It, Fight It* conference in mid-October, most among the 1,000+ attendees were Jewish. But hundreds were not. We are not alone in fighting antisemitism.

As we light our *Chanukiah* candles this year, let us celebrate the courage of those who went before us, of those who served us in sacrifice over thousands of years and let's ensure that those protecting Israel now feel our support and our gratitude. Let us be the light!

Wishing you and yours a joyful, meaningful Chanukah.

Judy Zelkowitz is CIJA, Vice President, University and Local Partner Services

Op/ed: Social media has become unhinged

By Lior Zaltzman

(JTA) — It was a slow trickle, each long press of the finger and ensuing quick tap was days and sometimes weeks apart (it's hard to comprehend that a whole month has passed since Oct. 7), but I am here to tell you that I — a former social media manager — have removed each and every social media app from my phone.

In fact, as I was writing this very essay, I realized I still had Threads downloaded, opened it for a minute, saw a Thread that said "Zionism is antisemitism," and promptly deleted that, too.

I have zero desire to restore a single one of them.

What happened to me has probably happened to you, too. I saw a Tweet, a TikTok, an Instagram Story that filled me with such fury and indignation that I spent hours — sometimes days — formulating and reformulating an epic, fact-based, emotionally charged, imagined response. Imagined, of course, because I knew I'd never post it. I've seen so many celebrities and random acquaintances do such utterly embarrassing

and harmful and reputation-destroying things in the last weeks to even dare to try.

And to be clear: I would try if I thought I could change someone's mind and force them to see my humanity, but beyond the small, intimate, personal conversations that I can have off the apps, I feel like these enraged indignant responses only seem to silo people further.

I've worked in social media since 2014 — in the Jewish realm of social media, specifically. That means I've seen a lot of awfulness, gas chamber memes, overt antisemitism and Islamophobia. I've personally been told many times to go back where I came from (which, yes, is Israel, and that feels grimly funny now). Yet I've also believed in its power to heal, to make people feel seen, to energize activism, to educate.

I still believe that — kind of? But I've also never seen it this awful, this polarizing, this ... honestly, unhinged. An unscientific poll of people I know seems to indicate the same thing: Social media is the worst it's ever been, maybe because the Israel/Palestine conversation has always been so impossibly polarizing.

People are so stuck in their "side" and binary that they're willing to share anything — without fact-checking, without making sure they're not getting in bed with people whose worldview is dangerous, without asking themselves for a small second, wait, is this Islamophobic? Antisemitic? Completely detached from reality? Without wondering if they sound like a conspiracy theorist, or if they're just being cruel for cruelty's sake.

And the amount of words wasted on misinformation and meanness doesn't even compare to the number of words some people insist on putting into other people's mouths (or keyboards, rather) when their statement doesn't 100% pass whatever standards they've arbitrarily decided it must. Beyond Israel and Palestine, we've been tearing ourselves apart inside our Jewish community, and that also breaks my heart.

I understand the deep grief and rage behind most posts. I've been enraged and grieving myself. I've been scared too: Of the growing antisemitism. Of the people who tell me that I and my family, because we were born

Continued on page 13

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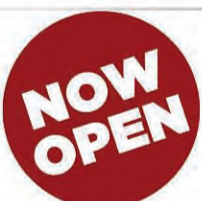
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Zionist cowboys and other state building adventures

By Elliott J. Steinberg
Executive Director, JNF Calgary



Elliott J. Steinberg

In these difficult times, it's important to internalize our history and know the truth. In that vein, I'll share with you a story about the formation of the State of Israel that you may not know. I think the most interesting part of this story is how land was purchased. Who owned it before? How were the

owners convinced to part with their land? The story's characters and bold actions may surprise you.

As the most prolific purchaser and developer of land in pre-1948 Palestine, and today in Israel, Keren Kayemet L'Yisrael (KKL) has a history that is an essential part of the rebuilding of our Jewish Homeland. Although JNF Canada is an independent Canadian charitable organization, we share this history with our friends at KKL in Israel.

In 1897, at the First Zionist Conference in Vienna, a proposal was put forth by delegate Zvi Schapira, to form a charitable organization to raise funds for purchasing land in Palestine as a first step toward rebuilding a Jewish Home. Of course, individuals like Baron de Rothschild and Moses Montefiore had already been doing so on their own dime for years. The difference was that this new entity called KKL would be the Jewish people's official means of investing in Eretz Yisrael. It took a few years of bickering to decide to proceed (nu?) and Theodor Herzl expressed his frustration by stating, "Yours is the power to decide whether to postpone the establishment of the fund for another two years, or until the coming of the Messiah!" The resolution passed by only 105 to 82 votes.

KKL was off and running, with an initial donation by the fund's first Chairperson Yonah Kremenetsky, and the second donation by Theodor Herzl. In 1904, Kremenetsky initiated the Blue Box to collect coins from Jews around the world. KKL began purchasing land, literally with pennies.

By 1905, KKL had purchased a few thousand dunams (a dunam is a little more than an acre) of land for agricultural settlements; educational facilities such as the now well known Betzalel School of Art and Design; and a number of high schools and training facilities. KKL also provided financing for most of the founders and first inhabitants of Tel Aviv in 1910, and

funded construction of the Hadar HaCarmel neighbourhood in Haifa.

A key figure in this story is Yehoshua Hankin, who I like to call a Middle Eastern cowboy. He had without a doubt made the biggest impact on the Zionist endeavour.

Yehoshua described his process as "unravelling a tangle of registrations, hazy borders, ownership rights and inheritance quarrels; and patience, patience, patience." Again and again, mounted on horseback, Hankin rode out to tents in the heart of the desert, to clay huts in the Valley, and to the mansions of rich effendis for protracted, laborious negotiations. He spent many hours negotiating Arab-style - drinking coffee by campfires at night and smoking water-pipes in tents by day, in order to restore more and more land to the Jews in the name of Zionism.

In one instance, Hankin returned to Jaffa to announce that he had purchased the Jezreel Valley from the Sursuks, a Syrian family living in Beirut, whose lands were worked by tenant farmers (who, without legal rights to the land, were evicted). Ironically, Hankin secured a bridge loan for the purchase from a Sursuk relative in Egypt. He rode on horseback through the Sinai desert to secure that loan.

KKL's vision at the time had to be broad in order for Jewish development to succeed in every way. This included agricultural research, as the land purchased by The Fund was usually fallow, swampy, or inherently difficult for agriculture, such as in the Negev Desert. And of course from the beginning, KKL planted trees and developed water resources.

As the 1910s wore on, land was set aside for Technion University, and Hebrew University on Mount Scopus. By this time, KKL owned only 4% of all Jewish-owned land, but that would change through stubborn determination, despite restrictions put in place by the new rulers of Palestine - the British. More on that later.

Interestingly, at the 1920 London Conference of Zionist Representatives, KKL established a new fund to focus on supporting an influx of immigrants, at that time mostly from Yemen. This new fund would be called Keren HaYesod, which is today the Israel arm of Jewish Federations around the world, independent of KKL.

The third and fourth decades of KKL proved to be the most challenging,

between British restriction on Jewish immigration and land ownership, Arab riots, and even internal squabbles about how much money to spend purchasing land. In the end, the people on the ground in Israel like Yehoshua Hankin and Menachem Ussishkin ignored the KKL executive, and purchased as much land as they could. They considered it a criminal act not to. Ussishkin even travelled to Canada in 1927, raising enough funds to purchase the Hefer Valley. Years later, KKL-JNF executives would thank them for their stubbornness and insubordination.

Even though the British had enacted strict regulations about where Jews could buy land, KKL agents nonetheless secured land with funds and "facts on the ground" - typically a water tower and a stockade - as this was recognized by the British as true ownership that cemented (as it were) mere ownership on paper. On more than one occasion, hundreds of Jews would load up trucks with building materials, and overnight transform thousands of dunams of land with those "facts on the ground." By 1935, KKL owned 41% (358,000 dunams) of all Jewish-owned land in Palestine, and had planted 1.7 million trees. The Peel Commission of 1937, and a later unnamed British initiative to divide the land prompted even greater efforts to secure land for the future.

By the fifth decade of KKL's work, the focus shifted to developing the Negev, building new communities and infrastructure to support life in the desert. When the UN proposed the Partition Plan of 1947, the Jewish portions of the plan had been clearly delineated by 5 decades of frantic legal land purchases and development. Arguably, there has never in history been such a prolific effort to restore an indigenous people on its ancient homeland, through countless obstacles, culminating in Israel's declaration of Independence in May 1948.

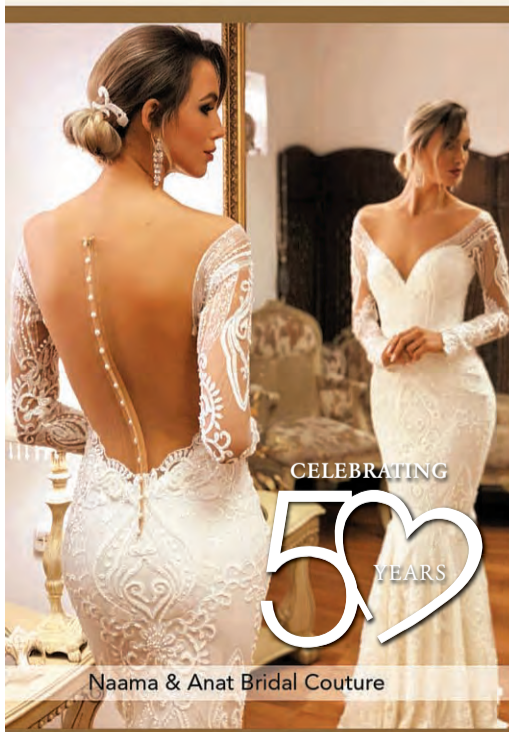
The tradition of diaspora Jews investing in Israel continues today.

Team Honey defeats Team Apples



Congratulations to the Jewish Bowling Association on the completion of their first in-season tournament, The Shofar Series. Mazel Tov to Team Honey for claiming the top prize, defeating Team Apples in the finals.

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This opportunity is guaranteed to last 10 months, with the possibility of an extra 2 months. Begins with training in mid-December 2023. Proficiency in Microsoft Office suite is a must.



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A meditation for Chanukah 5784



By Rabbah Gila Caine

Chanukka's fire turns our mind back to the Menorah in the depths of the Mikdash (temple in Jerusalem). That fire was extinguished by the Romans almost two thousand years ago, but we discovered that sacred fire isn't tied to place. It is tied to peoplehood - and

we carried that sacred fire into every synagogue we built, into every Jewish family as women became priestesses of their homes and lit the Shabbat candles. And we proclaim this sacred fire every year at Chanukah as our Chanukkiyot echo the long lost Menorah. With this fire we are reminded that even though the *Mikdash* was physically destroyed, the fire within it was saved and spread with us across the world and over many generations.

Fire is energy and therefore power, which is why Shabbat candles are considered to bring so much strength and resilience. So too the candles we light at Chanukah.

But, the Chanukah candles contain an additional layer to the story of resilience, they add the understanding that we can rededicate that which has been destroyed. They hold within them the powerful magic of rebuilding from ruins, of containing the fires of war and hate and transforming them into flames of light and joy. And so, the essential miracle of Chanukah is the potential for transforming war into peace, sacrilege into the sacred, and pain into healing.

The question this year is, how do we go about harnessing the power of this fire and performing the miracle and moving away from sadness to celebration?

Here is a short meditation I wrote which you are welcome to use after lighting your candles during the festival nights, or at any time you feel powerless to bring about a change for good in our society.

A meditation on the Power of the Chanukah candles

Look into a flame of the *Shamash* (the one candle we light on all nights)

You can close your eyes or keep them open and focused on the flame

Notice your breathing

Inhale and imagine as oxygen moves into your lungs and from there around your body

Exhale and imagine as CO2 leaves your body to mingle back with the air around you

Imagine a place that is sacred for you.

Walk towards that place, enter and move into its deepest part

You will find a small table in the darkest corner of that place

On the small table you will see a clay bowl

Within the bowl you see a small, strong flame burning.

Watch the flame

Listen to the flame

Feel the heat of the flame

This is the soul of Creation

Look around and notice a Firekeeper: the person or creature who keeps this fire alive.

The Firekeeper touches the fire and hands you a flame

The flame moves into you.

You feel the flame in your body

Notice where you feel energised

The Firekeeper hands you two Hebrew words:

Zachor (remember) - remember you carry the sacred fire of creation

Shamor (guard) - use the sacred fire to protect creation

You thank the Firekeeper and move out of the space

Notice your breathing while you exhale and inhale

Open your eyes (if they are shut) and notice the *Shamash* candle.

Breath out.

Rabbah Gila Caine is the spiritual leader at Temple Beth Ora, Edmonton's Reform Jewish congregation.

Op/Ed *Cont. from page 10*

in Israel, can't be innocent civilians, that we all deserve the horrors of Oct. 7 to befall on us.

I've also been scared for the life of every innocent person lost and about to be lost. Around 1,200 Israelis killed, 300 kidnapped, over 10,000 Palestinian lives believed to have been taken, all unfathomable numbers. And I've been scared about the cycle of rage and violence and siloed indignation that removes the humanity of a whole swath of people. Because I do believe that that's part of what got us here. And I keep seeing it evinced, over and over again, on social media.

I am — unlike many “experts” newly minted by numbers of followers or magnitude ofchutzpah — not an expert of Middle Eastern politics, despite being Israeli and working in Jewish media for almost a decade. I know a lot, but I am not a politician or historian. And yet, to the extent I believe that there is a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, I believe that it has to be one that takes into account the inherent humanity of all those involved. I believe that it will be human and imperfect.

I'm awed by the people who are still managing to use social media for good right now, the little spots of light — people who parse through history and reality with

wisdom and empathy, well-educated veteran observers of Israel and Palestine, academics, journalists, fierce activists, who, through immense pain, still manage to retain their humanity.

Yet for me, I've realized being on social media is doing more harm than good. It's keeping me further away from solutions and useful action, and closer to rage and fear. So for now, I can't stay there.

This essay originally appeared in Kveller.

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of JTA or its parent company, 70 Faces Media.

Happy Hanukkah

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Parents & teens: When Jewish families fight over Israel

By Rabbi Daniel S. Brenner

(JTA) — Most of my friends in Jewish circles are parents of teens or college students. We are liberal, tolerant, open-hearted folks, who jokingly call ourselves “NPR Jews.” We have Israeli friends, and we are watching in horror at a world in which it is once again fashionable, in liberal circles and on college campuses, to justify the murder and kidnapping of Jewish children — this time, because they were born in Israel. This new wave joins the rise of Jew-hate/Israel-hate in MAGA circles and the white supremacist anti-Jewish tropes parroted by celebrities like Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Elon Musk.

While we lament the bloodshed of all people, we sympathize instinctually with our fellow Jews in Israel. We continue to advocate for a peaceful, long-term solution for both Israelis and Palestinians, but we know that Israel sometimes has to fight for its security. And while we ourselves have been critical of the Israeli government, at times deeply, we see too many others crossing the line from harsh criticism to double standards to outright demonization and antisemitism.

Our kids, meanwhile, are absorbing other messages. Yes, they see bad actors spreading misinformation and influencers fawning over the words of Osama bin Laden. But they also see images that activate the very values we helped instill in them: tolerance, inclusion and compassion. Daily footage of Palestinians, often children, who are caught in the crossfire of this war, demands their compassion. Clips of Israeli leaders who speak about Palestinians as “animals” or “Amalekites” provoke their outrage. Their parents’ laments about Jewish vulnerability are hard to square with hourly evidence of Israeli military power.

So, these last weeks have brought new questions:

When a teen tells us that we should stop worrying about antisemitism, how should we react? Should we push back and criticize them for not taking this seriously, or let them blissfully pretend that we are not living during a surge of hate?

Free Milk / Free the Hostages

A dedicated group of community volunteers hit the Calgary streets to raise public awareness for the hostages being held by Hamas after the October 7 attack. By handing out 240 free milk cartons with missing hostages wrapped on the backs, Calgary Jewish Federation and CHW Calgary brought a united message – Free Milk, Free the Hostages! A big thank you goes out to @ateventsdesign for her coordination of this impactful program.

What if teens are actively promoting, from a place of compassion and solidarity, only arguments that are anti-Israel or pro-Palestinian? How do we make sure that they are hearing Israeli voices on these issues and that they balance their critique with some clarity about the challenge of taking sides with those who wish to destroy us?

And what if our teens are justifying the terror of Hamas as a righteous form of armed resistance, as some Jewish students are doing on college campuses?

Just as the Passover seder calls on us to differentiate

how we are to answer four types of children, these questions present us with a multi-layered pedagogic challenge.

I had the opportunity last week to speak with a New York-based therapist and parent coach, Dr. Julie Hirschfeld, about these questions in preparation for a webinar we hosted for parents of teens at Moving Traditions. Here are five of her insights (in bold) and my own reflections on why these insights are important right now for parents of teens.

Continued on page 27

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May Jewish peace activist Vivian Silver's memory be for a revolution

By Lior Zaltzman

(Kveller) - After 38 days of the most tenuous but persistent hope, Vivian Silver's family got the news that they would not be reunited with their loved one. The tenacious Canadian-Israeli peace activist was not being held hostage, as they believed, but instead, had been killed on that dreadful October 7 in which she spent hours hiding in her safe room in Kibbutz Be'eri.

In the past five weeks, many faces and stories have haunted me day in and day out; one of them was that of Vivian and her smile: in a field of anemones with her AJEEC (Negev Institute for Peace & Economic Development) co-founder Amal Elsana, smiling brightly; in a photo taken by the talented documentarian of Israeli history, Alex Faruri; marching with the grassroots peace organization she co-founded, Women Wage Peace, her eyes crinkling with a smile, draped in a symbolic scarf of light blue. In every picture I saw of Silver, she was fighting and smiling at the same time.

Aside from that smile, the reason Vivian Silver's story captured so many people who didn't know her during these past few weeks was that she was, through and through, a woman of peace. For many who have never lived through war, peace may be a word misconstrued for something naive or facile, but for activists fighting for peace on the ground, it is all about the fierce, Sisyphean, constant labor of the body and the mind. It is not popular or easy to keep fighting for peace in a land of constant conflict. Many have died on its altar, and in recent years, as political turmoil roils Israel from within, the word peace often feels like an endangered species. Yet to her final days, it kept falling and falling from Silver's lips.

Silver was born in Winnipeg, Canada, but her home was Israel. She moved there in 1974, helping to found the American-Israeli Kibbutz Gezer. Then she moved to Kibbutz Be'eri in the 1990s. She had two boys, Yonatan and Chen, and four grandchildren. Her life

was one of advocacy for human rights — aside from her work with AJEEC and Women Wage Peace, she was a board member at the human rights group B'Tselem; she fought for gender equality in kibbutzim; and she volunteered at Road to Recovery, driving patients in Gaza to hospitals in Israel.

While Silver was presumed a hostage, her son Yonatan Zeigen reminded the public of her desire to end the cycle of bloodshed and wars, and called for the ceasefire he believed she, too, would be fighting for.

On the morning of October 7, Zeigen was woken up by sirens. He was supposed to be in Be'eri for Simchat Torah with his mother, but instead, his family stayed back in their home in the center of the country. When he called his mother, she was in her safe room. Her bright spirit shone through as ever as she joked with him, even as the messages from Be'eri's WhatsApp group painted a dark picture of the massacre taking place. "She stayed with a sense of humor, and at the end there was a sharp drop of the understanding that this is the end," Zeigen told *Rishon Bet*.

"I'm telling everyone how much I love you and how I'm blessed to have you in my life," she told him that day.

"I'm with you," he texted her, and she responded with, "I feel you." A little before 11 a.m., the messages stopped. Silver's house had been completely incinerated. Barely a trace of it remained but for some old pottery on ashen ground. Her phone was still in the kibbutz. Zeigen was sure, after that text exchange, that it was all over — and yet, there was still no trace of her



Israeli-Canadian Peace Activist Vivian Silver was murdered by Hamas terrorists on October 7.

body. Since she was a foreign citizen, she was believed to be captured. Now we know that she never left Be'eri, and that the kibbutz she loved was her final resting place. Her remains had been recovered in that first week after the massacre, and yet it took this long for them to be identified. It is an ever present reminder of the fact that Israelis are still, literally, counting their dead, and of how the horrors of October 7 continue to reverberate, and probably always will.

Even in the days and hours before her death, Silver's work did not cease. On October 4, she marched in a rally with Women Wage Peace. On the day of the attack, she even got on air to talk about peace. "We'll talk more if I survive this," she told a radio host who she felt antagonized by.

So many words have been said about Vivian in the hours since her death was discovered. Yet I think we must give as much space for her own words as we can.

In an interview for the *Free Press* last year, in front of an idyllic background of dotted red flowers, Silver beseeched that "the violence, no matter what, it has to stop, and we have to start talking... I spent a lot of

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Jake Soifer uses his carpentry skills to help keep Israelis safe

By Regan Treewater-Lipes

Edmonton-born Israeli, Jacob (Jake) Soifer, his wife Yael, and their three children, Geshem, Elul, and Kerem, went to sleep on October 6 just as they normally would; they intended to spend a quiet Shabbat together. Jake and Elul would go to shul, just as they had done each week since he began preparing for his bar mitzvah. Jake, a professional carpenter, and business-owner in Kiryat Tivon, had been working hard all week on several large-scale construction projects, and the rest of the family eagerly awaited the arrival of loved ones from the Edmonton-based Soifer family travelling to Israel for the upcoming simcha in a few weeks' time. On the morning of October 7, Jake and Elul left for Shabbat services.

"We are accustomed to instability and upheaval," explained Jake in a recent phone interview with *Alberta Jewish News*. "When we left for shul, we knew that something had happened, but the scale of it wasn't really clear till after we got home. Then we started learning more about what was happening in real-time, and it was horrible. Everyone remembers where they were on 9/11. Our entire country stopped except for the security side of things," Jake explained somberly.

The family's discussions in the weeks leading up to October 7 were about caterers for Elul's bar mitzvah, and plans for excursions with the fifteen or so family members flying in from Canada. Now, the family found itself frozen with shock and horror. "Actually, we had been talking about the bar mitzvah so much, and then, all of a sudden, it didn't come up at all," remembered Jake.

Understandably, with so much destruction and uncertainty, grief and catastrophe, celebrations were not on anyone's mind. The family, Jake, Yael, and the children sheltered in place and tried to create a sense of calm and safety for the Soifer kids, the youngest only three.

Jake, who had earlier in the week been working to build elegant cathedral ceilings and fancy pergolas, now found himself thinking about what he could do with the skills and resources available to him, to support his community and country. "There is always something happening here – it's life," Jake began, thoughtfully. "Then the stories started coming out. We started to hear about people who had gone into their saferooms..." Jake proceeded to explain that although buildings constructed after the 1990s in Israel are mandated to have a safe room (MAMAD), these were conceived with chemical warfare in mind. "These saferooms have been outfitted with proper ventilation,

but they don't lock from the inside. They are actually designed to be opened from the outside in case a rescue team needs to release a family that has been incapacitated."

After a long pause, Jake continued: "We started to hear about people, families, that were under attack. They would try to find safety in their MAMAD, only to have to struggle to hold the door closed while Hamas aggressors continued to try to get in from outside. Some people were doing this for hours; some people weren't successful."

Jake knew of a way to easily make a MAMAD lockable from the interior. Those familiar with 'The Club,' a vehicle theft prevention device from a past generation, will understand the concept well. Jake was quick to clarify that the apparatus, which does not have an official name yet, is not his invention. However, as a carpenter, he is the ideal person to measure and outfit any MAMAD door with one of these custom-made boards to prevent the door from being opened from the exterior.

"It really is just a board," Jake emphasized humbly. "It's a piece of wood that is cut to fit the specific door, and it holds the handle firmly in place so that the MAMAD can be locked from the inside."

Upon returning to work, Jake posted on social media offering these security boards to anybody wishing to obtain one. "I wanted people to know that if they wanted one, all they needed to do was call." Jake hoped to be clear, that these would be free of charge, and customized to fit each individual door.

"I've heard of these boards being sold," explained Jake. "But the sold ones are standard sizes, and so they aren't necessarily going to fit each door the way they are supposed to. Just a few millimeters of variation can mean the difference between the system working or not working, and we don't want to take that chance."

Initially, Jake thought that maybe a couple of dozen families in the area would contact him, but the outpour of requests was staggering. For ten days straight, two teams drove from house to house, measuring, custom fitting, and showing families how to install these boards. "I would tell everyone – I hope you never have to use this, hopefully one day you'll be able to throw it in the trash. But for now, there are older people, women at home with children while their husbands are away defending the country – these people need to be able to keep themselves safe."

To date, Jake and his team have outfitted over three hundred homes with these MAMAD security boards. He still gets some calls now, although the volume has slowed down. "We even fit some of these boards for



Jake Soifer with his son Elul at his bar mitzvah on Oct. 19.

public shelters in the area," said Jake. "It was interesting to see such differences in the saferooms we outfitted though. Some were extremely well stocked and prepared, and for other families, over time, the MAMAD had just turned into another room of the house. The government has a list of things that every MAMAD should be stocked with. Even though these boards aren't officially on the list, no home should be without one."

Providing this service free of cost was no small matter. It was not just the supplies that were needed, but the manhours, the transportation, the additional resources. Jake's siblings, who were already enroute to Israel at the time the attacks broke out started up a GoFundMe campaign while in Europe trying to figure out what to do. This made all the difference. "We could not have possibly accomplished the number of installations we did if it hadn't been for the generosity of donors," Jake emphasized.

As Israel began to find what Jake refers to as "war-time normal" the bar mitzvah plans began to evolve. Elul - thus far Edmonton community members Randy and Jane Soifer's, only male grandchild - needed to be recognized for his achievements and ushered into adulthood as dictated by tradition.

"My father, during his last visit to Israel, helped us pick the synagogue where Elul would have his bar mitzvah, it was so important that my mom and dad be able to share in this," offered Jake earnestly. "We started thinking about going to Europe and meeting there. Our Rabbi was supportive of whatever decision we made, but he pointed out that Elul's bar mitzvah

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Homes by **AVI**

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Chef Akiba Charikar & BTZ expand kosher offerings for the community

By Maxine Fischbein

"I love cooking. It's in my heart," says Chef Akiba Charikar, who has been dishing up traditional Jewish, Israeli and Indian takeout at Beth Tzedec Congregation since the synagogue expanded its kosher culinary services in May.

"In addition to our wide range of ritual, educational, social and cultural opportunities, we know that another important path to Jewish hearts is through our stomachs," quipped Beth Tzedec CEO David Inhaber, who has long believed that Beth Tzedec's dairy and meat kitchens - where kashrut is supervised by the congregation's spiritual leader Rabbi Cantor Russell G. Jayne - should be deployed so as to provide a community service beyond the synagogue doors.

Akiba - who had already been engaged by the Synagogue to prepare Shabbat Kiddush meals, lunches and congregational Shabbat dinners - began offering a uniquely flavourful menu of fresh and frozen takeout dishes that have received rave reviews from congregants and members of the community at large.

Top of the list during Chanukah and popular throughout the year are Akiba's potato latkes. Among his other offerings are fresh or frozen soups, entrees and side dishes as well as dips, spreads and salads.

Akiba, who was born and raised in Mumbai, India is no stranger to the Calgary Jewish community or Beth Tzedec, where his family have been congregants for many years and where he proudly works alongside two of his children. Daughter Jennifer Girvitz has served the congregation in a variety of capacities, most recently in a dual role as executive assistant to Rabbi Cantor Russell Jayne and event manager. Son Adi Charikar serves on the congregation's operations team.

Because their responsibilities dovetail, "Team Charikar" - which occasionally includes Akiba's wife Yerusha - works hand in hand in helping to create a warm family atmosphere at Beth Tzedec.

When he was first hired by the Synagogue a few

years back to provide in-house catering, Akiba continued to offer the traditional fare the Synagogue had been providing for years.

"Slowly, slowly I started introducing my East Indian dishes and people liked them," Akiba told AJNews.

Those are some of the dishes Akiba grew up with in Mumbai, where he learned how to cook at the knee of his mother, Elisheba. Accompanying her to the local markets from a young age, Akiba became adept at choosing the freshest vegetables, fish and kosher meats.

As a young man, Akiba helped his mother by manually grinding the spices the family used in all their cooking. He has fond memories of the large grinding stone on which they ground fresh cilantro, ginger and garlic. For dry spices, like those combined in garam masala, the Charikars first roasted their spices before grinding them.

Sadly, the grinding stone - a family heirloom too heavy to bring with them when they left India - is but a memory. These days, Akiba has access to commercially ground spices that are of very good quality for the dishes he crafts at Beth Tzedec.

"But at home, we still roast our spices and grind them fresh," Akiba said, adding that many of the foods his family eats date back some 2,000 years to when the Bene Israel people first migrated to India and adapted to local customs while maintaining kashrut.

"It makes my life easier....I really know what I'm doing," said Akiba of his transition to cooking in and managing Beth Tzedec's kitchens.

Back home, the Bene Israel Jews had some unique customs, Akiba said. For example, they did not mix fish with dairy dishes. Akiba and Yerusha, who was born and raised in Pune, India, did not even consider fish to be pareve until they immigrated to Israel - one year after their 1978 marriage - and lived on a kibbutz where dairy and fish were served together.

The Charikar children were born in Israel, where the family eventually moved to Rishon L'Tsiyon before



BTZ Chef Akiba Charikar

immigrating to Canada and settling in Calgary in 1991. They have always taken joy in sharing their proud Indian Jewish heritage. Nowhere was this more evident than the weddings of daughters Jennifer and Caroline, which included elaborate pre-wedding henna parties, homage to Eliyahu Hanavi (Elijah the Prophet, for whom the Bene Israel have a particularly strong reverence), and traditional Indian wedding garb.

"I called them our East Indian-Israeli-Canadian-Jewish Big Fat Weddings," Akiba recalled with a chuckle.

Prior to joining Beth Tzedec in a professional capacity a few years back, Akiba managed the Oakridge Boston Pizza for 17 years. Before that, he managed the catering department at Sunterra in Bankers Hall and served as duty manager at the Carriage House Inn on Macleod Trail.

Demand is growing for Akiba's takeout soups, salads, entrees and side dishes. He hopes that over time Beth Tzedec can expand its catering into the neighbourhood, serving nearby businesses.

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Chef Akiba *Cont. from page 17*

As he continues to cater the weekly Kiddush Lunch following Shabbat morning services as well as Synagogue events including Shabbat dinners, Akiba tests new dishes. Those that hit the spot may eventually find their way to the takeout menu.

A November Beth Tzedec family dinner attracted some 350 participants, most of them youth and young families. Many told Akiba that his tasty dishes have reeled them in.

Two crowd pleasers are mac & cheese and lasagna. "I was a little bit worried," recalled Charikar, thinking back to when he first tried his hand at these comfort foods. Though they fell outside his own culinary traditions, he gave them a whirl after receiving encouragement from his daughter Jennifer and collecting tips on YouTube.

"The response when I made the mac & cheese was so great," recalled Akiba. "It rocked."

The lasagna, based on a recipe Jennifer uses at home, was an instant hit too. Akiba has since gladly filled many orders for his pasta dishes, some of them

for staff lunches just footsteps away at The Calgary Jewish Academy. He says spaghetti is coming next.

International favourites include aloo gobi - a classic Indian dish that brings cauliflower and potatoes to new heights - and chola, which marries potatoes with chickpeas. Among other dishes, his Israeli specialties include falafel, hummus, matbucha, and Israeli and chickpea salads.

Akiba's lentil and pareve matzo ball soups are made from scratch, the latter from a slowly simmered vegetable broth. Those who prefer their matzo balls light and fluffy are in for a real treat!

Among future takeout plans is the addition of meat-based dishes including traditional Shabbat meals.

Meanwhile, David Inhaber wants congregants and community members to know that in addition to simchas like brisses, baby namings, b'nai mitzvah and weddings, Beth Tzedec is a great location to host business and social events including private Shabbat dinners.



"As we say on our website, the Beth Tzedec kitchens are open for business," Inhaber told *AJNews*.

If you feed them, they will come...especially when Chef Akiba Charikar is doing the cooking!

For the Beth Tzedec takeout menu or to order online go to <https://bethtzedec.ca/catering/>

For more information on event planning at Beth Tzedec, contact Jennifer Girvitz at jgirvitz@beth.tzedec.ca.

Maxine Fischbein is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.

Jake Soifer *Cont. from page 16*

during Thursday shacharit would make the service more festive and make it possible to film everything," said Jake. "A man can be called to the Torah on a Thursday, so that is how we did it. Elul made his Aliyah to the Torah on a Thursday, and my family was able to join us by video call. It was very important that this took place in Israel."

Elul Soifer also was able to observe a traditional bar mitzvah with a maftir and haftorah on Saturday accompanied by his parents, siblings, and Yael's family. The local family members gathered on Saturday evening for a celebratory dinner, although Jake admits that current circumstances still loomed in everyone's minds despite the simcha at hand.

"We have to mark these occasions," Jake emphasized with conviction. "This is what we must do as Jews. If we stop our celebrations, if we don't observe the traditions that define us as Jews, then we are weaker.

This is the time to stand up for ourselves, and for everything that is important to us, because we are fighting for survival," he paused for a moment of contemplation. "Everywhere else in the world Jews are a minority, a smaller piece of a bigger population. Here, in Israel, that isn't the case, but there is a very real desire to destroy all we have built."

The Soifer family is proud of their newest bar mitzvah boy, and following the small local gathering, Jake was very pleased to be able to send Yael and the children to meet up with two of his brothers in Greece for a few days of respite.

"It was the first time they got to meet our little daughter; she was born during COVID. My wife and kids returned to Israel to continue helping on the homefront - my wife, as a teacher, helping with schooling the more than 150,000 displaced peoples from the bordering Gaza neighborhoods and the far north. And my eldest daughter, along with her high school class, has been helping out in the agriculture industry with picking or harvesting - once a week since the

second week of the war. Everyone is doing what they can."

Jake is still happy to lend a hand and install security boards free of charge. "I've heard of some of these things being sold for up to 450 shekels. I want to make sure people have them no matter what. And thanks to all the donors, we can make sure that keeps happening."

Edmonton's Jewish community should be infinitely proud of Talmud Torah alum Jacob Soifer, and the GoFundMe efforts of his siblings. What he has done is a noble mitzvah. Humble through and through, he would be the first to bashfully downplay his impact, but Edmontonians should ponder for a moment, how many Jewish lives he has helped to protect, and how many people are sleeping more soundly and peacefully tonight because of Jacob Soifer. Yasher Koach!

Regan Treewater-Lipes is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.

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Advocating for Israeli-Palestinian coexistence: We're still in this together

By Haviva Ner-David

(Kibbutz Hannaton, Israel JTA) — One of my son's close friends was fatally wounded fighting Hamas in Gaza this week. Yair Nafusi was his name. He would have been 21 next month. He was born on Hanukkah, thus his parents chose the name Yair, to "light up." Indeed, he lit up many lives.

As we said goodbye to Yair's physical presence and buried his body, I felt deep reverence and gratitude to this young man who gave his life to protect me and the more than 1,000 people standing around his grave, as well as the diversity of people living in this country and Jews around the world. They count on Israel to be a safe haven. Especially in times like these. Violent anti-Jew hatred is very much alive.

The Oct. 7 "Black Sabbath" Hamas massacre triggered a deep fear for our survival as Jews — and justifiably so. What reinforced our fear was the hailing of that massacre by much of the world, including the progressive (even Jewish) left, as a necessary step towards "freeing Palestine."

Like many of the thousands of victims of this massacre (some who died, some who were wounded, and some who will suffer trauma for the rest of their lives) and of the almost 250 hostages taken by Hamas, I am an activist who believes in a vision of Jews and Palestinians living on this land in partnership and peace. I devote much time and energy towards building a shared society among Palestinian and Jewish Israelis, especially in the Galilee, where I live. And I continue to believe in this vision.

I also believe terror and war are not the solution to the ongoing conflict. Only once we all (Palestinians and Jews) recognize one another's suffering, acknowledge the truth in both our narratives, and take responsibility for the conflict and its solution, will we be able to have a true and lasting peace. I recognize Israel's contribution to this conflict, and I hold our current government partly responsible for the "success" of Hamas' attack, although certainly not for its brutality.

The events that have unfolded since Oct. 7 have been eye-opening. My work building Palestinian-Jewish coexistence has always assumed partnership: a belief in the humanity and rights of both the Palestinian and Jewish peoples. That is why my novel, "Hope Valley," about the friendship between a Palestinian and a Jewish Israeli woman, is told from their alternating points of view.

And yet, when I watch the pro-Palestinian protests by "progressives" from London to New York to Washington, I see activists crossing a line from struggling for peace and Palestinian rights into promoting a hateful, terrifying, dangerous anti-Jewish agenda.

It is a line crossed when they blame the conflict on Israel and Jews alone; when they call Hamas "freedom fighters" who were justified in using barbaric violence to achieve their goals; when they distort the complicated history and present reality of Israel-Palestine into a black-and-white story of white colonialist Jews invading Palestine to commit genocide on an indigenous Palestinian population.

It's the same dangerous line crossed by those who say innocent Israeli citizens deserve to be butchered,

burned, raped, maimed; who glorify Hamas as a progressive humanitarian group when its covenant specifically calls for wiping Israel and the Jewish people off the earth; who call Israel's retaliation against Hamas "genocide" — as if the IDF's intention is to wipe out the entire Palestinian nation.

Hamas is no good for Palestinians and no good for Jews. It wants a fundamentalist Muslim dictatorship on the land from the river to the sea, devoid of all Jews. And Christians. And LGBTQ folk. It is no good for anyone who believes in democracy. It is simply no good for humanity. What Israel faces now in Gaza is a moral dilemma. Hamas wanted the IDF to retaliate so it could make Israel look bad. It worked. What Israel is doing is bad — killing thousands of innocent people, including children. But not evil. Hamas is evil. And while so many across the globe who promote Palestinian rights don't want to see the difference, I do.

I do spiritual companion work for clients around the world, including liberal rabbinical students and rabbis. They report among some of their peers a lack of knowledge of historical and political facts about Israel-Palestine, as well as about anti-Jewish tropes and their underlying theories, that concerns me immensely. I grew up Orthodox Jewish Zionist in New York, where the Palestinian narrative was omitted from my education. That was highly problematic. But so is teaching *only* the Palestinian narrative, or not balancing the progressive world's bias towards the Palestinian narrative with the Jewish one. Future Jewish leaders especially need to understand both narratives, and not simply go with the tide of the times.

Human rights include Jewish human rights. It is possible to believe in human rights for both Jews and Palestinians. It is possible to cry for the innocent Palestinian lives lost in this war (from Israeli bombs, Hamas and Islamic Jihad missiles and Hamas using their own citizens to protect their terrorist cells) while believing in Israel's right to defend itself against Hamas' attempt at the annihilation of Israel and all Jews.

It is even possible to demand from Palestinians truthful examination of their leaders' culpability.

Devoting time and energy towards building Palestinian-Jewish partnership and fighting for equality, justice and peace, I have had to hold many truths. I have had to find a way to deal with feelings of guilt over Jewish Israelis' part in the injustices inflicted upon innocent Palestinians (blame that must also be shared with Arab countries and Palestinian leaders) without losing my sense of self, self-respect and a belief in my right to live here, and even exist.

It has not been simple, but it is possible. I expect



my Palestinian and progressive Jewish counterparts to go through a similar process. Some have, but not all, and unfortunately the voices of those who have not are reverberating loudly throughout the world (ironically, less so in Israel, where advocates for Palestinian rights and a lasting peace more often hear and heed the voices of the "other" side).

I do believe if we remove Hamas and replace our leaders — the Palestinian and Israeli leaders who stand in the way — with worthy ones who will talk and be willing to compromise, we can build a lasting peace. Then no more soldiers like Yair, or victims of terror, or casualties of war, will have to pay the price for our inability to do so.

Haviva Ner-David is rabbinic founder of Shmaya: A Mikveh for Mind, Body, and Soul, on Kibbutz Hannaton. She is a certified spiritual companion with a specialty in dreamwork, working with couples and individuals. She is the author of "Dreaming Against the Current: A Rabbi's Soul Journey," the novel "Hope Valley" and "Getting (and Staying) Married Jewishly: Preparing for Your Life Together with Ancient and Modern Wisdom."

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of JTA or its parent company, 70 Faces Media.

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A MESSAGE FROM ADAM SILVER

It feels strange for me to be writing about *Chag Urim* (The Festival of Lights) during these very dark days for our local and global Jewish community. In a typical year, I would focus on the joy of *Chanukah*, the happiness we experience when lighting the *Chanukah* (*Chanukah Menorah*), the smells and tastes of the *latkes* and *sufganiyot* (donuts), and the fullness we feel when gathering with family and friends to celebrate.

This year, however, is different. There are people in our community who might feel unsafe and choose to keep their candles away from the window, instead of displaying them with pride. There are community members who will tighten their circles of guests, instead of expanding them. In addition, there are many of us who will feel conflicted in doing any kind of celebrating while our brothers and sisters in Israel, around the world, and right here at home are in so much pain.

I understand that I started my message with gloom and doom. I would, however, like us to take stock of the strength and resilience of our community in the face of escalating antisemitism, and the relentless onslaught of hate, disinformation, and continued marginalization. Our synagogues, schools, JCC, and other community partners have continued to provide

programs and services to bring us together. The very same university students who are experiencing vast and significant issues on their campuses have gathered by the dozens for support groups, social events, and educational programs. Our teens in BBYO, NCSY, and C-Teen are also continuing to hold events, attend conventions in large numbers, and demonstrate their Jewish pride. And, our community and allies came together on a crisp and cold Tuesday night to stand, 500 strong, in solidarity with the hostages and with Israel. We are a strong, caring, resilient community and though we have moments of concern, we will navigate this long road together.

This *Chanukah*, I would like to encourage our community to gather with family and friends, to light candles, to display them proudly, and to defy the hate that has become all too common. I would also like to encourage all of us to invite friends and allies from outside the Jewish community to share *Chanukah* with them. The *Chanukah* story notes that our ancestors didn't give up when being persecuted. They found ways to learn, celebrate, and preserve our traditions. They also found ways to fight back against their enemies. To be clear, we must commit ourselves to live proud Jewish lives, while also finding ways to fight back against antisemitism and those

who promote hatred against Jews. Fighting back takes many forms – practicing our traditions despite being fearful; challenging those who tell mistruths and lies; demanding better and more from political and institutional leaders; and building bridges with allies and friends of our community.

We cannot cave to the darkness we are seeing. *Chanukah* remains a time of light and miracles. We must spread the light...and the miracles. It is in each one of us to make the world just a little brighter and a lot better. As we navigate the days, weeks, and months ahead, and we continue to combat antisemitism and the demonization of Israel, I hope we will derive energy and sense of purpose from *Chanukah* – from its story and from the way it puts smiles on our faces as we gather with those we love. Perhaps, most of all, it reminds us that even in darkness we can find happiness, internal resolve, and miracles.

Wishing you and yours a *Chag Chanukah Sameach*,

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Vivian Silver *Cont. from page 15*

time in Gaza... like-minded Palestinian organizations, all of those people want to live in dignity and in recognition of a national people.”

“I call myself a conditional Zionist,” she explained. “I believe in the right of the Jewish people to have a state, as long as we give the same right to the Palestinian people. This could be such a haven to both of our people here. I know what life could be like if we put down our arms.” She said that she dreams of a different reality for her grandchildren, to whom she was so devoted, “one in peace and security, one where they have Arab friends, where they have Palestinian friends.”

Women Wage Peace shared these words from Silver, spoken a few years ago, in their moving eulogy for her: “We cannot go on without a political horizon.... We cannot accept operations and acts of war that bring only death, destruction and pain, and inflict mental and physical harm, as a daily occurrence... We call upon the Prime Minister, the Defense Minister, and the Cabinet to find the necessary courage to promote political alternatives, which will bring us peace and security. We call upon our sisters in Gaza: join us and call upon your leaders, enough. Terror benefits no one. You, too, deserve peace and security.”

On Israel’s Reshet Bet, Zeigen talked about his mother, each word breathlessly uttered through an impossible struggle.

He described his mother as an amazing grandmother and mother, and a woman of contradictions. “She was small, fragile, very sensitive, and also a force of nature. She had an amazing spirit, she was very assertive, she had a strong moral core when it came to the things she believed in the world and life.” He shared what he believed would have been her heartbreak at the horrors of October 7 as well as the deaths in Gaza. “She worked all her life,” he said, “to steer us off this course... In the end, it shattered on her.”

He also shared how, for years and years, she had told him that peace could come tomorrow, and he kept telling her that she was beating a dead horse. Yet now, her hope is alive in him, the seed of peace she kept trying to sow growing roots in all the pain.

“I now have her optimism. It feels like a relay race; she passed something onto me,” he said. “I don’t know what [I’m going to do with it] but I think we can’t go back [to how things were]. We need to create something new — more in the direction of what she was looking for.”

May Vivian Silver’s memory be a blessing, and for a revolution. May her memory be the foundation that one days brings us to the realization of her dream of peace.

This article originally ran on Kveller.

About Shelley Werner: Our cover artist



Shelly Werner



The image on the cover of this month’s Alberta Jewish News is by Shelley Werner, a designer and Judaica Illustrator. She is the moderator and host of Art and Scroll Studio, a live zoom series featuring the makers and creators of Judaica art. An award-winning speaker, she is passionate about integrating Tikun Olam in all things. Having recently moved from Winnipeg to Calgary she uses bold colors, watercolour and markers to celebrate her Jewish heritage. Her inspiration is also found in the Alberta landscape, which has brought her a new form of meditation on majesty. To register for Art and Scroll Studio please contact artandscrollstudio@gmail.com

8 ways to celebrate Hanukkah that aren’t about the presents

By Rebecca Rosenthal

(Kveller via JTA) -- We love Hanukkah. The message that the rabbis in the Talmud give about the holiday is that we light candles each night in order to increase the holiness in the world.

What a beautiful idea -- one that can be completely lost on children.

We don’t expect them to be immune to the culture in which we live, but we want to help them understand that the miracle of Hanukkah is about bringing more light into the world, not filling their rooms with more stuff.

So here are some ideas for celebrating Hanukkah with kids that aren’t just about the presents that have

worked for our families.

1. Decorate.

The mitzvah of Hanukkah is to publicize the miracle, both that the small Jewish army defeated the large Greek army and that the small jar of oil lasted for eight days. Get the message out by decorating your house. Turn it into a family project by making your own decorations.

2. Do something for others.

The best way to publicize the miracle is to help others see the light in the world. Find a project that you can do as a family that helps others in your community or in the world.

3. Donate your tzedakah.

Search your house for those coins that have been hiding in the couch all year. Find a cause that your family is passionate about and donate all that loose change. You’d be



surprised how much it can add up to. Instead of presents every night, ask your family and friends to make a donation in your child’s honour.

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The Hanukkah merch market has exploded. Is that a good thing?

By Philissa Cramer

(JTA) — Last November, Nicholas Wymer-Santiago walked into his local Target in Austin, Texas, and realized it was beginning to feel a lot like Hanukkah.

Instead of an endcap with a limited array of Hanukkah basics, as he had seen in past years, there stretched out a whole aisle of holiday products: pillows; dreidel-shaped pet toys; window decals; menorahs in the shape of lions, corgis and whales; and so much more. Even the \$5-and-under impulse-buys section filled with seasonal products had a supply of Hanukkah goods, including a Star of David-shaped bowl and a set of dishes labeled “sour cream” and “applesauce.”

“In a good way, it was overwhelming at first, because there’s so much and I kind of want to buy it all,” Wymer-Santiago recalled feeling as he stood in the holiday section, looking up at a large photograph of a Hanukkah celebration alongside others showcasing Christmas.

The higher education administrator at the University of Texas decided to limit himself, at first taking home just a tea towel and a matching mug printed with a Hanukkah motif.

“And then I came back twice, maybe three times and each time I bought more and more items that I know I probably don’t need,” he said. “I think I’ve just had so much excitement about the novelty of it all, and having the ability to purchase these items, many of which I’ve never seen before.”

Wymer-Santiago is hardly alone in loading his cart with Hanukkah merchandise. Across the United States, big-box stores appear to be stocking more Hanukkah products than ever — and while off-color items such as Hanukkah gnomes and “Oy to the World” dish towels have raised eyebrows, the real story might be that American retailers have decked their shelves with menorahs, tableware and other items that are appropriate, affordable and often downright tasteful.

For many American Jews, the result is a sense of inclusion at a time of unease — although some are wrestling with what it means to have access to a fast-fashion form of Judaism.

“It is very exciting to go into Target or Michaels or a Walmart and to see Hanukkah merchandise,” said Ariel Stein, an influencer who shares crafting and holiday content for Jewish families on Instagram, where she has more than 20,000 followers.

“The feeling is almost like pride and like we’re being

seen and represented,” Stein added. “In a sea of Christmas ... it feels really great, even if it’s a much smaller representation, that the Jewish holiday is there also, and the Jewish community is being acknowledged and represented.”

The idea that retailers have stocked up on Hanukkah goods to make Jews feel represented is tempting, but it’s probably not the only reason for a shift in the market, according to Russell Winer, deputy chair of the marketing department at New York University’s Stern School of Business. He said that while an endcap — the small set of shelves at the end of an aisle — might sometimes be given over for symbolic purposes, the devotion of an entire aisle at the busiest time of the year is purely a business decision.

“These stores are very sophisticated in what they put in them,” Winer said. “They’re not going to put stuff on the shelves, especially at the holidays, if they don’t think they’re going to sell.”

There are signs that the Hanukkah market might be much wider than the proportion of Americans who identify as Jewish, 2.5%, would suggest. Numerator, a respected consumer trends polling firm, found in a survey of 11,000 consumers conducted in January 2022 that 14% of respondents said they were “definitely” or “probably” celebrating Hanukkah this year, compared to 96% for Christmas. More than half of the Hanukkah celebrants said they expected to spend more than \$50 on the holiday — suggesting that retailers can expect hundreds of millions of dollars in Hanukkah spending this year.

Part of that marketplace is the growing number of families in which Hanukkah is celebrated alongside other holidays, usually Christmas. Most American Jews who have married in the last decade have done so to people who are not Jewish, according to the 2020 Pew study of American Jews; most of them say they are raising their children exclusively or partly as Jews. They may want to have products that allow Hanukkah to share the stage equitably with the other celebrations in their family.

“I’m not terribly surprised from a cultural standpoint that there’s more merchandise,” said Winer, who is Jewish. He said he and his wife had purchased Hanukkah stockings for their grandchildren, who are being raised in two faith

traditions.

Stein offered another theory to explain the uptick in interest in Hanukkah products: the fact that social media and Zoom meetings have made home lives more transparent than ever.

“The communal sharing of lives, whether you’re an influencer or even my friends on Facebook showing what their display is this year or taking a picture of a recipe they were really proud of, making latkes from scratch — there’s just more visibility than there has been in the past,” she said. “And that’s probably a factor.”


Whatever the reasons, shoppers are noticing. Like Stein and countless other Jewish influencers, Rabbi Yael Buechler, a devoted observer of Jewish consumer trends, has offered tours of Hanukkah merchandise to her social media followers. Wearing Hanukkah pajamas that she designed and sells, Buechler has posted videos to TikTok showcasing the Hanukkah collections of national retailers and assigns each store a “yay” or “nay” based on several metrics, including whether items display accurate Hebrew or appear to be generic blue-and-white items being passed off as made for the holiday. The videos, which have been viewed hundreds of thousands of times, have given her a broad view of what’s available to the Hanukkah consumer.

“I see a lot more products this year than any other year,” said Buechler, who works at a Jewish school outside New York City. “I see a lot of new prints. I see more creativity in the market. I see more humor in the market.”

Like Wymer-Santiago, Buechler said Target, which has 2,000 locations across the United States, stood out




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Nani Vazana performs new Ladino songs in Canmore

By Irena Karshenbaum

In an interview in early November from her home in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, Ladino singer and songwriter, Nani Vazana, evokes images of centuries past when men prayed in the synagogues of their Spanish villages while the women had to make their way in the market. Their Spanish imperfect, a paella of the local language tossed with spoonfuls of Hebrew, evolved into a language of its own, Judeo-Spanish, also known as, Ladino. It was this language — Vazana calls “matriarchal” because it was created by women — and used in their daily lives to share recipes and domestic knowledge, discuss mother-daughter relationships, secret desires and unattained loves, that with time flourished with poetry and songs.

Today, Ladino is considered a dying language because most of its speakers are over 70 years of age. Vazana, who in her 30s, not only speaks the language, but is believed to be the only person in the world who writes new songs in the dying language, and which are “reflective of millennial life,” as she explains.

It is a musical path that almost did not happen. Vazana’s father, who was either born in Vazan, Morocco or on a boat to Israel, (his exact place of birth is unknown due to the turbulent early years of the modern state of Israel), forbade his daughter to speak Ladino. She only did so in secret, when her father was not around, with her maternal grandmother, “Savta Mami,” from when she was four to the age 12, when her grandmother passed away.

Born in Be’er Sheva, Israel, Vazana’s musical journey did not begin with Ladino music, but had European musical origins. Vazana explains that she always knew she wanted to become a singer and songwriter. “My mother says that I was imitating opera singers in the shower when I was two or three years old and I asked for a piano when I was three.” It was a wish Vazana did not see fulfilled until she was 10, but she never stopped asking for the instrument while starting piano lessons at age five or six and having to use the piano at her conservatory. She took up playing the trombone because, as a child, she had a high-pitched voice and wanted to expand her range, which is now over three octaves. She became principal trombone player for the Ra’anana Symphony Orchestra, then moved to study at the Jerusalem Music Academy and then moved to Amsterdam to study at the Amsterdam Conservatory. It is where she decided to stay explaining, “The city is at a crossroads for many international musicians and is great for collaborations.”

While in her new home, Vazana was invited to perform at the Tangier Jazz Festival in Morocco and took the opportunity to visit her grandmother’s home town of Fez. Walking through the ancient streets, she heard a song her late grandmother used to sing to her. The song, called “Kuando El Rey Nimrod,” translated as “When Nimrod Was King,” was sang in Arabic, not in Ladino, but had the same melody, which she recognized. “I had flash backs and it became very special and from this moment I understood what the path was about for me.”

For two years Vazana took Ladino lessons to relearn the language and started to research Ladino music. She admits the music is hard to relate to because Ladino singers do a lot of “ornaments” with their voices, “So I created my own version of the classical songs and I started to perform and record them, but without the ornaments.” The collection of songs became her third album and her first work of traditional Ladino music called, “Andalusian Brew.”

Vazana performed this repertoire for three years, which took her to all continents around the world, except Australia.

She continues, “I started feeling it wasn’t enough to sing classical Ladino songs, so around 2018, I started writing my own songs in Ladino that are more reflective of modern life.” This work led to the making of her current album entitled, “Ke Haber,” translated as “What’s New.” She explains the title has a double meaning referring to the dying language and that it is also a common Ladino phrase, “It’s meant to preserve the language and make it current.”

In “No Tiene Hija No Tiene Amiga,” translated as “Without A Daughter, Without A Friend,” with music and lyrics by Vazana, she sings, “To rely on others is to be a fool / Better to be alone than in bad company / Whatever you say of another reflects yourself.” She writes in the notes to the album that the song is about the mother-daughter relationship and “that special female bond is highlighted and expressed as the highest value of friendship.”

“El Gacela,” translated as “The Gazelle,” with lyrics by Shmuel Hanagid and Moses ibn Ezra and music by Vazana, touches on the homoerotic. She writes in the notes to the album, “It was hard to find secular materials. I asked a rabbi at the Etz Chaim library and



Nani Vazana live at Montana Folk Fest.

he showed me these 2 homoerotic poems from the 11th century, written by 2 Jewish rabbis who are considered saints. It’s amazing that we feel that we’re very new and modern and advanced, but it seems that we raise the same questions 1000 years later. And maybe society was even more open minded back in the middle ages?”

Vazana plays the piano and trombone when performing and considers herself a solo artist employing different musicians in different locations. She explains that “everything” inspires her music, “Every song is like a short movie that tells its own story.”

She says she cannot pick a favourite song, but specifically mentions “Sin Dingun Hijo Varon,” translated as “Without Any Sons,” which is included in “Ke Haber.” A song based on 11th century text, and one of the earliest examples in history of a song on a transgender subject, it uses sparse language to tell the story of a young girl who declares to her father that she will be a son he never had and her mother accepts her daughter, as her son. Vazana explains, “We think that as millennials we invented this, but this has been around for centuries. The feeling of looking for your identity has very strong meaning for us today.”

Vazana’s unique contributions to world music have been recognized by her performing at the Kennedy Centre and, in September of 2023, as part of her current world tour, her concert was recorded by the Library of Congress, in Washington, DC.

Vazana performed in Canmore, Alberta on November 14 before traveling for concerts in Montreal on November 17 and Toronto the following day. In January of 2024, she will resume her world tour with 67 scheduled performances, at the time of this interview.

Irena Karshenbaum writes in Calgary.
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Japanese-Style Latkes for Hanukkah

By Sonya Sanford

(The Noshers via JTA) - The Japanese word "okonomiyaki" is derived from two words: okonomi (how you like it) and yaki (grill). Okonomiyaki is a customizable Japanese savory vegetable pancake. Like a latke, it gets cooked in oil in a fritter formation. Unlike a latke, it's usually made into a large plate-sized pancake comprising mainly cabbage.

Food historians have linked the rise in popularity of okonomiyaki in Japan to World War II, when rice was more scarce and this recipe offered a filling meal or snack with a wheat-based starch. Throughout Japan there are regional differences and countless variations of okonomiyaki, but the most common form of the dish involves a batter made of flour, a variety of mountain yam, eggs, shredded cabbage, green onion, dashi and often the addition of pork belly. It gets topped with its own tangy sweet sauce, Japanese mayonnaise and bonito flakes (katsubushi).

I first fell in love with okonomiyaki on a trip to Japan. You can find it there in restaurants that specialize in the dish, but it's also something that is prepared in home kitchens. The cabbage gets slightly crisp, tender and sweet when seared in oil on a flattop or skillet, and then it gets generously slathered with an umami-rich sauce, along with a welcome drizzle of creamy mayo. The richness, sweetness and tanginess of these components all work perfectly together.

A few months after I got back from Japan, I ended up eating at Brooklyn's Japanese Jewish restaurant, Shalom Japan. I didn't hesitate to order their Jewish-influenced spin on okonomiyaki. They're known to top it with pastrami or corned lamb tongue and sauerkraut. It became clear there that okonomiyaki, with its base of humble cabbage and onion, is a perfect fit on a Jewish table. The fried pancake part of it all called out "Hanukkah."

I am a fan of all pancakes and fritters, and I set out to modify the classic Japanese version for a recipe that didn't require access to a specialty food store, and that could be made with kosher ingredients. Full disclosure: My version lacks authenticity. If you're going for the real deal, you'll need a batter made with an okonomiyaki flour mix, or nagaimo yam; this special kind of yam is added in powdered form to the flour mix, or gets grated fresh into the batter. The toppings should include bonito flakes, and the batter should be made with dashi. These ingredients can be found at most Japanese markets. Instead of nagaimo yam, my version uses a batter of flour and potato starch, and instead of dashi I use water.

I've also included a recipe for homemade traditional okonomiyaki sauce that can be made simply with easy-

to-find ingredients, but you can also buy a pre-made bottled sauce. You can make these pancakes large-sized and cut into wedges like the Japanese do, or slightly smaller à la a large latke. I wouldn't go too small with this, as the vegetables tend to hold together better en masse. This recipe doesn't need to be too exact, and it works as a blank canvas for additional vegetables like kale, mushrooms and/or daikon.

In the spirit of Hanukkah, these okonomiyaki get cooked in oil, but they're not heavily fried. The oil used to fry the okonomiyaki gives a loving nod to the miracle of the oil glowing in the Temple for eight days instead of one, but the heap of vegetables and addictive sauce make this a nutritious and satisfying addition to any Hanukkah meal.

Ingredients

For the pancakes:

- ¾ cup all-purpose flour or gluten-free all-purpose mix
- ¼ cup potato starch or cornstarch
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- 2 large eggs
- ½-¾ cup water
- ½ shredded green cabbage, about 4 ½ packed cups
- 3 green onions, sliced thin, plus more for garnish if desired
- 1 carrot, peeled and shredded
- 4-5 inches daikon, peeled and shredded (optional)
- oil, as needed (sunflower, canola or peanut)
- sesame seeds, for topping (optional)
- mayonnaise, for topping (optional)

For the okonomiyaki sauce:

- ½ cup ketchup
- ¼ cup Worcestershire sauce
- 2 Tbsp soy sauce
- 2 Tbsp honey or agave syrup, or to taste

Instructions

Start by making the batter. Whisk together the flour, starch, baking powder and salt in a large bowl.

In a separate bowl, beat the eggs. Add the eggs and ½ cup of water to the flour mixture. Whisk until smooth. You want a fairly thin, crepe batter-like consistency. If you find it too thick, add another ¼ cup of water. Try not to over-mix; you do not want to overdevelop the gluten. Allow the batter to rest in the fridge for 30 minutes to an hour.

While the batter is resting, prepare the vegetables. Remove the thick core from the cabbage half, then cut the



halved cabbage in two. Thinly slice or shred the cabbage. Thinly slice the green onions. Grate the carrot and daikon if using.

Make the okonomiyaki sauce: Combine the ketchup, Worcestershire, soy sauce and honey/agave in a bowl. Taste and adjust to your liking. The sauce should be tangy, savory and a little sweet.

Combine the batter with the vegetable mixture.

Heat a cast-iron skillet or a nonstick skillet with about 3 Tbsp oil over high heat. Once the oil is glistening and hot, lower the heat to medium low and add some of the cabbage mixture to the pan, gently nudging it into a circle shape. I like to make each pancake with about 2 cups of the mixture. For me, that makes an ideal-sized pancake that isn't too hard to flip, and one that will hold together. Cover the skillet with a lid for 3-4 minutes. Carefully flip over the pancake, and cover it with a lid for an additional 3-4 minutes, or until browned on both sides and cooked through. Make sure not to cook on too high of a heat or the pancake might burn on the outside while remaining raw in the center.

Serve hot topped with a generous spread of the okonomiyaki sauce, mayo if desired, sliced green onions and sesame seeds. Slice and serve!

This recipe was first published on The Noshers.

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A Jewish Convert's Guide to Enjoying the Winter Holiday Jumble

By Leah Grisham

(Kveller via JTA) - Jewish kids and Christmas: For some parents, this combination can seem like a proverbial minefield of challenges presented to us each winter. The secular world, it seems, becomes infinitely less so as Christmas decorations, commercials and episodes of beloved kids shows proliferate.

For interfaith families like mine, which celebrate both Hanukkah and Christmas, this time can be especially fraught. My own 3-year-old Jewish daughter, for instance, is obsessed with the Grinch, loves Santa Claus, and has been singing "Jingle Bells" since July. No matter how much I try to hype up Hanukkah, she still asks me if it's Christmas every time she sees snow (which happens early in our part of the country). Whether it's the constant Christmas messaging or her own hazy memories of past Christmas celebrations, it seems like Hanukkah plays second fiddle to the other December holiday.

My holiday anxiety was especially strong last year, which was my first winter holiday season as an official Jew after converting earlier in the year. I'd breezed through Passover and the High Holidays content in my Jewishness, but after Thanksgiving I felt a huge amount of pressure to make Hanukkah more fun, festive and memorable for my daughter — and, if I'm being honest — for myself, someone who spent decades of her pre-conversion life loving Christmas.

I'm not alone in these feelings. According to posts made in a Facebook group called Jewish Converts (Converts to Judaism), an online support group of sorts for Jewish converts that is over 2,500 members strong, this time of year sees lots of people asking for advice and venting their uncertainties toward navigating the winter holidays. Is it OK to still have a tree in my interfaith home? Is it OK to attend extended-family Christmas gatherings? What do I tell my kid when all their friends are talking about gifts from Santa? How can I get my mother-in-law to stop trying to proselytize

my kids? What if I still love Christmas music? These questions are not totally unique to converts, but for those of us who grew up celebrating Christmas (no matter how un-religious our families' traditions were), it can be hard — and very confusing — when it comes to the winter holidays, which can cause feelings of resentment and competition.

In my mind, the competition I was imagining between Christmas and Hanukkah became greater than the holidays themselves. Looking back, I can see now that my need to make Hanukkah "better" than Christmas became conflated with my very Jewishness: Bigger and better Hanukkah celebrations came to represent (in my mind) being Jewish "enough." Accordingly, I spent December going crazy buying Hanukkah gifts, planning what had to be the perfect Hanukkah party and decorating every inch of our home in blue and white decorations. I don't know what the world record for most Stars of David in one house is, but my home in December 2021 would be in the running. I was also filled with angst over the Christmas hoopla that my daughter would experience when we travelled to see our extended families over the holiday. I wanted her to feel joy and excitement over Jewish celebrations, but that felt impossible in a sea of red, green and Santa Claus.

After so much fretting, things came to an anti-climactic end with the introduction of the Omicron variant of COVID-19, which kept my small family at home alone. Weeks of feeling resentful toward extended family Christmas parties faded into disappointment that these gatherings — which would have been our first extended-family celebrations since 2018 — didn't happen at all. In fact, as my daughter and husband enjoyed Christmas afternoon naps, I had quite a pity party for myself as I guzzled champagne and chocolates on the couch, watching "The Holiday" by myself (Jack Black and Eli Wallach make it Jewish enough for me!).

My unexpected sense of disappointment over



Scout is decked out for Chanukah.

cancelled Christmas plans made it clear: After so many quarantined holidays and life events celebrated over Zoom, the mental capacity I spent being angry at Christmas would be better spent embracing the opportunity to gather with family and friends, no matter what the occasion.

Navigating the Christmas season as a convert to Judaism is not easy — and it would be a lie to say that I've totally let go of the fact that, to my 3-year-old, Christmas is more exciting than Hanukkah — but this year I am going to do my best to stop fretting over details.

Our world has seen so much grief and upheaval over the last few years; maybe it is OK to let our guards down a little bit and embrace joy wherever it can be found. I'll pack our menorah and Hanukkah pajamas and bring them to Grandma's house for Christmas and do my best to just let my daughter enjoy the fun of this year's holiday jumble.

This essay was first published on Kveller.

8 ways *Cont. from page 22*

4. Carve out time together.

Commit to turning off your phones and being present. Sing as many silly Hanukkah songs as you know, play competitive dreidel, and eat some latkes and jelly doughnuts.

5. Read Hanukkah books.

There are so many fun children's stories about Hanukkah. Both PJ Library and Amazon are great sources for finding books that will appeal to your child and the whole family.

6. Invite friends over.

Bonus points for inviting those friends who have never celebrated Hanukkah. Make sure you brush up on the story before they arrive.

7. Watch lots of Hanukkah parody videos.

This is a personal favorite in my family, where we watch videos from groups like the Maccabeats to Six13 to videos people made in their own homes (or offices, like we did). Feeling brave? Make your own.

8. Make a new family tradition.

Are there things you always wanted to do in your city? Make a Hanukkah bucket list and do one each night. Or have a latke contest to see who can add the most creative ingredients to the traditional potato pancakes. Add something fun that you can do together as a family and share it with others.

And since we know that kids (and grown-ups!) still love to get presents, you can participate in a "get one, give one" plan so that each time your child is given a toy, they have to choose a gently used one to donate. Make it even more meaningful by taking your child to deliver his/her donation to a shelter or a hospital.

Happy Hanukkah!

Rabbi Rebecca Rosenthal is the director of youth and family education at Central Synagogue in New York City. This piece was written in conjunction with Erin Bouchard, the family engagement project director at Central Synagogue.

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Daniel Kowall & Tali Kowall

Liberal parents

Cont. from page 14

1. “Be aware of how the war is putting a strain on your relationships.”

This may seem obvious, but as a parent, I know that it is easy to overlook how stress outside of the home manifests as stress in the home. The more time I take reading and watching coverage of the war and the antisemitism perpetrated in its wake, the less present I am to my family. If your teen resists talking with you about the war, it may be because they feel that the crisis is a threat to your ability to care for, nurture and protect them. To counter this, parents can pay attention to their teen’s well-being and find time to do things that they enjoy doing together. Hirschfeld talked about “finding time for normalcy” and connecting through Shabbat rituals or other ways that you can slow down together. Even if this is an obvious point, it is worth repeating.

2. “Don’t assume that your teen understands your connection to Israel.”

This is something that I am learning every day. When I think of my own connection to Israel, I recall the personal stories of those who found refuge in Israel after the displacement of millions of Jews after World War II and after the rise of Arab nationalist movements. I remember my first trip to Israel as a teen, connecting with my extended family there, and studying and living there during my college years. I met incredible Israelis and Palestinians working side by side to build a future based on coexistence and respect. And I remember former Prime Ministers Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres and their visions of peace. Indeed, many of the hostages being held in Hamas tunnels are people who devoted their lives to those visions.

But our teens and young adults have come of age at a very different time. Israel has been labeled by their peers as a colonizer and white-supremacist oppressor. And since Rabin’s assassination, openly racist political and religious leaders within Israel have energized a Jewish supremacist vision, one that has a platform within the current government.

Since we cannot assume that our teens understand our connection to Israel, this crisis is a good moment to make time for you and your teen to share a walk, a meal or a drive — a time when you can give your teen some context that will help them understand why you care. Note: This is not the same as telling them why they should care. But it is important to share why you care, and what it means to you right now as you absorb the news and think about your connection to it. Even if your teen has a different set of feelings than you right now about Israel, you can ask your teen to have empathy for the emotions that you are feeling.

3. “Keep in mind that this is an unsettling time for teens because they are seeing some of their peers sharing anti-Israel, and in some cases, anti-Jewish hate, and this is disrupting their social connections.”

Even well-educated, college-bound teens are more likely to read the political opinions of a select group of models, athletes, actors and cultural commentators than they are to follow journalists, political scientists or writers. Some people in your teens’ network are likely sharing propaganda and conspiracy theories posted by their favorite influencers. But while teens today are seeing vehemently anti-Israel posts and anti-Jewish posts, most do not want to make waves about them. Whether these posts are shared by someone in their class, on their sports team, or from their summer camp, most teens would rather not confront the person or comment on the post. Also, when teens see posts that call for peace, a ceasefire or humanitarian aid, they don’t necessarily view them as anti-Israel or antisemitic, but simply as “pro-peace.”

If your teen is willing to talk with you about what they are seeing on social media, you can help support their decision-making as they navigate what posts to ignore, when to reach out and when to speak up. You can help them find information about the crisis that they can trust, help them understand the continued threats that Hamas and Islamic Jihad pose in Gaza and in the region, and help them figure out what role they can play in challenging hate of any kind.

4. “If your teen is truly obsessed with the war, seeing everything through the lens of this crisis, and using this issue as a way to distance themselves from you, then you may need to speak with someone who can mediate the situation.”

There are times when a teen will latch on to an extreme political position because it sends a message to the parent that they seek independence or detachment. In more extreme cases, the teen can begin to see the world through the lens of a political battle and place the parents as the enemy. If that is your case right now, you may want to seek support from a friend, clergy person or therapist.

5. “It is natural for teens to differentiate their views from parents, and they often use their peers as a reference group.”

If your teens are in a school where peers are one-sided in their solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza, and indifferent when it comes to the continued attacks on Israeli citizens by Hamas rockets, the welfare of the hostages being held by Hamas or acts of antisemitism here and around the world, then your teens may feel that fitting into their peer group requires that they express only pro-Palestinian sentiment or suppress their pro-Israel leanings. They might need to hear from parents the message that their hearts can have



room for both the Palestinians suffering in Gaza and for the millions of Israelis who are in mourning, displaced, hiding in bomb shelters or awaiting news about the captives.

To help your teen expand their circle of empathy, you might share the various ways that Israelis are working with Palestinians to express solidarity, or tell them about joint efforts to provide humanitarian relief, like World Central Kitchen, which seek to help all non-combatants evacuees and families impacted by the escalating conflict in the region. Help your teens to see that there are dozens of ways to care for Israelis, for the Jewish people as a whole, and for Palestinians. Share the story of the late Vivian Silver, the Israeli peace activist murdered by Hamas. Give them hope that coexistence is still possible.

I deeply appreciated Hirschfeld’s insights, and since hearing them I, as a parent and a rabbi, have been trying my best to be in dialogue across the generations, which includes my children and their peers. I know that for some of my own peers, this has been one of the most challenging times in their parenting journey. The arguments that they are having with their teens are enormously difficult and require a great deal of patience.

I hope that in the coming months, we as a Jewish community can support all parents of teens as we navigate through this crisis and help bridge some of the generational and other divides that are tearing us apart.

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of JTA or its parent company, 70 Faces Media.



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Shabbat Challah Project Photo Gallery



On the evening of November 2, over 60 members of our Jewish and greater Calgary community came together to take part in the Paperny Family JCC's Shabbat Challah Project, in partnership with House of Jacob Mikveh Israel. This was a wonderful event that welcomed all ages and diverse backgrounds. It was a joyful celebration of Jewish unity, pride, values, and delicious challah! Photos: Paperny Family JCC.



Happy Chanukah to everyone!



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JFSC extends a heartfelt Yasher Koach to Communications Specialist Lisa Thomson for her distinguished induction into the Canadian Rockies Ski Racing Hall of Fame. It is a well-deserved honour.

The amazing skills that she has honed on the slopes - camaraderie, dedication, confidence, kindness and a commitment to inclusion are a source of inspiration to us all. We are blessed to have Lisa as a friend and colleague.

ALBERTA Jewish News

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Second Voices Project: An impactful tool for Holocaust Education

By Regan Treewater-Lipes

On November 9, the Jewish community of Edmonton gathered at Beth Israel Synagogue to remember the horrors of Kristallnacht and to show solidarity in the face of current trends against the world's Jewry. Individuals were greeted with a sobering display of empty chairs in the foyer – each with a poster of one of the 240 people that were taken as hostages during the brutal massacre in southern Israel by Hamas terrorists on October 7. Blue ribbons were available at the door as a sign of support for the safe return of the hostages.

The event opened with an emotional announcement from the provincial government that Holocaust education will be part of the new Alberta curriculum and that resources from the Jewish community will be utilized in the development of these pedagogical approaches. The announcement was met with cheers, applause and a standing ovation.

One of the valuable resources introduced to the local Jewish community by Rabbi Ilana Krygier Lapedes in 2013 is The Second Voices Project which preserves witness testimony of Holocaust survivors while

harnessing the voices of first- and second-generation survivors to help make the material relatable and accessible to students. The project has expanded over the years with heartfelt support and expert guidance and input from many Calgary Jewish Federation volunteers.

The Second Voices Project is a series of testimonials narrating stories of Holocaust survival brought into Alberta schools by second and third-generation descendants. With help from a generous grant from The Government of Alberta and support from the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, Calgary Jewish Federation's Holocaust and Human Rights: Remembrance and Education Department has created a series of multi-media presentations in which children and grandchildren bring their parents' or grandparents' survival testimonies to life for young people, grades four through twelve. Students are able to engage meaningfully with this painful history by learning a survivor's story, and the texture provided by the first- and second-generation perspectives, helps to create a more tangible link between younger audiences and those bearing witness.

Dr. Frances Cyngiser is an active member of the



Jonathan Livergant and his Zayde Sid Cyngiser OBM

Federation's Holocaust Education Department, and a supporter of the Second Voices Project. She has long been a passionate advocate for educating Alberta students about the Holocaust. As part of the Kristallnacht program, she introduced an impactful forty-five-minute Second Voices Project film that integrates testimony from her late father Sidney Cyngiser OBM, with narration by her son and nephew.

The recordings of Sidney Cyngiser's story are excerpts from his Shoah Foundation interview of over

Continued on page 39

Hostage deal *Cont. from page 3*

those releases was subject to an agreement with Israel. Israel rescued one hostage, a soldier, on Oct. 30.

In addition, some of the hostages are known to have died after being taken captive. Others were severely injured before being abducted to Gaza. The condition and location of the remaining hostages may not easily be known. Even those who are alive could be hard to find, in a region where the vast majority of people have been displaced since Oct. 7.

Some of the hostages are soldiers and do not appear to be represented in the deal at all. It also appears that adult men who are not soldiers are not set for imminent release.

Notably, the deal applies only to Israeli hostages. Perhaps dozens of the hostages are foreign nationals who were in Israel as guest workers, including Thai and Filipino citizens and students from Tanzania. (One of them, Clemence Matanga, died in Gaza.) Hamas also took about a dozen U.S. citizens hostage, though most if not all hold Israeli citizenship as well.

Some hostages are not in Hamas' control. Hostages were held by three different terrorist groups in Gaza: Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and a smaller militia. Negotiations have involved only Hamas, which controls Gaza. According to Israeli reports, only 30 of the estimated 40 child hostages are being held by Hamas.

What is Israel giving up to get the hostages back?

According to the contours of the deal reported by Israeli media, Israel will release three Palestinian prisoners for every hostage released, meaning that up to 240 Palestinians will go free. That represents only a tiny fraction of the approximately 5,000 Palestinians held in Israeli prisons prior to Oct. 7.

It's also a much smaller number than the 1,000 prisoners Israel released in 2011 in exchange for Gilad Shalit, a soldier who Hamas had taken hostage five years earlier. As opposed to the 2011 exchange, this time Israel says it has agreed only to release women and minors who did not kill anyone.

Israel is also agreeing to pause its offensive in Gaza for at least four days and to suspend aerial surveillance for six hours a day during that time, in part so Hamas can locate additional hostages. Israeli soldiers will remain in northern Gaza, which they

invaded last month, during the pause.

The number of trucks bringing in humanitarian aid during the pause will increase under the terms of the deal. Two weeks ago, Israel began allowing 100 trucks a day into Gaza, a goal the United States had laid out. Under the deal, that number will increase to 200 a day.

How will this affect Israel's war against Hamas?

A big question is whether and to what extent Israel's war in Gaza will continue after this group of hostages are released. Israel says it plans to resume fighting as soon as the truce expires. But a provision in the reported terms of the deal allows for an extension of the truce if Hamas releases more hostages — 10 freed captives for each additional day of calm.

A lot can happen during a pause in fighting: Both sides can regroup, but there could also be continued talks that would lay the groundwork for a more lasting cessation of hostilities — something protesters around the world and a small but growing group of Democratic lawmakers in the United States support. Israel has so far rejected calls for a permanent ceasefire because its stated goal is to depose Hamas.

Previous Israel-Hamas humanitarian pauses have also been broken — plunging both sides back into the fighting.

Plus, international sentiment that has been firmly on Israel's side up to now could shift. Some, though not all, of Israel's goals have been met, and a pause in the fighting may allow humanitarian groups to assess the devastation. Already, the United States is signaling that it may not support an expansion of Israel's military campaign in southern Gaza without stronger assurances from Israel that it will protect civilians.

According to the Hamas-run Gaza Health Ministry, more than 12,000 Palestinians have been killed in the fighting, though the number does not distinguish between civilians and combatants, and does not say how many have been killed by misfired Palestinian rockets.

Who helped broker the deal?

Both the United States and Qatar acted as go-betweens for Israel and Hamas, which refuse to negotiate directly. Both are already involved in the fighting: The United States has stood firmly behind Israel's military campaign in Gaza and provides it with aid, while Qatar is the home base of Hamas' political

leadership.

This is far from the first time Israel and Hamas have conducted indirect negotiations. During their last major round of conflict, in 2021, Egypt brokered a ceasefire with the support of Jordan and the United States.

Does everyone in Israel support the deal?

No. Members of the far-right bloc in the government said they oppose a deal, calling it short-sighted. The Religious Zionist party, led by Bezael Smotrich, issued a statement calling it "bad for Israel's security, bad for the hostages, and bad for the soldiers of the IDF."

Their argument is that sending Palestinian prisoners back into Gaza lays the groundwork for future attacks. Yahya Sinwar, the mastermind of Oct. 7, was released from an Israeli prison in the 2011 prisoner exchange. The far-right lawmakers also say Israel will be demonstrating that it is willing to make compromises to win back hostages, potentially raising the cost to get the rest of the hostages out.

Family members of the hostages have clashed with the far right in calling for their relatives' release. At a meeting in Israel's parliament this week, far-right legislators yelled at family members of the hostages and one accused them of supporting Hamas.

Other right-wing parties have said they will support the deal, giving it far more than enough support to clear a government vote.

Wishing the community a Happy Chanukah!



MLA Adriana LaGrange
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Happy Chanukah to the Jewish Community

Birthright cancels Israel trips for December

By Andrew Lapin

(JTA) — Birthright Israel has canceled its trips that had been scheduled for December due to safety concerns from the ongoing Israel-Hamas war, reportedly the first time in its history the group has pulled programs due to war in the region.

A Birthright spokesperson told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency the group expects to resume trips soon. The nonprofit's CEO Gidi Mark told eJewishPhilanthropy that the trips could resume before the end of the year if the situation in Israel becomes "more stable."

Launched in 1999, the organization's free trips to Israel for Jewish young adults have become a staple of many Jews' college or post-college experiences, though participation in the program has waned in recent years. Funding for the organization has also been

jeopardized after losing some major donors in recent years. The only previous time the organization has canceled trips was at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

During previous periods of violence in the region, in 2014, 2015, 2018 and 2019, Birthright continued trips as scheduled but altered them to avoid violent areas, according to eJewishPhilanthropy. That meant, in 2019, that trips briefly avoided visiting the same Gaza border communities that were massacred on Oct. 7 of this year. The Kibbutz Movement, which represents some of those communities, criticized Birthright at the time for its decision, saying the move ran contrary to Zionist values.



TAGLIT BIRTHRIGHT ISRAEL

Last month the organization had denied rumors of the December trips' cancellations to JTA, saying that they were still on schedule. Birthright typically schedules many winter tours to Israel for college students starting in mid-December.

In the meantime, Birthright is getting hands-on with the current conflict in other ways. The organization is now running a program to bring alumni back to Israel to volunteer in agriculture and donation centers while the country's workforce is being redirected to the war. Those joining in are part of a wave of volunteers looking to fill in the gaps in the country's agriculture and other industries. Unlike its regular Israel trips, participants in this program are required to buy their own flights and travel insurance.

Though the organization normally bills itself as not political, Birthright also launched a social media campaign to encourage alumni to share positive posts about Israel to combat anti-Israel sentiment on social platforms in the wake of Oct. 7. Noa Bauer, a marketing executive for Birthright based in Israel, told JTA last month, "I think this is the time for Birthright to make sure that every alumni stands up for Israel."

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New York Rangers star Adam Fox partners with local bagel chain

By Jacob Gurvis

(New York Jewish Week) — At only 25 years old, New York Rangers star defenseman Adam Fox has already accomplished plenty.

The Jewish Long Island native was a star player at Harvard University. In 2021 he became the first Jewish player to win a major NHL award when he was named the league's best defenseman. He's also a two-time All-Star.

Now Fox, who got off to a hot start this season before suffering an injury on Nov. 2, is adding a different kind of achievement to his resume: one that comes coated in sesame seeds.

On Nov. 14, Fox announced a new partnership with Brooklyn Bagel and Coffee Company, which is routinely ranked among the best and most popular bagel spots in the city. Curiously, despite the name, the mini-chain has three locations in Astoria, Queens and two in Manhattan — and none in Brooklyn.

"As a Jewish Kid from Long Island a bagel partnership is something I am extremely excited about," Fox said in a press release. "For as long as I can remember, bagels have been a part of every family gathering. Now playing in New York, I have had the opportunity to explore some of the best food in the world, and yet nothing feels like home quite like an egg

& cheese on a bagel."

Fox's new venture will include a video series, aptly named "Bagels and Fox," where Fox will interview a number of internet personalities, including Ben Soffer, the Jewish influencer and podcast host known by his Instagram handle "BoyWithNoJob."

Fox will also have a new menu item named after him at all Brooklyn Bagel locations: "The Foxy," a sesame bagel with fried eggs, lox, cream cheese and tomato. The new sandwich is available starting Thursday. And Fox will make an appearance behind the counter Thursday morning at the chain's Chelsea location.

"We're absolutely thrilled to announce our incredible partnership with none other than the NY Rangers' superstar, Adam Fox!" Brooklyn Bagel founder Pete Voyiatzis said in the press release.

This is not Fox's first food-related sponsorship deal — he partnered with Dunkin' Donuts last year.

Fox, who grew up a Rangers fan in Jericho, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency last year that his parents and brother attend most home games. He said he cherishes the opportunity to represent his local Jewish community in the NHL.

"There are a lot of Jewish residents on Long Island, so it's cool for me to represent that community," Fox said. "And, you know, there's not many Jewish athletes.



Adam Fox during a game at Nationwide Arena in Columbus, Ohio, Oct. 14, 2023. (Kirk Irwin/Getty Images)

So to be one of the few and have people who come from where I come from look up to me... I think it's definitely pretty special."

Merch market

Cont. from page 23

as offering the widest array of products and the lowest proportion of "fails," or products that miss the mark religiously, culturally or aesthetically.

"They have really stepped it up," Buechler said. "Target also carries the Nickelodeon 'Rugrats' Hanukkah sweatshirts that are just brilliant. ... I would definitely say they get the biggest 'yay' for this year."

Target, which has a track record of using inclusive imagery in its advertisements and in-store promotions, declined to answer questions about its offerings, including how much bigger its Hanukkah collection is this year than in the past and how widely the products for Jewish buyers have been distributed. But a spokesperson said the feeling Wymer-Santiago and Stein described after visiting their local stores is exactly what the company is trying to cultivate.

"Target is committed to creating an inclusive guest experience in which all guests feel represented," the spokesperson wrote in an email. The spokesperson noted that Target's Hanukkah assortment "was developed in collaboration with Jewish team members and input from our Jewish employee resource group" and crosses several of the retailer's in-house brands.

One of those lines, Opalhouse by Jungalow, was created by a Jewish artist, Justina Blakeney. Last year, Blakeney's first Hanukkah collection included plates

and pillows, as well as a gold menorah shaped like a dove. This year, Blakeney added new pillow designs and a clay menorah.

"If I could go back in time and tell elementary-school-aged Justina (or 'Tina' as I was called back then) that I would have a chance to design a Hanukkah collection for Target, I would have lost my mind," she wrote in an October blog post revealing the collection.

Hanukkah goods have always been widely available through Jewish merchandisers and at synagogue bazaars — but those products have been available only to people who already engaged in Jewish communities. Amazon and other online retailers have increased access, but only for people who are hunting for Hanukkah supplies. A Hanukkah aisle at Target, in contrast, reaches the many Jews who may not already have robust holiday traditions.

Stein, who said she particularly regretted not snapping up a marble dreidel sculpture that quickly sold out at Target, said she saw only benefits in promoting major retailers' Hanukkah offerings, even if doing so has made her something of an unpaid advertiser at times.

"Right now, especially with the rise of antisemitism, if there are ways that we can spur Jewish joy — and for me, that's by sharing and inspiring people with different kinds of Hanukkah merch and home decor and jewelry — I think that's great," she said.

Not everyone is thrilled by the shift in the marketplace. The sweeping Hanukkah displays are drawing criticism from those who have long lamented

that the American primacy of Christmas has caused Jews to focus too much on a minor holiday, while leaving holidays with more religious significance relatively uncelebrated.

"I think: What would it feel like to see a giant Shavuot display?" Wymer-Santiago said.

The fast-fashion aspect of the big-box retailers' offerings, many of which are imported from China, also raises concerns about whether easy access to trendy Judaica comes at environmental and cultural costs.

"How about we don't extract fossil fuels to make crap that no one needs and that makes Jewish communities less distinctive?" asked Dan Friedman, a writer and longtime climate activist, though he emphasized that systemic change, rather than tweaks to purchasing decisions by Jewish consumers, is needed to avert climate catastrophe.

For Buechler and others, the benefits of a mass-market Hanukkah merchandise boom outweigh any possible drawbacks.

"As a rabbi, I am all for anything that will make Hanukkah celebrations more engaging and potentially lengthen a family celebration," said Buechler. One of her favorite purchases was of a Hanukkah sweater for lizards that she bought for a friend's guinea pig.

"I really do believe that owning different kinds of Hanukkah merch, whether apparel or otherwise, will increase the likelihood that a family will celebrate with friends with family for more nights than they would have last year," she added.

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Happy Chanukah
from Marilyn Anderson
and Jim Ball




Happy Chanukah
from
Sam & Lauren Bell and family




Wishing family & friends
all the best this Chanukah
from John & Linda Barron
and family



Chag Chanukah Sameach
from Robbie Babins-Wagner
& Neil Wagner and Family



Chag Chanukah
Sameach
from Jeanette and
Rudy Berger




Wishing family & friends
all the best this Chanukah
from Sheila Bermack and family


Chag Chanukah Sameach
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Wishing family & friends a peaceful
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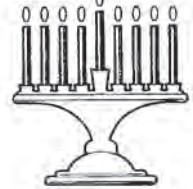
Wishing family & friends
all the best this Chanukah
from Faye and Warren Book




Wishing family & friends
all the best this Chanukah
from Annabelle Bondar



from Marnie,
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& Chloe Bondar



Chag Chanukah Sameach
from
Shirley & Al Chafetz




חנה נהנה ען
from Judy Shapiro and
Richard Bronstein and family



Let the light shine this
Chanukah and every day.
Am Yisrael Chai.

Wishing family & friends
all the best this Chanukah
from Harvey Cyngiser




Let the light shine this Chanukah
and every day this year!


from Sandy & Bernie Corenblum
and family

Wishing everyone
a Chanukah filled with love,
light, health & hope

from
Kim, Alex,
Adam, and
Zach Chulsky




Chag Chanukah Sameach.
We stand with Israel.
from Faith Dubisky
and family



from
Judith Hagan-Conn



Wishing family & friends
all the best this Chanukah
from Bronia Cyngiser




Happy Chanukah
to the entire community
from Michele Doctoroff,
Ted and Sydney Switzer

Let the light shine this
Chanukah and every day.
Am Yisrael Chai.

Let the light shine this Chanukah
and every day. Am Yisrael Chai.

We wish everyone a happy
& healthy Chanukah

from
Phyllis D'Aguiar



from Ruth Dvorkin,
Susan Dvorkin, Dara,
Spencer & Josh



from Sam, Cindy,
Rebekah &
Josh Feldman



Wishing the entire
community a
Happy Chanukah



from the
Balaban
family

Have a happy Chanukah filled
with good food, family, and light



from
Alvin Libin
and
Bobby Libin
and family

Happy Chanukah
to the entire community
from Maxine & Milt Fischbein



Happy Chanukah to the entire
community from Gabriella, Aviva,
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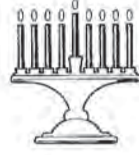
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from Sandy Fayerman



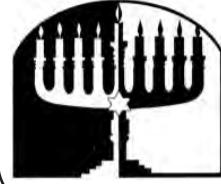
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Louise Glin
and family



Happy Chanukah
to the entire community
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Bruce Girvitz and family

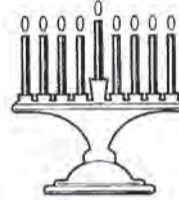


Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled
with love, light, health & hope
from
Cheryl, Jason,
Jacob &
Gabrielle Gurevitch



Debbie and Nelson Halpern
and family wish you
a
Chanukah Sameach.
חג חנוכה שמח

Wishing everyone
a Chanukah filled with love,
light, health & hope
from
Therese Groner
and Family

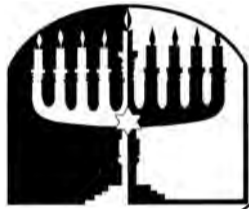


Chag Chanukah Sameach.
We stand with Israel.
from Vivian and Ben Herman

Let the light shine this Chanukah
and every day. Am Yisrael Chai.
from
Arlein Hoffman
Chetner & family



Let the light shine this Chanukah
and every day. Am Yisrael Chai.
from Eva &
Gordy Hoffman
and family



Wishing everyone a Chanukah
filled with love, light, health & hope
from Darryl,
Alli, Joseph
& Leo Gurevitch



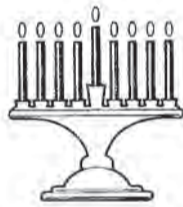
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Susan & David Inhaber
and family



Have a happy Chanukah
filled with good food,
family, and light.
from
Janis & Brian Kowall
and Family



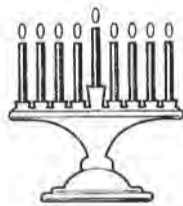
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and every day. Am Yisrael Chai.
from
Jackie and
Hayim Hamburger
& family



Chag Chanukah Sameach.
We stand with Israel.
from Rhonda Barad,
Steve Kaganov & Family
Wishing family & friends
all the best this Chanukah
from Lea Kohn and Family



Wishing family & friends
a peaceful & illuminating Chanukah.
from the
Mel Ksienski
Family



Wishing the community
all the best
for this Chanukah!
from
Rabbi Cantor Russell G. Jayne
&
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We stand with Israel.
from
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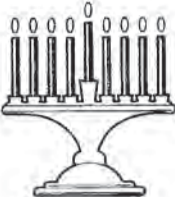
Have a happy Chanukah filled with
good food, family and light.
from
Saundra &
Harold Lipton
& family





Wishing everyone
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filled with love,
light, health
& hope
from
Jenny Belzberg


 *Chag Chanukah Sameach*
from
Helena Barker
& *Israel Lachovsky*

Wishing family & friends all the best this Chanukah from Cheryl, Rob, Danielle, and Jarrett Milner


Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled with love, light, health & laughter

from
Miriam Milavsky
and family

Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled with love, light, health & hope

from
The Oppenheim Family

Wishing family & friends a joyful and illuminating Chanukah

from
Walter Moscovitz

Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled with love, light, health & hope.

from
Roz Mendelson
&
David Hodgins

Chag Chanukah Sameach. We stand with Israel.
from
Roz & Danny Oppenheim


Chag Chanukah Sameach. We stand with Israel.
Beth & Lorne Price and family



Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled with love, light, health & laughter from the Molotsky Family

Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled with love, light, health & hope
from
Raechelle, Lorne, Shoshanna and Leo Paperny


Wishing family and friends all the best this Chanukah


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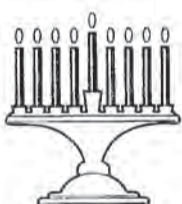
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from *Al Osten*



Chag Chanukah Sameach. We stand with Israel.
from the *Prasow, Ginzberg and Blanchard families*


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from
Esther & Gary Silberg



Happy Chanukah to the entire community from *Robert, Jennifer, Brixton and Harrison Preece*


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from
Ron Plucer and family


Let the light shine this Chanukah and every day. Am Yisrael Chai.
from *Hilda & Lenny Smith and family*


Chag Chanukah Sameach. We stand with Israel.
from *Irene and Stuart Ross and family*


Let the light shine this Chanukah and every day. Am Yisrael Chai.
from
Carol Ryder


Chag Chanukah Sameach. We stand with Israel.
from
Cheryl & Morley Shore




Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled with love, light, health & hope

Esther and Sam Plucer

חג אורים שמח
Wishing the entire community a Happy Chanukah
from
Zohar & David Wallach


*Chag Chanukah Sameach
from Bev Sklar,
Lorne Tucker & Family*

*Chag Chanukah Sameach.
We stand with Israel.
from Evelyn Sheftel Shapiro
& family*

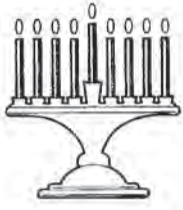


*Chag Chanukah Sameach.
We stand with Israel. Marg Semel,
Adam Singer, Rachel and Hanna*

*Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled
with love, light, health & hope*

*Let the light shine this Chanukah
and every day. Am Yisrael Chai.*

*Happy Chanukah
from
Mary & Ken Taub*

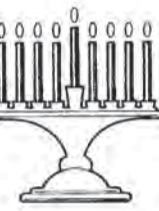


*from
Drew & Ronnie
Staffenberg*



*from
Gail &
Brian Sidorsky
and family*

*Have a happy Chanukah filled with
good food, family, and light.*



*from
Gail, Dean, Bryan,
Ellie, Matthew,
& Rayna Staniloff*

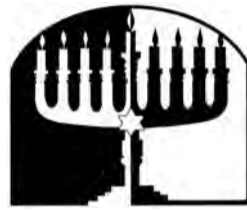
*Let the light shine this
Chanukah and every day.
Am Yisrael Chai.*

*Have a happy Chanukah filled with
good food, family, and light.*

*from
Stan and
Carey Smith
& family*



*from
Ron and Helmi Switzer
and Family*



*Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled
with love, light, health & hope*



*from
Wynne &
Harvey Thal*

*Wishing everyone a Chanukah
filled with love, light,
and good health*

*Wishing family & friends
all the best this Chanukah
from Diana Kalef, Elliott, Jonah
and Micah Steinberg*



*from
Dorothy Hanson,
Sheldon Shagal
& family*

*Wishing family & friends
all the best this Chanukah
from Jessica, Joshua,
Zoey, and Max Switzer*

*Wishing family and friends
all the best this Chanukah*



*from
Arlene, David,
Michael and
Erin Holmes*

*Have a happy Chanukah
filled with good food,
family, and light.*

*Chag Chanukah Sameach to the
entire community. Am Yisrael Chai.*



*from Mark &
Amalia Mandel
and
MHM Professional
Corporation*



*from
Jerry and
Fay z"l
Schwartz*


*Let the light shine this Chanukah
and every day. Am Yisrael Chai.*

*Our hearts are one with our beloved Israel
May there be light and peace ahead
With our shared family*

*from
Marina Paperny
& Shep Sector
and family*

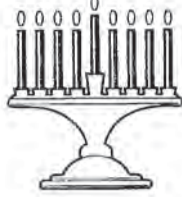


*Am Yisrael Chai
Sandy and
Larry Martin*

 Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled with love, light, health and hope from
Linda & Gary Wolf

Happy Chanukah to everyone!
From
Laura Moser & Mike Fischer


Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled with love, light, health & hope
from
Dalia, Allan, Tammy and Mark Wolinsky



Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled with love, light, health & hope
from
the Zivot Family




Grateful for life's blessings and strengthened by our beliefs, to all we wish peace, good health and a Hanukkah filled with good food, family and light.




Darlene Switzer Foster, Bill Foster and family

Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled with love, light, health & hope.



from
Marilyn Libin & Jed Gaines

 **Happy Chanukah to the entire community**
From all of us at Alberta Jewish News: **Deb Shatz, Dan Moser, Sandra Edwards, Sandy Fayerman and Maxine Fischbein.**
Thank you to everyone who participated with a Chanukah greeting this month. We appreciate you!



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happy
HANUKKAH
from
Nagwan Al-Guneid
MLA FOR CALGARY-GLENMORE

Unity through Music: A concert for Israel at the JCC



On October 29, we gathered together in community bringing much needed light and hope. Over 120 friends and allies attended Unity Through Music: A Concert for Israel at the JCC, raising over \$4,000 for Calgary Jewish Federation's Israel Emergency Fund. Performers included Ze'ev Berger and the Schmoozers, the JCC Voices Adult Choir and other local musicians. Todah Rabah to all who supported, donated, attended, and performed at this wonderful event. Photos: Calgary Jewish Federation

Sfenj: Moroccan Hanukkah Donuts Recipe

By Carine Goren

(Noshers via JTA) - I was never able to pronounce the name of this pastry correctly. Sfenj actually means "sponge," and these are indeed spongy, springy and full of air bubbles. I learned this recipe from my friend and pastry chef Ruta, and here it is, with a few minor adjustments. In my family, sfenj are consumed in three different ways: mom likes them plain; most of the family (including yours truly) prefer them sugar-coated; and my own private chef heats up some honey in the microwave oven and dips them between bites.

Allow for at least two sfenj per person; I am yet to meet anybody who can stop at one.

Ingredients

- 7 cups (1kg) all-purpose flour
- 2 Tbsp (17g) active dry yeast
- ½ cup (100g) sugar, plus more for rolling
- ½ tsp salt
- 3½ cups (800ml) lukewarm water, divided
- 1 ½ qt (1.5L) vegetable oil, for deep-frying

Directions

In the largest bowl you have, mix the flour and yeast. Add the sugar and salt, and mix with the flour. Pour in about half the water, and begin kneading with your hands—fingers spread open, using lifting motions from the bottom of the bowl to the surface of the dough. Gradually add (all!) the remaining water, and knead for another minute, and no more! This dough must not be over-kneaded. It is very loose, and that's okay.

Cover in plastic wrap and set aside to rise, until doubled in bulk. With very wet (dripping with water) hands, work the dough to let out the air (it will return to its original volume). Cover, and let rise again until doubled in bulk. This second rising will be a lot shorter, so you may begin heating up your oil. In a wide pot, heat the oil to 325°F (160°C) on a deep-frying thermometer.

Dip your hands in a bowl of cold oil or water. Pinch a ball of dough (tangerine size) and pull it up. With your other hand, pinch under it to cut it off the rest of the dough. Holding the ball of dough with both hands, insert your finger in its center to create a hole, and stretch until the hole is about 1 inch (3.8cm) in diameter. Carefully place the bagel shape into the hot oil. Repeat with the rest of the dough (not forgetting to dip your hands in cold oil or water occasionally).

Deep-fry until sfenj are golden, 2–3 minutes on each side. Put the fried sfenj on a paper towel to soak up the excess oil. Dip each sfenj in a bowl of sugar to coat, and serve immediately.



*Grandma Knows Best: Sfenj must be prepared and fried when they are meant to be served. Don't prepare this dough ahead of time, and don't put it in the refrigerator. When cold, it is hard to work with, and it goes sour very quickly (within 4 hours).

This story and recipe come from the book *Traditional Jewish Baking* by Carine Goren. It was first published on *The Noshers*.



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from the

Sources

by Eliezer Segal

“When the wicked Greek Empire arose...”

The familiar Hanukkah story begins with the emperor Antiochus IV “Epiphanes” outlawing the practice of the Jewish religion and compelling the Jews of his domain to observe heathen rites devoted to Greek deities.

This narrative is found in the most detailed chronicle of the events, the works known as the Books of Maccabees, and in its general outlines it is consistent with other ancient versions.

And yet it is precisely that aspect of the story that historians have found baffling.

Why should Antiochus have wanted to tamper with Judaism in the first place?

If you learned about Hanukkah in a traditional Jewish setting, then this question might strike you as superfluous. Isn't it obvious that disdain for Jews and Judaism is built into the fabric of gentile culture? Haven't idolatrous nations always felt threatened by the ethical monotheism that challenges their immoral lifestyles? In these respects there is no difference between Antiochus and all the other malevolent oppressors of history.

In reality, however, the historical context of Hanukkah is quite distinct. The hellenistic régimes that ruled the Mediterranean basin had an admirable record for respecting their subjects' religious traditions. This was true of the Ptolemaic dynasty centred in Egypt, which governed Judea in the third and second centuries B.C.E.; and more so of the Seleucids, based in Syria, who dominated from the early second century. Antiochus III, father of the Hanukkah villain, actively supported Jewish religious institutions (as a reward for their backing him against his Ptolemaic rivals); he channelled resources for the upkeep of Jerusalem and its temple, and granted the Jews a large measure of political and cultic autonomy.

At any rate, Antiochus IV's aggressive religious persecution marked a radical departure from any

previous imperial policy, and it is not explained satisfactorily by the ancient historians.

It has been suggested that Antiochus's eccentric personality is enough to account for his anti-Jewish policies without having to seek any deeper reasons. In ways that call to mind the bizarre antics of Roman emperors like Caligula or Nero, he had a reputation for mingling among the commoners and bestowing elaborate gifts on complete strangers.

There are some scholars who see Antiochus's persecution of Judaism as a natural outgrowth of the ideology of hellenism which was driven by a missionary urge to civilize the barbarian peoples. Unlike other subject nations, the Jews did not possess a pantheon of gods that could be conveniently grafted onto the Greek pantheon. That fact would have vexed Antiochus.

Some scholars have proposed that economics furnished the main motive for Antiochus' strange policy. Pressures on the royal treasury were exacerbated by debts to Rome, by a lengthy military campaign by the Seleucids against their Ptolemaic rivals, and by Antiochus' own extravagant lifestyle. This impelled him to support factions in the Jewish community who were ready to tolerate his pilfering of sacred treasures of the Jerusalem temple, and to ruthlessly suppress traditionalists who resisted such sacrilege.

Antiochus might even have absorbed some of his attitudes during a period that he spent as a political hostage in Rome, where he could have observed Roman policies like the outlawing of certain religious cults or the forcing of hellenism on some ethnic minorities.

One hypothesis goes so far as to suggest that the whole story of Antiochus's persecutions should be treated with skepticism, because the Hasmonean propagandists who composed the books of Maccabees might simply have been recycling a standard motif

of Babylonian royal propaganda that liked to depict the current monarch as the restorers of the ancestral religion that had been suppressed by their predecessors.

One of the most popular theories was formulated eloquently by the eminent twentieth-century historian Elias Bickerman. He insisted that the impetus for Antiochus' suppression

of traditional Judaism is not to be sought in Seleucid ideological or political interests, but rather, the king was drawn into the sectarian infighting of Jewish factions in Jerusalem. There were influential groups, led by prominent members of the priesthood, who were determined to modernize their religion so as to integrate better with the cosmopolitan hellenistic culture that defined civilization for much of the world. Their radical ideology aroused so much opposition among the Jewish traditionalists that its proponents had to solicit support from the Seleucid government.

The preceding scenario finds strong support in the narratives of the books of Maccabees and in the biblical book of Daniel, which reflects the concerns of traditionalists on the eve of the Hasmonean revolt.

Howsoever we might choose to assess the merits of Bickerman's theory, it has been called into question for another reason: the historian was accused of anachronistically imposing his personal perspectives on the historical facts. In particular, his descriptions of the assimilationist forces in ancient Jerusalem seemed significantly shaped by the experiences of the radical Jewish reformers in Germany (as well as of Jewish communists in Russia) who had sought futilely to gain acceptance by abandoning Jewish beliefs and practices. The fragmented Jewish communities were therefore unable to offer effective resistance to the rising Nazi party.

It did not help Bickerman's credibility that a very similar equation of ancient hellenists with modern reformers had been proposed by a prominent nineteenth-century theological apologist for Jewish orthodoxy, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch.

Academic scholars tend to be very suspicious of attempts to view the events of the past through contemporary lenses. Nevertheless, there is no denying that human nature remains constant over the ages; so it does not seem inherently implausible that internal communal discord could render us vulnerable to attacks from our enemies. Recent experiences confirm, of course, that irrational hatred of Jews and Judaism is indeed a persistent historical phenomenon.

Bickerman's enthusiastic praises for the Maccabean resistance to oppression, in a work published in 1937, offered encouragement to Jews suffering under the Nazi persecutions.

So too, we might find legitimate encouragement in the historical lesson of a united Jewish nation successfully combating the onslaughts of our haters and oppressors.



May the lights of Hanukkah shine bright on you, your family & Alberta's Jewish community.

United Conservative caucus

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'From the Sources' by Eliezer Segal is sponsored by the Zeisler Families of Calgary, Edmonton, New York and Los Angeles

Wishing you a Chanukah filled with wonder, warmth, and happiness.

The Zeisler Family



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Second Voices Project

Cont. from page 29

five hours. In her speech to the audience at Beth Israel Synagogue, Dr. Cyngiser commented, “In the face of Holocaust denial, my father made a tireless commitment to bear witness – believing that hope for the future begins with truth about the past. It became a way for him to give his survival meaning. Guided by integrity, humility, quiet generosity, and a firm belief in doing the right thing, he brought his story to thousands.”

Born in Lodz, Poland, Sidney Cyngiser never returned to the country of his birth after liberation. “In 2005 he and my mother attended a commemoration in Germany, but my father never did go back to Poland. The idea of it was too painful for him. To see the void left by the world he once knew no longer being there was too excruciating,” Dr. Cyngiser explained in a recent interview with *Alberta Jewish News*. “Our parents never sat us down to explain what the Holocaust was; they wanted to protect us. We knew that our parents had lost their families, and so they surrounded themselves with other survivors. As a child, I was barely conscious of the fact that my parents had accents because everyone in their circle had accents,” she continued. “Things would be presented to us as they came up. Like my mother telling us not to throw away bread – she would say that food should never be thrown away. What if we didn’t have food? Or being told not to talk back to my mother because I’m lucky to have a mother.”

For a couple who lived through such atrocities, raising a family in Calgary was a welcomed opportunity to rebuild, until the insidious threat of Holocaust-denial compounded their lived trauma by allowing hate-speech to masquerade as pseudo-scholarship. Bronia Cyngiser used to answer when asked about her tattooed number: “Oh it’s my phone number; I’m just forgetful.”

In the face of Holocaust-denial she vowed never to stay silent again. Together, Sidney and Bronia Cyngiser took upon themselves the duty of giving voice to the millions lost in Europe, by telling their stories. How fitting that Sidney Cyngiser’s very voice, and the voices of two of his grandsons now are being used to

safeguard the sanctity of history for junior high and high school students throughout Alberta.

“When we were first approached by the Second Voices Project, we knew that we wanted it to be the grandchildren lending their voices to support their grandparents’ stories,” noted Dr. Cyngiser. “There’s a certain relatability for a younger generation this way, I think.” Her son and nephew narrate along with their grandfather, while another nephew and Cyngiser’s daughter narrate for her mother, Bronia Cyngiser’s video.

Dr. Cyngiser has accompanied her father’s video to be screened at two schools to date, and she has been pleased by the thoughtfulness of the students’ questions. “It isn’t easy for me to watch the film on these occasions; it is very emotional for me.”

As Maxine Fischbein noted in the *Alberta Jewish News*’ obituary for Sidney Cyngiser: “Sid found much solace in memories of his happy childhood, though he was robbed of most of his youth after.” Films, like Sidney and Bronia Cyngiser’s, that archive Holocaust history through the Second Voices Project focus not only on the horrors of the Second World War, but also on life before and after.

“When my father would go and speak to students, they would always ask ‘So, what is your life like now?’ That’s why I think it’s critical to explain the lives that people had before the Holocaust, and what people managed to become and achieve afterwards,” Dr. Cyngiser elaborated.

Her father had a good life before the Second World War, and because of his strength and fortitude, he built a good life after. “I don’t know if he was compelled to write before the War,” commented Dr. Cyngiser. “But he was certainly driven to write after the War. He would write bits and pieces of his story on everything – any scrap of paper. When I began going through his things after his passing, there were so many notes everywhere.”

Although Sidney Cyngiser questioned where G-d was during his harrowing struggle to survive, he also maintained a strong sense of his identity. “My father was forced to do slave labor in a quarry. He worked twelve hours straight breaking apart and moving rocks. They would give out a small ration of bread for the day. One Yom Kippur, my father, who was seventy-

four pounds by the end of the War, fasted.” Dr. Cyngiser characterizes this as an act of resistance, and not faith, but the message could not be clearer: am Israel chai!

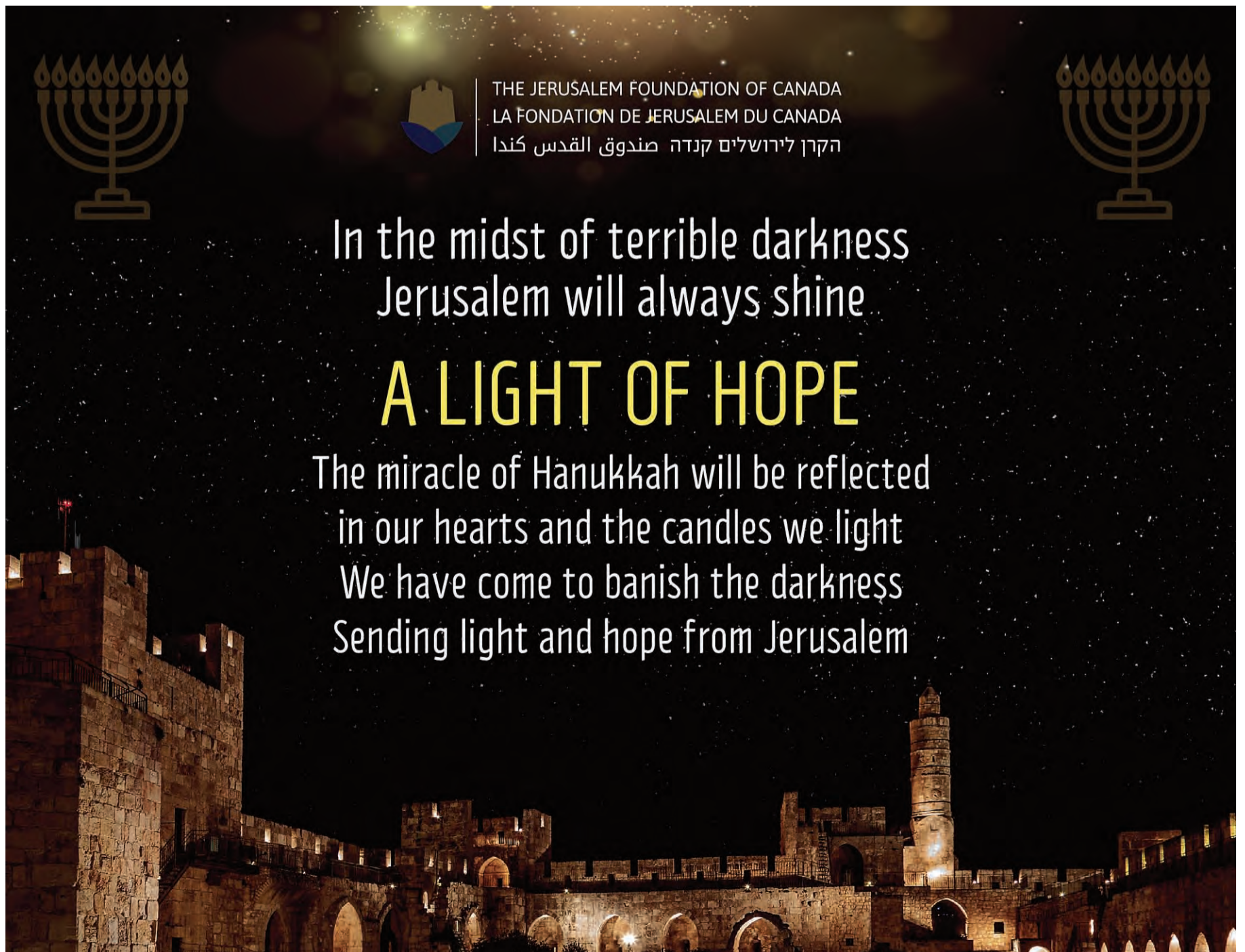
Dr. Cyngiser noted also that her father, although not shomer Shabbos, never missed services at Beth Tzedec Congregation in Calgary. “He davened daily in the final months of his life.” She paints the portrait of a man who was dragged through the depths of Hell and survived, finding that the only connection to his former life and family was through embracing his Jewish identity. Sidney Cyngiser wrote: “Religion to me is teaching how to deal kindly and honestly with my fellow man. Religion is working towards a better tomorrow, and a kinder world – a world without wars, hatred, and revenge.” Dr. Cyngiser noted: “He was proud to be Jewish, and we were raised with these values.”

As Jews around the globe and their allies collectively pray for the safe return of the hostages imprisoned in Gaza, one cannot help but acknowledge the halting revelation that only eighty-five years after Kristallnacht, pogrom-style violence is again being orchestrated against the Jewish people on a mass scale. More than ever the lessons of the Holocaust are imminently relevant, and it is critical that younger generations understand the magnitude of what took place in the name of a perverse vision of ‘social progress’ not so long ago.

Sidney Cyngiser’s film was exceptionally well received by the Edmonton Jewish community, many of whom knew him well. His film, that of his wife, and many others are readily available to schools in Alberta wishing to provide quality education to their students. Through efforts like the Second Voices Project, and others, the global community can work to ensure that ‘never again’ means ‘NOW!’ As Sidney Cyngiser would say: “To not speak out is to be an accomplice.”

For more information on accessing the SVP or other resources contact holocaustedu@jewishcalgary.org to determine which testimonial would work best for your classroom needs. These free presentations generally run 90 minutes in length and allow for questions at the end. The presentations are offered in person as well as virtually.

Regan Treewater-Lipes is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.



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