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It starts at the Seder table



Judy Zelikovitz

By Judy Zelikovitz

This year, the Jewish community will greet Passover with mixed emotions. On a holiday where we celebrate the 3,500-year-old Exodus from Egyptian slavery to freedom, we also mourn the modern-day hostages held captive for so long and the loss of those who will never return to their loved ones.

Passover offers a unique opportunity for families and friends to gather around the Seder table, retell the story of the Exodus from Egypt, eat symbolic foods, and, most challenging of all, attempt to keep the younger children engaged until the meal.

It can be difficult to explain to our children the enduring importance of Passover – a tale of survival,

courage, and resilience. The story of the Jewish people facing an impossible obstacle and conquering it, of our people standing up against oppression, proud of our Jewish identity – confronting and overcoming baseless hatred.

In the past year, Jewish students have been made to feel othered, embarrassed, threatened, and, sometimes, compelled to hide their Jewish identity. Since October 7, online Jew-hatred and anti-Israel vitriol have become all too common. While cities, overrun by hate-filled protests, seem almost completely desensitized to the hate, we see our children suffering.

An excerpt from the *Passover Haggadah* reminds us that “in every generation, one must see oneself as having personally come forth from Egypt...and you will tell your child on that day...” As we sit down at the Seder table this year, we will, once again, tell the next generation the story of the Jewish people’s victory against oppression and that pride in our identity is the way to fight oppression.

The younger guests at our Seder table – our children, our grandchildren, our nieces and nephews – are the next generation of leaders. It will be their responsibility to challenge antisemitism head-on, and it’s our responsibility to educate them on how to do it.

CIJA remains committed to protecting the quality of

Jewish life in Canada. Our team is working with government officials to advocate for the introduction of safe access (bubble) legislation to protect schools and places of worship from the threat of violence or harassment. We are also advocating to enforce existing legislation that combats online and real-world hate.

We continue to demand accountability from social media platforms, institutions, and organizations. We urge the government to support the provinces’ education for judges, crown attorneys, and law enforcement regarding antisemitism and hate crimes. We continue to stand by our policy priorities that include advocating for community safety, for maintaining public order, and fighting antisemitism in schools and on campus.

The community, after a long year and a half, is tired. Some of us are scared. And yet, we remain proud. We know more work must be done to protect ourselves, our children, and our Jewish identity. So, this year, as we retell our ancestors’ story to our children, we are reminded that we remember the past to protect our present – and our children’s future. It starts at the Seder table. But it doesn’t end there.

Judy Zelikovitz is Vice President, University and Local Partner Services, at The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

'More than Just a Vote' launched to mobilize Jews in upcoming election

On March 23, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) launched *More Than Just a Vote*, a campaign to mobilize Canadian Jews in the upcoming federal election. Amidst rising antisemitism and threats to our shared Canadian values, CIJA is calling on the community to act by voting, mobilizing others, and engaging candidates about the issues that matter.

"The Jewish community has always punched above its weight, whether in academia or professional fields, business or philanthropy, or arts and culture," said Elan Pratzter, CIJA's National Chair of the Board. "This election calls on us to punch above our weight in Canadian democracy by taking meaningful actions

that will make Canada a better home for all who share our values – and a place where Jewish life can continue to thrive."

The campaign invites Canadian Jews and our allies to see casting one's ballot as just the first step to making an impact. It encourages them to take additional actions throughout the election, such as bringing others to the polls, engaging with candidates, volunteering, and helping mobilize their networks. With many ridings decided by a small margin, every vote – and every action – counts.

"*More Than Just a Vote* will empower our

community to fight for the core Canadian principles that have enabled Jews and people of all walks of life to thrive," said Noah Shack, CIJA's Interim President. "From ensuring our physical security to accountability for hate, the issues we are raising must be addressed by all candidates and parties, regardless of their political stripe. Their answers matter not only to our community but also to all who care about the Canada we will pass on to future generations."

Together with Jewish Federations across Canada, CIJA will be inviting community organizations – including synagogues, Jewish schools, and Jewish community centres – to join the campaign, spread the word, and share resources and calls-to-action with their members.

To learn more and take action, visit JewishCanadaVotes.ca.

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It starts at the Seder table.
But it doesn't end there.

This year as we retell the Passover story of our Exodus from slavery in Egypt to freedom in Eretz Yisrael, we are reminded that we remember the past to protect our people's present – and our future. The younger guests at our Seder table – our children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews – will be the leaders of tomorrow. They will carry on our traditions and will lead the fight against antisemitism, proud of their Jewish heritage. It's our responsibility to educate them about how to do it. Thankfully, there is something we can all do to engage leaders in all walks of life to ensure the safety and vibrancy of our community.

Sign up at cija.ca to get involved

CIJA

Canadian Jewish Advocacy

The Unending Exodus

By Rabbi Alisa Zilbershtein



Rabbi Alisa Zilbershtein

This season marks liberation. Yet, as we ready ourselves to retell the ancient story of our people's journey from slavery to freedom, many of us carry heavy hearts. Israel endures a devastating war while antisemitism has erupted globally with frightening

The first signs of spring appear in Alberta. Snow begins to recede, revealing patches of earth long dormant. Birds return, their songs breaking winter's silence. In Jewish homes across the province, a different awakening stirs as families prepare for Pesach – clearing chametz, bringing out special dishes, and planning seders.

intensity. Economic uncertainty grips communities, making the promised liberation of spring feel distant – its brightness complicated by shadows that loom large across our world.

Rabbi Yehudah Aryeh Leib Alter, the Gerer Rebbe known as the Sefat Emet, offers an insight that speaks directly to our current moment: "The Exodus from Egypt never ends. In the act of telling about the Exodus, the miracle itself is fulfilled and enhanced."

What does it mean that the miracle is "fulfilled and enhanced" through our telling? This teaching deepens our appreciation of Pesach's timeless wisdom. The miracle of the Exodus transcends history – continuing to unfold through our engagement with it. The seder table becomes a site where ancient liberation actively extends into the present. Through our retellings, the miracle grows and finds new expression. It reflects the Jewish historical consciousness – our foundational stories exist simultaneously in past and present. The miracle that began with our ancestors continues to unfold through our lived experiences today. When we taste the bitter herbs, the ancient suffering becomes immediate, and when we recline as free people, ancient liberation becomes real.

When we tell the story of the Exodus at our seders this year, we participate in this ongoing miracle. The Jewish people continue to move from constriction toward expansiveness, and the miracle unfolds in our

collective journey. Our ancestors left physical Egypt; we continue to leave the various "Egypt" of our time. Their telling became our inheritance; our telling becomes the foundation for generations yet to come.

The Sefat Emet's understanding of Pesach as an ongoing miracle offers a consolation in our present moment. When facing difficulties, we might feel isolated in history – as if our community alone bears these burdens. This teaching reminds us that we stand within a continuing story of liberation that spans centuries. Our struggles connect us to our ancestors who also faced hardships yet continued to move toward freedom.

Spring in Alberta arrives gradually, often interrupted by late snowfalls and cold snaps. Yet despite these setbacks, the season's progression remains inevitable. When we gather at our seder tables this year – amid war, amid hatred, amid uncertainty – we participate in something far greater than remembrance. Through our words, questions and discussions, we fulfill and enhance the very miracle we describe. The miracle that carried our ancestors across the sea carries us still through waters both calm and turbulent. Their liberation and ours form a single, unending story.

Rabbi Alisa Zilbershtein is the Rabbi at Beth Shalom Congregation in Edmonton.

ELLA offers up a wealth of choice for mature learners

By Kathy Kerr

Friends rolled their eyes when I told them I planned to take a course in Canadian constitutional controversies.

They didn't see the attraction of taking a three-week course about dusty political history. But that course, offered last spring by the Edmonton Lifelong Learners Association (ELLA), was engaging enough to keep a room full of mature students in their seats, continuing the discussion well past the end of class.

ELLA non-credit courses for senior adults cover such a breadth and depth of topics that there's bound to be gems for everyone.

Fellow constitution class student Barb Maheu says she was surprised by the behind-the-scenes politics of the 1984 Meech Lake Accord, and enjoyed the sessions on indigenous rights and the constitutional court case centred on the Morgentaler abortion clinics.

The course touched on hot button issues including Alberta sovereignty, climate policy and Quebec language laws.

Class instructor Richard Mailey, the director of U of A's Centre for Constitutional Studies, praises the engagement of ELLA students.

"I love the challenge as a 30-something Irish guy coming into a room with a lot of people who have lived in Canada a long time, have all this experience of

different sectors, had different jobs in different disciplines. They all bring different expertise to the room."

Mailey will be back this spring with a course that will bring in context from the constitutional law in other countries and how Canada compares.

ELLA is offering more than 30 classes from April 28 to May 16 on the U of A campus. Topics range from painting to improvisation, astronomy to origins of the Cold War, the Inca Empire to yoga.

The full course list will be available on the ELLA website, my-ella.com, on March 24 and registration for the spring session begins April 2.





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TT Students participate at the Running Room Indoor Games

By Natalie Soroka

In January, teachers Ari Sniderman and Marlee Soroka made a call out to students in Grades 4-6 interested in trying out for the TT Running Club. Tryouts resulted in a group of approximately 20 students committing to twice-weekly lunch recess practices. In the beginning, sessions focused on warm-up laps in the gym, relay handoff drills, sprinting techniques, and endurance training to enhance long-distance running stamina.

It wasn't long until practices moved to the hallways. The circular design of Talmud Torah School provided an ideal setting for running laps, with hallways resembling a track. Practices were made even more exciting by enthusiastic supporters cheering them on from the hallways.

After months of dedicated training, students were excited to showcase their skills at the Running Room Indoor Games on Friday, February 21, 2025.

Competing in mixed relay teams, as well as the boys' and girls' long jump events and individual 200m events, the students had a valuable opportunity to challenge themselves against peers from various schools and experience different levels of competition in a large-scale setting. Their dedication and effort were evident, as they proudly gave their best in the prestigious athletic environment of the University of Alberta Butterdome. Some of our students were excited to successfully advance to the semi-finals and finals! Our co-ed relay team made it to the finals and finished in an honourable fourth place, just barely missing the podium. Neve Choma



Talmud Torah students at the Running Room Games in Edmonton.

impressively jumped 3.77 meters landing her in a gold place finish, fulfilling her destiny as a 3rd generation track star! We are so proud of our athletes and their remarkable efforts and performance.

Mazal Tov to all participants on this outstanding achievement!

Support of CMDA is empowerment, not just kindness

By Valerie Sobel

No one expected October 7th. No one expected more than 500 days of war. No one expected a terrorist tunnel network bigger than the entire London underground.

Everyone expected MDA to rescue and restore life from imminent death on day one and for the duration of Israel's longest war. And that is exactly what the ambulatory bloodbank service has been doing.

October 7th brought enormous loss to the organization: ambulatory employees killed, vehicles damaged and entirely destroyed by the relentless fire of the jihadists. Yet MDA persevered and was the first on the scene at the Nova Festival and many other locations to do what they do best; save lives.

I first got interested in Magen David Adom after becoming aware of the Red Cross' refusal to operate in Israel. We must build and grow our own ambulatory service, I thought. Our own life-saving tools for our own people - our extended family that is Israel.

Magen David Adom, the only bloodbank in Israel designed for massive catastrophes like October 7th, has become not just vitally important but unequivocally necessary. CMDA, the Canadian arm of the organization, is front and centre in this life-saving business by raising funds, big and small, from everyday Canadians of various backgrounds who may share only one value; love of Israel. Every one of us can and should be part of this mitzvah, no matter our economic competence; every penny counts in saving a life.

Donation is certainly a gift of kindness and generosity. But also of selflessness. An act of saving a life that you will never know in a community where you will never live. Service and aid to strangers who will never know of your name or your gift. It is exactly this blind participation, the absence of reciprocity and the inability to feel the immediate impact of our charity that defines who we are. This is the reward and the very embodiment of tzedakah. But it is first and foremost, an act of empowerment.

Empowerment to change lives. Empowerment to be part of CMDA and its life-saving work. Empowerment to stand up to terror and Israel's

enemies. Empowerment to change the outcome Israel-haters design and count on.

On a personal note, I am blessed to be a Canadian and a member of the Israel-supporting diaspora mainly due to Israel and her people. In the 1970s and throughout the 1980s, before the fall of communism, Israel issued 291,000 exit visas to Eastern European Jewry. These visas were the only way Soviet-bloc Jews were permitted to leave the epicenters of state-sponsored anti-semitism. At age 11, I was one of the lucky millions (as was my husband at age 9) - holders of an Israeli visa which opened the door to freedom, opportunity and proud Jewish identity. Israel, quite literally, performed the largest rescue operation in history, as approximately 2,000,000 Jews found a new life. It is high time we do all we can to rescue Israel's citizens, our brothers and sisters, from deliberate harm by hateful enemies: CMDA is a great place to make that impact.

It is not our job to criticize Israel. It is not our job to pass judgment on Israel's internal policies. It is not our job to dictate what Israelis should or should not do. It is certainly not our job to advise on military strategy or hostage release deals. But it is our job to stand united behind Israel in the way that counts and makes a material difference. Not by words but by deeds.

Today, my husband Ed and I together with our children, Jacob and Danica, will be donating a CMDA medical scooter, a gift to the people of Israel. I'm further happy to announce that a group I founded shortly after October 7th, Together For Israel (TFI), consisting of Canadians and Americans, Jews and non-Jews, is donating \$10,000 for Life Support Equipment to the people of Israel. And we are not done yet. Anyone wanting to contribute and join us in our collective efforts in order to make a bigger impact, please contact Valerie Sobel at togetherforisraelnow@gmail.com

Join the Western Division of CMDA at a Special Gala event on May 4 in Calgary at the Carriage House Inn for a magical evening of entertainment and captivating speakers. For tickets and details call 587-435-5808 or email sfraiman@cmdai.org.

REGISTRATION AND HIRING IS NOW OPEN FOR SUMMER OF 2025

July Session: July 6 - 27 August Session: July 30 - Aug. 13
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Wonder Week 1 & 2: July 6 - 20. Wonder Weekend: Aug. 6 - 10



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Happy Passover!



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Purim festivities at TT included a costume parade followed by a school assembly with the Megillah Reading and a fabulous carnival organized by the grade 6 class. Activities also included crafts and delicious treats.

TT assembly and carnival brought joy and tradition!

By Natalie Soroka

What a great day at TT during Purim!

The Purim parade was live-streamed through the K-6 secure portal, allowing families to experience the event via their School Zone accounts. Students radiated excitement as they paraded through the hallways, many dressed in character alongside their classmates. Adding an educational twist to the celebration, school staff wore themed costumes representing digits of the mathematical constant π (Pi), enriching the festivities with both creativity and learning.

Following the parade, a school-wide assembly took place, during which students from grades K to 6 each read a portion of the Megillah. Early learning students were also invited to attend, enjoying the vibrant costumes and the retelling of the Purim story. Naturally, Ari, the beloved TT lion mascot, wouldn't

miss an assembly — and was in the audience, beaming with pride as the students performed.

After lunch and some classroom learning, the festivities continued with the highly anticipated Purim carnival. Grade 6 students took on leadership roles in organizing and running the event, making it a resounding success. Excitement filled the air as ELC and K-5 students rotated through a variety of Purim-themed stations, including arts and crafts, sports, trivia, and even a quiet room for those who needed a break.

One of the most eagerly awaited attractions each year is the famous haunted house, designed and operated by the Grade 6 students on the gym stage. Alumni often fondly reminisce about their own experiences creating spooky memories, swapping stories of the thrills and laughter from their haunted house days.

This year, each grade was assigned a designated

time slot, significantly reducing wait times. Moreh Ari Sniderman noted that his approach — modeled after Disneyland's ticketing system — was a great success. One Grade 6 student shared that he loved the leadership role in organizing the carnival, enjoyed being part of the haunted house and playfully scaring his peers, and had a fantastic time parading around the school in costume.

Parents and grandparents also contributed to the event, volunteering at various stations, with some embracing the Purim spirit by dressing up in adorable costumes. It's hard not to have fun at a Purim carnival!

No Purim celebration would be complete without delicious treats, and students were delighted to enjoy chocolate hamantaschen from Bliss Baked Goods, generously sponsored by the Talmud Torah Society.

From creativity and leadership to teamwork and fun, this year's Purim Carnival was a true celebration of the joy and tradition of Purim.

Why I named *Cont. from page 5*

after liberation from all types and levels of Egyptian bondage, freedom had not yet been acquired in the hearts of Israel, for if you are free from external influence but have not yet connected to your inner self, you are not truly free. Therefore, the final and essential stage — the ultimate purpose — is connecting to the original Israeli authenticity at Mount Sinai through the giving of the Torah, as the Sages say in the Mishnah: "And it says (Exodus 32:16): 'And the

tablets were the work of G-d, and the writing was the writing of G-d, engraved (Harut) on the tablets' — do not read 'harut' (engraved) but 'Herut' (freedom), for no one is truly free except one who engages in Torah study" (Avot 6:2).

Not only do the commandments themselves express the free spirit of the Israeli nation faithful to its authenticity, history, and culture, but so do the sacred traditions and customs hallowed by the self-sacrifice of generations upon generations. From birth to burial, the life of a Jew is accompanied by these sacred traditions that preserve the character and authentic nature of the nation. No reform disguising itself as modern and progressive — but which is actually

fraudulent, attempting to pander to fashionable, contentless contemporary trends contrary to the soul of the Israeli nation — can truly withstand the eternal power of the nation, even if temporarily it might achieve one Pyrrhic victory or another.

"No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue that rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from Me, says the Lord" (Isaiah 54:17).

I wish for my daughter Herut, for my other children, for myself, and for all of us to discover the true freedom within us, that we might remain faithful to ourselves, to our traditions and to our roots, and not wander astray after fleeting fashions and foreign values.

Rabbi Guy Tal is the Rabbi at Beth Israel Congregation in Edmonton.

SUMMER PROGRAM

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A MESSAGE FROM CEO STACEY LEAVITT-WRIGHT

Visiting Israel this past month was the infusion of Jewish peoplehood that I refer to as “vitamin I”. From the formal moments of expert speakers and visits to projects we have funded to the informal encounters on the street, it was poignant to witness the connections we have as a Jewish people.

For example, on a bench on the tayelet, I ran into former hostage Aviva Seigel, married to recently released hostage Keith Segal. We discussed the situation, her continued advocacy, and her Edmonton connection. I jokingly call us the “Shtetl of the North,” but I believe our community forms an integral part of Canadian Jewry, possesses an ongoing legacy with the land and people of Israel, and remains connected to the ongoing Jewish story.

As the Jewish Federation CEO, I am committed to leading these efforts and ensuring that our organization stays at the

forefront of fostering these relationships. My role involves not only overseeing our local initiatives but also actively engaging with agencies across Canada and Israel. By doing so, I can bring back valuable insights, forge meaningful partnerships, and advocate for our community’s needs on a broader scale.

As Passover approaches, we remember what it means to be Jewish, sharing our past, present, and hopes. No matter how you set your seder table or what foods are part of your seder, reciting the Haggadah connects us to Jews throughout the world, Jewish people throughout time, and to the land of Israel.


The saying, “Once we were slaves in Egypt”, serves as a powerful reminder of the Jewish community’s historical struggle for freedom. This legacy highlights the importance of actively taking part in federal elections; every vote helps shape policies and ensures

all communities have a voice. I encourage you to volunteer and engage with the candidate of your choice. All parties need to see and hear from our community.

Numerous opportunities for community engagement will arise next month—including screenings of the acclaimed film October 8, participation in Yom Hashoah and Yom Hazikaron observances, Yom Ha’atzmaut celebrations, and attendance at the Edmonton Jewish Film Festival. Together, we can build a stronger, more connected Jewish community. I invite each of you to join me in this endeavor, support our projects, and embrace the opportunities that come from collaboration. Let us work hand in hand to create a brighter future for all.


Chag Pesach Sameach.

Reach out to us on social media or by emailing info@edjfed.org.



Yom HaShoah

Save the date
Community Commemoration
Thursday, April 24 | 7 p.m.
Beth Israel Synagogue
Register at jewishedmonton.org





Food for purchase from Eddie's Veggie Delights

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SAVE THE DATE - OPENING NIGHT: MAY 6, 2025



Edmonton Jewish Film Festival

The finest Jewish themed films, online and in-person.

Tickets and sponsorship opportunities at jewishedmonton.org





2025 Yom HaZikaron

Please join us for the annual Yom HaZikaron ceremony, commemorating Israel's fallen soldiers and victims of terror.

Tuesday, April 29
Beth Shalom Synagogue
The gathering starts at 7 p.m.
The ceremony starts at 7:30 p.m.
Register at jewishedmonton.org







Four Questions To Ask Your Local Candidates

After 18 months of rising antisemitism and hatred, many feel this is the most important election of our lifetime. We are asking all candidates who seek to represent us in Parliament to answer four questions that are critical to building a better future.


- 1. Physical Safety**
If elected, what will you do to support our community and to help keep us safe?
- 2. Accountability for Hate**
If elected, what will you do to hold accountable those who attack and threaten Canadian Jews?
- 3. Strengthening Canada-Israel Ties**
If elected, what will you do to strengthen the trade, diplomatic, and security ties with our ally Israel?
- 4. Safeguarding Canadian Society & Values**
If elected, what will you do to help guarantee our Jewish community has a secure and vibrant future in Canada?



MORE THAN JUST A VOTE

JewishCanadaVotes.ca



DEADLINE APRIL 17, 2025



IBP opens doors

Jewish Federation of Edmonton's Integrated Bursary Program can help.

If you are having a financial struggle to have your children participate fully in Jewish life in our community, apply today at jewishedmonton.org.



— The Great Passover Matzah Ball Debate —

Like a rock, baby!

By Sinky Titanicstein

Editor’s note: In the spirit of lively discussion at the seder table, we bring you these arguments about a staple of the Pesach meal: The humble matzoh ball. These may or may not have been contributed by Joel Magalnick, president of Temple Beth Ora in Edmonton, and are reprinted from the now-defunct JTNNews, where Joel served as editor for the last 13 of its 90-year existence.



Joel Magalnick

There is so much that can be said about matzoh balls, all of which may be important, but if you asked me to take all that I have to say about matzoh balls and densely pack them into one word, that word would be SINKER! Yep, you read that correctly, I said sink, baby, sink!

The virtues of the matzoh ball are many – we are of course familiar with them. They can make us happy when we feel down, they bring smiles to our faces and our tummies during a week of gastrointestinal distress. They are so utterly fantastic,

that we actually eat them all year long, even when we don’t “have to”!

What I cannot understand, however, is why some people like them to be light and fluffy like cotton balls or those awful “Snowballs” that you get at the local mini-mart.

During Passover, we do not eat leavened/puffy foods. This serves to remind us that our ancestors had to leave in such a hurry that they did not have time for their bread to rise. The spirit of these special Passover rules also tells us not to eat fluffy anything. In fact, I take this spirit so far as to not even wear feathered boas during the holiday – fluffy is bad!

When I eat a matzoh ball, I want to search for it in my bowl of soup; I don’t want it to be floating there at the surface like some sort of beach ball. No, I want to wander through the bowl looking for the Promised Ball (seeing any connections to our past yet?). Once I find it, I want to work to cut it into bits. Life was not easy for our ancestors when they had to flee their homes, thus it should not be easy for us.

A friend of mine is even more extreme about his matzoh balls being dense sinkers. Just the other day, when we were discussing global politics, we meandered over to the topic of matzoh balls. In his opinion, you either like your matzoh balls dense or you are with the terrorists. Personally, I think he is a bit fanatical, but I can relate to his feelings.

Matzoh balls are serious business, and I don’t want my business to be fluffy. Not to mention the fact that a dense matzoh ball simply tastes better – it has a better texture, it holds the complex flavors of chicken



soup within it, it absorbs spices in a way that a fluffy matzoh ball can only dream. Shall I continue? OK then, I will.

A dense matzoh ball holds its shape throughout the entire holiday, while a fluff ball will often fall apart if not handled correctly while making the transfer from the pot to your bowl. A dense matzoh ball can fill you up, so that when you take a bowl of matzoh ball soup to work for lunch, that’s all you need. If you bring a lunch of fluffy matzoh ball soup, you’ll need about dozen to fill you up. Dense matzoh balls are simply more economical, more efficient and better for you. And let’s face it: if you’re gluten-free, fluffy’s not even an option.

Thank you for seeing it my way. Go dense or go home! Happy Pesach.

Like a lifesaver, let them float

By Capt. Beachballberg

There is nothing I hate worse than having to bring a hacksaw to my seder table. Not only that, when baseball season begins, I don’t want some joker thinking it’s funny to pull a matzoh ball out of our soup pot to make the first pitch. This is why matzoh balls must be fluffy.

Not to mention the Passover seder itself. We’re talking about a big meal here, folks. If for no other reason than to save yourself for the delectable food

ahead, the matzoh balls and the soup must be light. How on earth are we going to get through egg soup, charoset on matzoh, four more cups of wine (plus the required ones), salad, gefilte fish, roasted chicken, kugel, steamed asparagus, and the afikomen if we’ve got a lead weight taking up half of our tummies?

That says nothing about the taste, either. A hard matzoh ball is like a fortress. It doesn’t allow the flavors of the soup—whether it’s the vegetables in the stock or the oils from the chicken—to filter through and make each and every bite delectable. Sure, they fall apart. But they’re supposed to! If the ball comes apart easily, then an equal amount of ball, soup and vegetable can fit into the spoon. That’s every flavor, with no excavating required. What more could you ask for?

Another thing to think about: when the Hebrews were escaping from Egypt, how many of them do you

think would haul a bag filled with big, round rocks? None? Good answer.

Then there’s the whole age discrimination part of the argument. How many times has an older member of the family come to the seder, bitten into a heavy matzoh ball, and then they can’t find their teeth? How many teething babies, anxious to enjoy their very first seder, turn their backs on Judaism for the rest of their lives because that first matzoh ball impacted their first little tooth and now there’s no way they’ll ever try that stuff again?

Fluffy and floaty is better. There’s no doubt about it. I know this is an election year, and the advertising is gonna get messy, but I feel that I too must go negative on these hard, undercooked, dense matzoh balls, if you can call them that. It’s fluffy or nothin’. If it must be a choice between the hard matzoh ball lovers and the terrorists, then I for one am with the terrorists.

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JNF Negev Gala: An evening of hope, healing, and heroism

On June 18, 2025, the Jewish National Fund of Edmonton and the Israel Magen Fund of Canada invite you to be part of an unforgettable evening – one that transcends entertainment and indulgence to become a beacon of hope. The 2025 Negev Gala is more than an event; it is a rallying cry for healing, resilience, and unwavering solidarity with Israel.

At a time when Israel's southern communities are in dire need of support, we have the power to make a difference. Proceeds from this year's Negev Gala will directly fund the construction of the Ashdod Rehabilitation and Therapy Centre, a groundbreaking facility that will provide urgent medical and psychological care to wounded war victims, children with disabilities, and pediatric cancer patients. This is our chance to stand shoulder to shoulder with those rebuilding their lives after trauma, ensuring they receive the care and dignity they deserve.

A Powerful Lineup: Voices of Strength and Survival

This year's Gala will feature two extraordinary individuals whose stories embody the resilience of the Jewish people:

Shai Davidai is a fearless Jewish civil rights leader and professor who has taken a stand against antisemitism on the front lines of academia. His insights and passionate advocacy inspire courage and unity within the Jewish community worldwide; "the October 7 Massacre made every Israeli a little bit more Jewish and every Jew in the diaspora a little bit more Israeli." Shai is the living bridge between the people of Israel and Diaspora Jewry, keeping the release of the hostages at the forefront of all his advocacy.

The world watched in horror as **Noa Argamani** was abducted by Hamas during the Nova Festival on October 7, 2023. After months in captivity, she was rescued in June 2024 and has since dedicated herself to securing the release of the remaining hostages. Her emotional speech at the UN Security Council in February 2025 shook the world. Now, she will share her story of survival and hope with us in Edmonton.

This is a rare opportunity to hear firsthand from two individuals who have lived through some of the most pivotal moments in recent history. Their words will leave you moved, inspired, and ready to take action.

The Negev Gala promises a night of sophistication, meaningful connections, and impactful storytelling. The evening will include: 5:30 pm cocktail reception, 6 pm dinner reception and an official programme will begin at 7:30 pm followed by dessert.

The location will be disclosed closer to the event and will bring together community leaders, philanthropists, and supporters who believe in the power of action. Your presence will not only elevate this event but will also make a tangible impact on the lives of those in need.

By attending the Negev Gala, you are directly contributing to the establishment of the Ashdod Rehabilitation and Therapy Centre. There are multiple ways to show your support:

A VIP Dinner & Event Package costs \$500 per ticket and includes an exclusive meet & greet event, dinner, and the programme.

General Admission Ticket costs \$125 per ticket and includes dinner, the programme, and dessert.

Other sponsorship opportunities are available including Student Sponsorship (\$36), and Corporate and Individual Sponsorships; various tiers are available, with recognition at the project site in Israel.



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2025 NEGEV GALA PROJECT:



Ashdod Rehabilitation and Therapy Centre: A Lifeline for Israel's Most Vulnerable

In the wake of the devastating events of October 7, 2023, Israel's healthcare system has been pushed beyond its limits, leaving thousands of wounded individuals without adequate rehabilitation services. The Ashdod Rehabilitation and Therapy Centre is a critical response to this crisis—a beacon of hope for war victims, children with disabilities, and pediatric cancer patients in Israel's southern region.

This state-of-the-art facility will provide comprehensive medical, psychological, and rehabilitative care, ensuring that those who have suffered physical and emotional trauma receive the support they need to heal and rebuild their lives. The centre will feature essential services such as:

Hydrotherapy and Physiotherapy – Offering cutting-edge treatments that restore mobility and strength.

Speech and Occupational Therapy – Helping patients regain essential communication and motor skills.

Psychological Support and Mental Health Services – Addressing the deep emotional scars left by war and displacement.

Specialized Pediatric Care – Providing children battling cancer and other disabilities with top-tier medical and emotional support.

Located in Ashdod, a rapidly growing city in Israel's south, the centre will eliminate the barrier of long-distance travel to rehabilitation facilities in central Israel, ensuring that families can access world-class care close to home.

By supporting the 2025 Negev Gala, you are directly funding the establishment of this vital facility, empowering survivors to reclaim their lives and build a stronger future.

Together, we can turn pain into healing and adversity into resilience.

Tribute and advertising opportunities are available by honouring a loved one or promoting your business in the Gala Tribute Book.

All donations of \$7,500+ will be acknowledged at the Ashdod Rehabilitation and Therapy Centre in Israel, cementing your legacy of generosity and impact.

This Is Our Moment

The people of Israel need us now more than ever. By coming together for one night in Edmonton, we can change the trajectory of thousands of lives. The Negev Gala is not just about raising funds—it's about making history. It's about standing in unity and proving that when one member of our global Jewish family suffers, we all rally to lift them up.

Join us on June 18, 2025, for a night of hope, healing, and unwavering support. Buy your tickets today and be part of something truly life-changing.

To reserve your tickets or become a sponsor, visit jnfedmonton.ca or call 780-481-7881.

Together, we can rebuild. Together, we are one nation, one heart.

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NEGEV GALA 2025

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Shai Davidai
Jewish Civil Rights Leader, Israeli American Professor

Shai Davidai is an Israeli-American Professor at Columbia University, a modern day warrior for Jewish civil rights, boldly confronting antisemitism on the front lines of academia. In an era when Zionism is under siege and Jewish students in the diaspora feel increasingly isolated, Shai's voice is a rallying cry for courage, truth, and unwavering Jewish pride.

Noa Argamani
Rescued Hostage

Noa Argamani was kidnapped with her partner, Avinatan, by Hamas on October 7, 2023, and held captive in Gaza for 245 days. Noa's story is one of unimaginable hardship, strength, and unyielding hope. Her daring rescue by Israeli forces in June 2024 was a moment of triumph, and her journey continues as an advocate for the hostages that remain in Gaza.

VIP DINNER PACKAGE 5:30PM COCKTAILS 6:00PM DINNER RECEPTION

GENERAL EVENT 7:30PM PROGRAMME FOLLOWED BY DESSERT



The Israel Magen Fund of Canada (IMFoC) is a Canadian registered charity founded in 2008. Following October 7, 2023, IMFoC has mobilized to support vital search and rescue efforts, mental and physical health, and social services for impacted communities in Israel. JNF Canada is proud to collaborate with IMFoC on this initiative to address this critical charitable need.

Is it safe yet to move back to northern Israel’s border towns?

By Ellin Bessner, Canadian Jewish News

The last time Nir Zamir went back to check on the status of his abandoned home in Metula was three months ago. The retired furniture maker and his wife Michal are among the more than 60,000 evacuees from northern Israeli border communities who were ordered to leave after Oct. 7, 2023, when Hezbollah terrorists began raining deadly rockets into Israel from Lebanon in a show of solidarity with Hamas.

Since then, the Zamirs have been living in a government-funded hotel in Tiberias, except for occasional trips to Edmonton to visit two of their children and five grandchildren, who live in the Alberta capital.

But this January, while Nir chose to extend his visit in Canada indefinitely, Michal moved back on her own to stay for a while at the couple’s house in Metula, where they’ve lived and raised their family for nearly 40 years.

“I came back because I have [had] enough of the hotel. I couldn’t stay any longer in the little room,” Michal, 63, said in a podcast interview March 16 with *The CJA Daily*. “It’s my house, and I like to sit on my couch and see the TV and do whatever I want.”

On March 1, the Israeli government officially told the northern evacuees to return home for good. Although a ceasefire with Hezbollah that went into effect in late November has now expired, the IDF has kept soldiers stationed in five areas inside Lebanon to make sure things remain quiet. And earlier this month, Israeli officials signalled they will open direct diplomatic talks with Lebanon to work towards a normalization of relations between the longtime deadly enemies.

But husband Nir, who’s also 63, isn’t convinced it’s safe to move home, despite his wife’s optimism, and despite the crucial financial incentives being made available from the Netanyahu government for returnees to northern communities.

“You have a better couch in Canada,” said her husband. “Because this agreement between Israel [with] Hezbollah is so breakable, we [could] come to the same situation that we were in before the war. In the long term, Hezbollah can do anything it wants in two minutes, in three minutes, and we will be almost in the same situation that we were stuck in the south.”

Indeed, six rockets were launched from Lebanon towards Metula on March 22, prompting a series of IDF airstrikes. No one was injured in the border town. Hezbollah has denied responsibility for the renewed attacks.

The Zamir home was not damaged by the daily barrage of rockets hitting Metula before the ceasefire. They were fortunate. The town’s mayor, David Azoulay, recently estimated that about 60 percent of the buildings, or 450 structures, need repairs.

When he was last there, Nir took many snapshots of the impact of the war on his community. He keeps the photos in a special souvenir war photo album.

The pictures show the remnants of homes which took direct missile hits, and there is blackened timber and broken glass still lying where they burned. The concrete barriers blocking access to Metula were standing at the entrance to the town then, but Michal reports these roads are open now. There was a squadron of four IDF tanks with their turrets pointed up the main road.

“I feel safe because we have the army here,” said Michal, who works for a regional water utility in the

Galilee panhandle. “What’s going to be in the future when the army loose[ns up] a little bit?”

She acknowledges that living in Metula is challenging.

There are no stores. No schools are open. There are no medical facilities. She has to go to Kiryat Shmona, about 10 minutes away, for food and supplies, although there, too, merchants are only slowly re-opening.

“Everything is missing, and it feels very different,” she said. “The roads are awful, and there’s nothing. No place that you want to go and meet your friends. So you just go to a friend’s house.”

She reported that only some of the neighbours on



Nir Zamir, a displaced former resident of Metula. (Nir Zamir photo)

her street have moved back in recent days. This, despite Metula’s mayor warning his residents not to do so, because the town is one massive construction site.

Continued on page 13

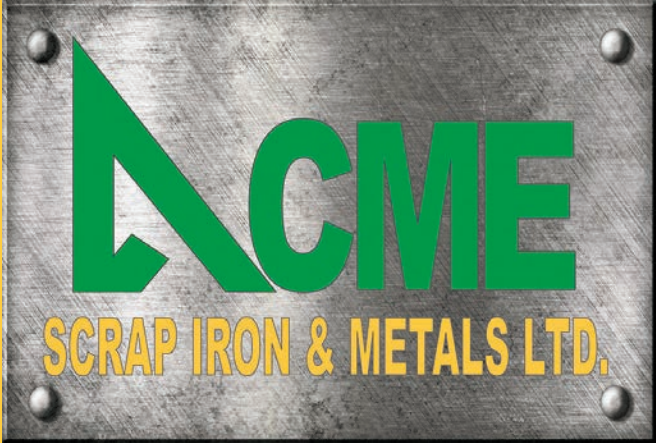


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— Book Review —

How to Share an Egg: A true Story of Hunger, Love and Plenty by Bonny Reichert

Reviewed by Maxine Fischbein

Toronto-based writer, chef and food stylist Bonny Reichert — who was born and raised in Edmonton — has written a memoir that will surely bring back fond memories for the many Jewish Edmontonians that know the Reichert family and, in particular, Bonny’s father: Holocaust survivor and beloved former Edmonton restaurateur Saul Reichert.

In *How to Share an Egg: A True Story of Hunger, Love, and Plenty* (Ballantine Books, 2025) Saul Reichert’s story is the jumping-off point for his daughter’s exploration of intergenerational trauma and its effects on her own life.

The unifying feature of the journey is food. Lack of it was one of the privations endured by Saul Reichert when his childhood was destroyed by the Nazis and their collaborators in his native Poland. Yet food was also the key to the new life he built for, and with, his family.

Bonny Reichert’s obsession with food has other underpinnings, given her mother Toby’s efforts at maintaining a trim physique in contrast to the girth of her mother — Bonny’s Baba Sarah — a woman who was, both literally and figuratively, larger than life.

Branded by her mother as the “sensitive one,” Bonny Reichert’s trauma begins in earnest when, as a young child, she asks her father about the number tattooed on his arm.

While making every effort to answer her questions with age-appropriate stories about the number and the “bad men” who put it there, her father’s explanations become the stuff of nightmares, a situation that worsens when the family gathers around the TV to watch *Holocaust: The Story of the Family Weiss*, a TV series that brought the Shoah to public consciousness when it aired in 1978.

So great is her trauma, that Bonny Reichert spends much of her life avoiding the topic of the Holocaust and declining opportunities to travel to Poland and the death camps. When her father — who hails from a long line of Gerer Chasidim — finds out that a family grave remains in Poland, he insists that the family travel there.

On that trip, a meal in a seemingly unremarkable restaurant — certainly not the kind her discerning family would seek out — Reichert experiences a bowl of borscht that she knows instinctively just how to eat. The meal takes Reichert’s culinary journey to old-new places in her efforts to replicate the cholent once made by Reichert’s paternal grandmother Udel. The rich stew — a Sabbath classic — looms large in Saul Reichert’s early and happy memories from his pre-war childhood in Poland, before the slaughter of his family, his deportation to Auschwitz-Birkenau, forced labour, a death march and, through it all, abject hunger.

Despite this — and, perhaps also because of this, Saul Reichert built a new life, warmly welcoming and feeding others, most notably at the family’s iconic Jasper Avenue eateries Teddy’s and The Carousel. (Edmontonians of a certain age have vivid memories of Saul Reichert’s warmth as they entered his eateries. You were welcomed as if you were the most important person to walk through the door.)

We get some evocative glimpses of the restaurants through Bonny Reichert’s eyes as a child and teenager.

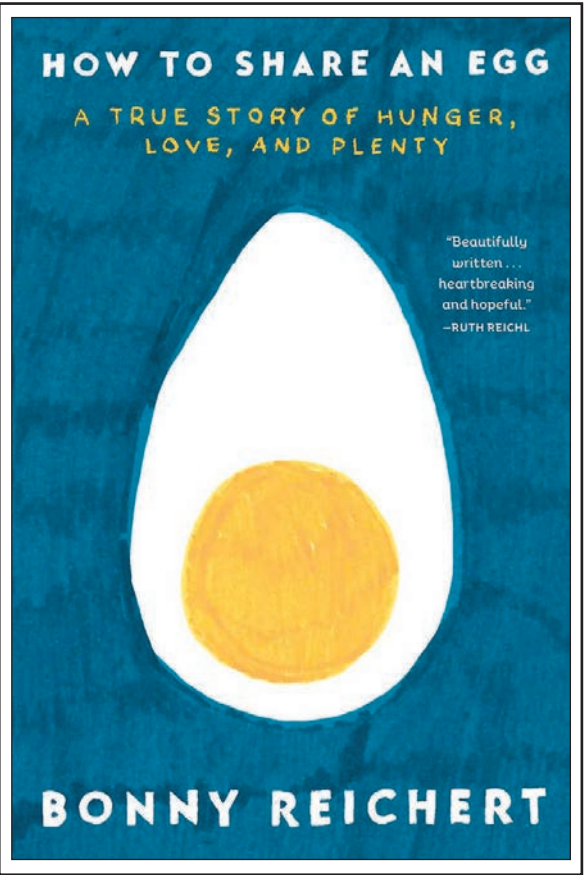
Also remarkable are the glimpses of Reichert’s maternal grandmother, Sarah Taradash, whose recipes and personal presence brought tam to countless diners. She is a source of comfort to her granddaughter through unconditional love, not to mention a steady stream of Jewish soul food that helped to fuel her *Bondles*’ seemingly inevitable entrée into the world of cuisine.

Seismic shifts keep happening as Reichert struggles with two wishes expressed by her aging father: That she should “be happy” — a state that is elusive given the burden she carries — and that she write a book about his experiences as a Holocaust survivor, an assignment she avoids for years but fulfills, in part, in the latter pages of her memoir.

Appetite describes Bonny Reichert’s book thus: “Sharing the moments that are sweet, salty, sour, and bitter, this is one woman’s search to find her voice as a writer, chef, mother and daughter. Do the tiny dramas of her own life matter in comparison to everything her father has seen and done?”

The answer to that question depends, of course, on each reader.

For this one, Reichert’s sour and bitter moments — a number of which are laid at the feet of her mother and authority figures on the professional side of her



life — seem to take up a disproportionate amount of real estate in *How to Share an Egg*.

By contrast, there are more than a few close family members whose sole purposes seem to be to advance Reichert’s self-exploration, as when she fictionalizes her sisters’ names and reduces them to one composite figure.

Those readers who pick up the book anticipating a deep dive into Saul Reichert’s experiences will probably leave the table hungry. Some may not easily digest the poetic license Bonny Reichert utilizes in the telling of her father’s story.

Individuals who crave tales of self-exploration may find the memoir infinitely more satisfying, and foodies will, no doubt, be captivated by Bonny Reichert’s superpower: turning words about food into mouth-watering sensory experiences.

Reichert took a brave step in writing this memoir and she is a writer to watch. Her writing is most exquisite when she gets out of her own head and reveals herself in living and breathing relationships with those she loves most.

Maxine Fischbein is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.

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Is it safe? *Cont. from page 11*

On a recent mission to the area by Canadian leaders from the Jewish Federations of Canada-United Israel Appeal organization, participants helped build new wooden benches and flower boxes to beautify a Kiryat Shmona public library for returning Israeli residents.

After Oct. 7, Canadian Jews raised a record \$140 million to help Israel through the immediate emergency. While much of the funds went to aid evacuees from the Hamas attack in southern Israel – and some funds went to help evacuees from northern Israel – now, after 17 months, the continuing allocations are being done with longer-term planning in mind, including rebuilding the north.

On March 6, JFC-UIA announced it was allocating \$20 million to strengthen education in northern Israel, with funds also going to expand a community college located south of Metula, in Tel Hai.

“This Pan-Canadian Initiative, focused on “building forward better” through being a catalyst for transforming education in the north, to ensure stronger, more attractive communities and a better future for the people of the north, is just one example of Canadian federations playing a significant role as partners with the people of Israel,” said Steven Shulman, the CEO of the Jewish Federations of Canada UIA agency.

The Israeli government has already promised to repair the region’s popular ice hockey complex in Metula, known as the Canada Centre, the first Olympic-sized ice rink in the Holy Land. It was built in the 1990s with donations from Jewish Canadians.

The centre means a lot to the Zamirs because their son, who now runs a solar energy company in Edmonton, learned to play ice hockey there. Oren Zamir actually spent his high school years playing hockey in Alberta, and also played as a member of Israel’s junior national hockey team.

“Until a few weeks ago, there [were] a lot of soldiers over there, so I think it’s a big mess,” Michal Zamir said, recalling her last drive in the arena’s neighbourhood. “I saw the windows were broken.”

The fate of the Canada Centre has been a continued worry for another northern Israel resident with deep roots in Canada. Dr. Esther Silver was born in

Calgary, raised in Toronto, but made aliyah. She now lives in Kfar Vradim, about an hour southwest of Metula.

Although she can see the Lebanese border clearly from her terrace, and Syria in the distance, her community was not ordered to move away after Oct. 7.

A former goalie when she lived in Canada, she is the manager of Israel’s national women’s hockey squad, whose members used to practice at the Canada Centre in Metula.

“While it was damaged secondarily to a missile hitting the swimming pool area...it caused damage to the whole site. So basically, the arena is shut down,” Silver told The CJN, adding that at least five of her players are among the evacuees and some have not returned to their homes.

“It will depend on funding from the government, and we hope and pray that we’ll come back because we have a lot of players from Metula.”

In spite of the lack of ice time for practice, Silver’s team made the trip to participate in February 2025 in the IIHF women’s hockey World Championships tournament for their division, held this year in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Despite having some team members currently serving in the IDF who weren’t permitted to take leave to come practice, and two other players who didn’t travel with the team for security reasons, the Israeli players racked up a silver medal.

“It was pretty difficult getting our team together and getting to the tournament. But our girls are amazing. They’re so brave,” Silver said, adding that the Israelis were booed when they took to the ice, and local organizers refused to play the Israel national anthem on the live broadcasts when the Jewish team won.

Silver remained in Kfar Vradim during the war because she said Israeli authorities didn’t consider her community close enough to the Lebanese border.

“The government decided that only up to four kilometers away from the actual border were people to be evacuated,” she said, adding that Kfar Vradim is nine km away. “But that’s a fallacy, because people five and six kilometers from the war also had no time to react to missiles, and it gave us no special protection



Damage from Hezbollah rocket attack on Metula. (Nir Zamir photo)

from being shot at.”

The IDF has an Iron Dome battery in her community, and she has a front row seat from her terrace to the hostilities.

“We were all pretty exposed all the time. It’s been a difficult year.”

Israel estimates 45 civilians were killed in the north during the war, including the 12 young Druze children playing soccer in Majdal Shams. A further 78 IDF soldiers lost their lives in battle in the area.

Silver herself lived through one particular close call that has left her, a psychotherapist who treats children with ADHD, with a form of post-traumatic stress disorder.

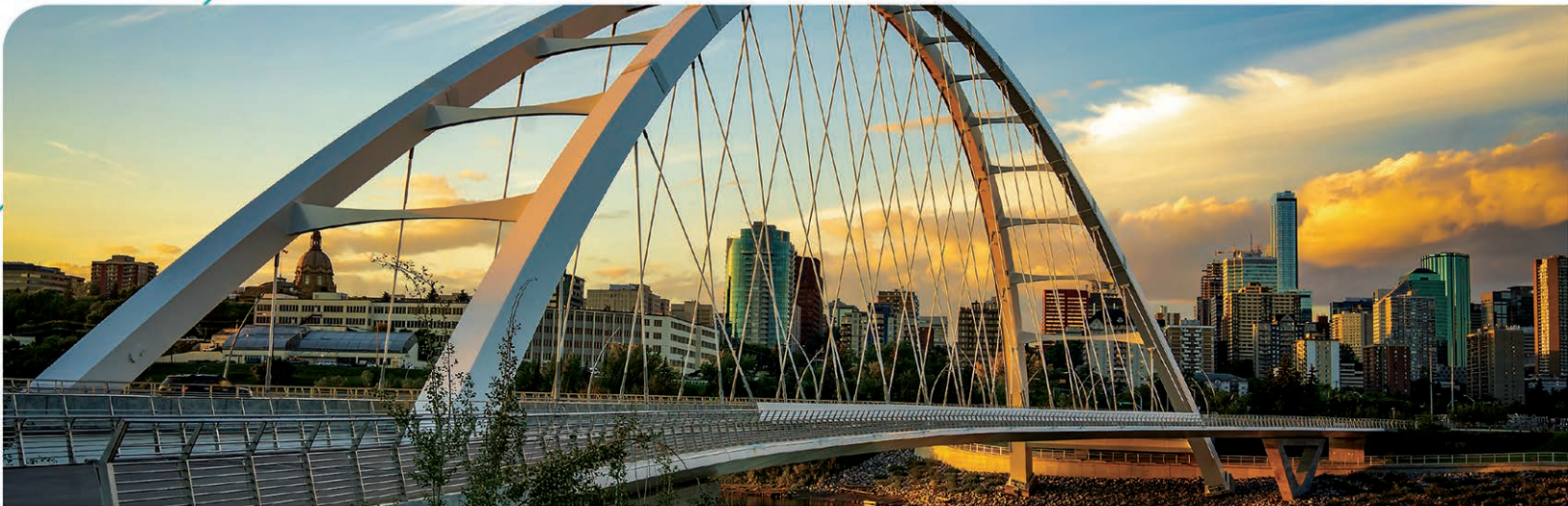
“One episode that scared the shit out of me, excuse me, but as a Canadian I’m not really used to full out war. One morning I was driving on the street just below me, and the siren sounded. I got out of the car and lay down on the ground, and I looked up. Tons of explosions. Rockets. The Iron Dome went up, and it was like ‘Oh, my God! I feared for my life!’”

She recalls that day a rocket hit an apartment half a kilometre from her and destroyed it. The tenants, who were themselves evacuees from communities a bit closer to the Lebanese border, were in the shelter and were unhurt. However, the same day, she remembers

Continued on page 19

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Joyous paintings on Season Finale of Art and Scroll: April 16

By Shelley Werner

The beautiful art on the cover of this month's *Alberta Jewish News* is by author, artist, scholar and maggidah (spiritual storyteller) Shoshannah Brombacher, from Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

"Art makes the world within visible. My art is a tribute to music and to our heritage, especially the Chassidic world," says the artist. "The Kotzker Rebbe once listened to a storyteller in the street talking about the Baal Shem Tov and stated, 'He told what he wanted and I heard what I needed.' That is art."

The works of Shoshannah Brombacher bring alive the intense emotions and intergenerational memories of our identities. The impact of art on the spiritual interpretation of a Jewish tradition cannot be underestimated. Her colour palette gives life to the exuberant shapes and forms that dance their way across her paintings. To see the art is to touch our collective soul that reaches back through time to modern day.

Brombacher holds a Ph.D. from Leyden University



Artist Shoshannah Brombacher

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(Holland) in medieval Hebrew poetry of the seventeenth century Sephardic Community of Amsterdam and has contributed to projects about Jewish manuscripts, books, and tombstone inscriptions. She taught, researched and studied in Leyden, Amsterdam (the Ets Haim Library and HetJoods Historisch Museum), Jerusalem, at the Free University of Berlin, and NewYork.

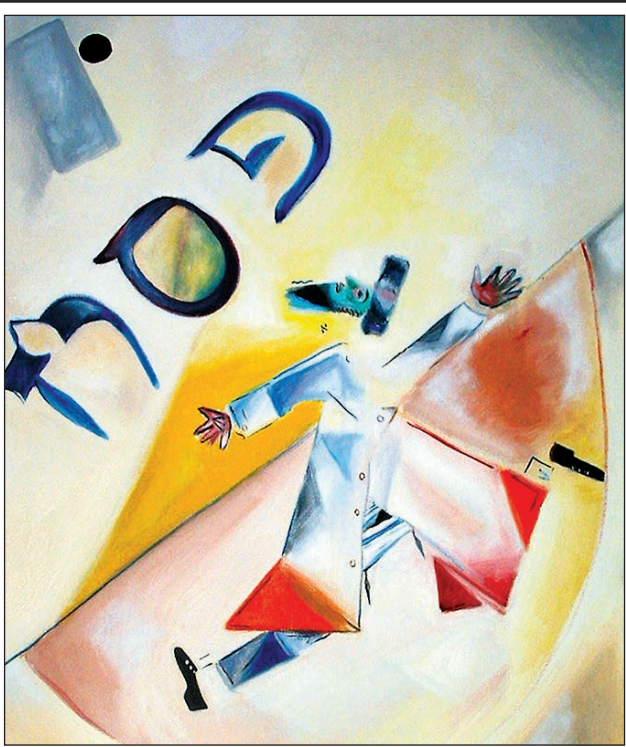
Her hearing loss forced her to leave the academic world and dedicate herself to art and writing. She organized courses for adults and children and currently lives in Berlin, where she dedicates her time to art, writing, lecturing, and telling Chassidic stories. She states: "For me, family and art are inseparable parts of my Jewish life. My academic background brings deeper meaning to my art, understanding of life and devotion to HaShem."

The teachings of the Chassidic Masters fascinated her since she discovered them in her father's study long ago. Her paintings are a tribute to the Chassidic way of life spreading light in a dark world while enriching our hearts and minds. Her themes include Jewish lore and legends, travels (the Venice murals), social justice (poetry of Nazim Hikmet Ran, OWS), classical music (Beethoven series), poetry in many languages, and custom art for special occasions, like weddings, kaddish and bar/bat mitzvah.

Brombacher has participated in, curated and organized international art exhibitions and won several awards and grants for her work which is in museums, (private) collections and institutions in all five continents.

She is currently the vice-president of the American Guild of Judaic Art, and contributes regularly to other magazines, blogs or calendars. She has authored and illustrated several books and articles including *Meetings with Remarkable Souls* (E. Klein, illustr. S. Brombacher), *Letters of Light* (A. L. Raskin, illustr. S. Brombacher), and *When the Shouting Began* (S. Sher, illustr. S. Brombacher). Brombacher designed calendars, posters, book and CD cover-art for synagogues, institutions, and has created posters for museums, films, the Yiddish Rep Theater (New York), Occupy Wall Street and others. Exhibitions include Liberaal Joodse Gemeente, The Hague, The Netherlands (solo), University of Leyden, The Netherlands, and Rova haYehudit, Jerusalem (solo).

Her work is an homage to classical music, poetry, Jewish and Chassidic stories, and traveling. Her love for people and memories of eras gone but not forgotten, cities where she lived and worked, like Amsterdam, Berlin, Jerusalem, New York, or visited, like Prague



Shoshannah Brombacher's painting "Miriam Dancing" is on the cover of this month's *Alberta Jewish News*. Pictured above: "Pesach."

and Sicily create the main ingredients of her art.

Like the water of the canals of her native Amsterdam, Rembrandt's city, the deeper you look into her paintings, the more you see. "A reflection of a reflection...look, what you see is not what you see. My art contains texts and letters, lets writing come alive, and reflects my deep connection with the Dutch 17th century Masters, German expressionism, Russian art and medieval miniatures."

Shoshannah has created many art works for Pesach, wrote a complete Haggadah, series of the 15 Steps, Chad Gadya, Echad mee Yodea, in black and white or in color, painted the seder, and more. Pesach means to jump, like the angel of death jumped over the houses of the Jewish slaves in Egypt. In the painting (seen above) the Chassid jumps for joy over the liberation.

Shoshannah Brombacher will be the featured guest on Wednesday April 16, 2025, 7:00 pm MDT on Art and Scroll Studio, a live zoom series that celebrates the makers and creators of Judaic art. She will share her incredible journey highlighting her inspiration and motivation for lighting the fire of spiritual intension in her work.

To view a short preview of her artistic journey, visit <https://bit.ly/ShoshannahBrombacherPreview>

For tickets for this virtual and free program visit <https://bit.ly/ShoshannahBrombacherTickets>

Shelley Werner is the host of Art and Scroll Studio zoom series that celebrates the makers and creators of Judaica Art.



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Festival Hatzafon celebrates Israeli culture and dance

By Jenna Vetsch, LJI Reporter

This year's Festival Hatzafon for the Aviv Israeli Folk Dance Association (AIFDA) highlighted themes of strength and resilience through captivating Israeli folk dance choreography, costuming, and lively performances. The festival brought together diverse communities to celebrate and embrace cultural heritage and unity.

Festival Hatzafon is a unique event in Alberta, offering the community the chance to experience Israeli folk dance and other cultural performances year-after-year.

The sold-out show was held at Campus Saint-Jean's auditorium on March 5th, 2025, with Reel Mensch Studios documenting the event on film. Under the directorship of Davina Eisenstat and Sari Uretsky, the annual event welcomed family, friends, and guests who eagerly filled the theatre to enjoy an evening of dance, music, culture, and connection.

The opening number was a new piece titled “Fly”, performed by the Aviv dancers under the leadership of Abby Wright. In November, the group welcomed guest choreographer Yulia Tvorilova to lead a 5-week dance intensive. The captivating performance featured lifts and unique movements, showcasing the dancers’ skills and talents. The choreography signifies the power of love, support, and the strength in togetherness. This project was made possible through a minor allocation grant from the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, powered by the United Jewish Appeal campaign.

The Rikud Academy dancers are a highlight of the show for families. Parents glow with pride as they see their children, dressed up and ready to showcase everything they've learned throughout the year. Dancers from kindergarten to grade six received enthusiastic applause and cheers, and their joyful performances brought a cheerful energy to the theatre.

Special guests from the South Asian Arts Movement (SAAM) performed a Kathak dance and Bollywood

number. Ashley Anjlien Kumar, the Founding Artistic Director of SAAM, captivated the audience with a classical dance of India, Kathak. It was a mesmerizing experience, from the traditional music, brilliant costuming, to her skillful footwork. Additionally, SAAM dancers performed an energetic Bollywood piece that featured famous songs from movies produced in India. Their performances gave us a taste of the beauty and joy found in South Asian performing arts.

Virtual performances by Winnipeg's Beyachad and Israel's Clore Center for the Performing Arts were woven into the show as well. Beyachad, led by Robyn Braha, "holds a special place in our dance family," said Davina. "We have shared the stage [with them] many times." The dance featured dazzling scarf choreography and costumes which helped tell a story of our collective humanity.

Dancers from the Clore Center shared a modern Israeli dance piece titled “New Day.” It was a beautiful display of hope and unity. The Clore Center is located within the Galilee Panhandle, Canada’s partner region through the Jewish Federation’s Partnership2Gether initiative. Aviv expressed gratitude to the dancers at the Clore Center for their participation by sending a thank-you card which was personally delivered by Stacey Leavitt-Wright, CEO of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton. In the card, it was conveyed that they are in Aviv’s thoughts every day, along with prayers for their safety. The Clore Center replied with a warm message: “I am happy the video we sent was a special addition to your festival. Hope it was only the beginning of the cooperation and connection between you and the Clore Center.”

Another memorable performance was a self-choreographed, lyrical solo by 15-year-old Aviv dancer, Aliya Leung, which was inspired by the hostages taken from Israel. Davina, co-Artistic Director, explained that “through movement, we honour the unbreakable



spirit of hope, unity, and the relentless determination to bring each individual home.” The auditorium fell quiet as Aliya delivered this poignant performance, captivating everyone in attendance. Abby Wright, Aviv Instructor, shared that “as a community and dance group, it was a meaningful experience to centre Festival Hatzafon around what happened on October 7th.”

Through various grants, subsidies, and donations, community organizations helped bring the 19th year of Festival Hatzafon to life. Thanks were extended to the Edmonton Jewish Community Charitable Foundation for sponsoring the theatre, the Jewish Federation of Edmonton for sponsoring a light reception after the show, and to the Talmud Torah Society, the National Council of Jewish Women of Canada – Edmonton Section, the Edmonton Arts Council and the City of Edmonton for their valuable support and contributions.

Following the show, AIFDA dancer Ronny Stocklin-Sagi credited the organization with helping her embrace her authentic Jewish identity by providing a safe space for cultural expression and fostering meaningful relationships. Festival Hatzafon is a cherished event in the Edmonton community, celebrating the value of cultural inclusivity.

If you or your child is interested in becoming a part of AIFDA's incredible dance community, visit www.aifda.ca. There are also weekly drop-in circle dance classes for teens and adults every Wednesday. Email aifdaedmonton@gmail.com for more details.

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Thinking of you during this time of reflection & renewal.

The alarming rise of anti-immigrant hate in Alberta: Echoes of a dark past

By Danielle Dolgoy and Roxanne Droppo



Danielle Dolgoy



Roxanne Droppo

Over the past several weeks our communities have witnessed hateful demonstrations designed to threaten and unsettle newcomers. As Executive Directors of Jewish Family Services in Alberta's major cities, we are shaken by these events and feel compelled to speak up. We call upon all Albertans to bear witness because we cannot look away. We cannot allow this to happen in our communities. The people waving hateful banners and spewing xenophobic rhetoric are not abstract figures from another place and time—they are here, in our streets, targeting our clients, our colleagues, and our neighbors. And they are your neighbors too.

This is not just about offensive words or misguided beliefs. It has escalated into terrorizing behavior. We have seen small but vocal groups gather in Alberta's towns and cities, brandishing anti-immigrant slogans and even performing Nazi salutes. In St. Albert, these individuals disrupted a peaceful community with a display of hate so brazen that even longtime residents were stunned (St. Albert Gazette). In Red Deer, racist and xenophobic symbols were left outside community agencies, an unambiguous attempt to intimidate and silence (rdnewsnow.com).

We cannot ignore these acts, nor can we dismiss

them as isolated incidents. The resurgence of such hate in our province echoes the warning signs of history. Throughout the 20th century, antisemitism and xenophobia were wielded as tools by authoritarian movements to justify oppression. The Holocaust did not begin with concentration camps—it began with rhetoric, with whispers that became shouts, with quiet tolerance of hate that escalated into organized violence.

Alberta has seen this before. The Orange Order once promoted division and discrimination, just as the Yellow Vests movement in Canada more recently harbored extremist, anti-immigrant views (CTV news). Hate crimes in our province have surged in recent years, disproportionately targeting racialized communities (preventviolence.ca). The pattern is clear.

As Canadians, our collective decency compels us to name this rhetoric for what it is: antisocial, dangerous, and unacceptable. Hate does not remain stagnant—it grows when left unchecked. If we allow it to fester, it will not stop at one community or one group.

This is not just about immigrants, nor just about Jewish communities. It is about all of us. Hate that is tolerated in one corner of society will eventually find its way into others. It erodes the very fabric of our democracy, our safety, and our humanity. We must be clear: the fight against hate is not only a moral imperative, it is also a matter of social responsibility. It requires us all — governments, institutions, organizations, and individuals—to take a stand. This is not an issue for any single community to face alone. The antidote to hatred is not just tolerance, but active and unwavering support for one another. It is through standing together that we show the strength of our values and the depth of our commitment to building a society where all can thrive.

We must not ignore this. Ignoring it will not make it go away. In the name of compassion and our collective future, we cannot let this hateful conduct take hold. It is time for all of us to speak out, to stand against this rising tide of intolerance, and to affirm the values that make our communities strong — diversity,

inclusion, and unwavering solidarity against hate. The time for complacency is over. We must collectively reject



Alberta Human Rights Commission photo

the rhetoric of fear, division, and hatred that seeks to fragment our communities. Let us be united in our resolve to create a more just and inclusive Alberta, where the voices of hate have no place to be heard. In the end, it is not only our communities that will be affected by the rise of hate—it is the very soul of our province, and our country. Let us stand firm, with courage and conviction, in defense of our shared values. Together, we can ensure that the Alberta we are proud to live in is a place where diversity is celebrated, and hate has no power.

Danielle Dolgoy is the Executive Director of Jewish Family Services Edmonton. She is a lifelong Edmontonian who's connection to this place echoes so many others in the community – her grandparents and great grandparents fled racial violence in Europe at the turn of the 20th century and found safety and each other on the cold Canadian prairie. Through her agency, she is committed to uplifting marginalized voices and providing care and support to all who are in need.

Roxanne Droppo is the Executive Director of Jewish Family Service Calgary, with over 30 years of experience in human services, driven by a deep commitment to the fundamental values of dignity, respect, and opportunity for all. She believes the fight against intolerance is not just a moral imperative but a social responsibility that requires us to stand together, fostering empathy, education, and understanding to dismantle the systems that perpetuate hate. Roxanne stands firm in her resolve to build a more compassionate and just Alberta, where diversity is celebrated, and hate has no place. Her life and work reflect a commitment to the shared values that define our province and our nation.



Wishing everyone a happy Passover



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Shalom! Happy Passover



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The very best Matzah Lasagna

By Sonya Sanford

This easy take on a Passover classic is sure to become a family favorite.

Once you're halfway into Passover, and the leftovers from seder are long gone, do you find yourself craving something that will scratch the itch for doughy bread and silky pasta? That's when it's time to whip up a matzah lasagna, or "matzagna" as it's more lovingly called. While the dish's exact origins are unknown (although it's likely an Italian Jewish creation), matzah lasagna strongly resembles Sephardic mina, a popular Passover matzah pie made with layers of cooked spinach and melty cheese.

Every family has their distinct way of preparing matzah lasagna; some insist on including cottage cheese in lieu of ricotta, others rely on torn fresh mozzarella instead of shredded, and some swear that it's essential to soak your matzah before you assemble the lasagna. So, what makes this matzah lasagna different from all the other matzagnas?

This recipe simplifies as many steps as possible by utilizing prepared ingredients, while leaving room to customize and personalize your matzah lasagna. While the ingredient list is short and simple, there are a few musts to maximize flavor. Basil and thyme added to the ricotta mixture offer a fresh, punchy, herbaceous note, and the sharp cheddar combined with mozzarella heightens the savoriness and depth. And it may seem like you're adding a huge amount of ricotta, but trust the process because matzah is more drying than a noodle and requires a heftier amount of filling. If you're feeling ambitious, you can even go the extra mile and make your ricotta and marinara from scratch. Sometimes, I also like to add in a layer of sauteed spinach or mushroom for a dose of fiber and nutrition.

Layered together and baked until browned and bubbly, matzagna is impossible to resist. Serving it to my family, my niece took one bite and enthusiastically exclaimed: "This tastes just like pizza!" followed by a request for seconds. Matzah lasagna is guaranteed to satisfy the kid in all of us.

Total Time: 1 hour. Yield: Serves 6-8.

Ingredients

6–7 sheets matzah, 3 ½ cups (1 jar/25 oz) marinara or your favorite tomato sauce, 2 (16 oz) containers whole-milk ricotta, 1 cup chopped basil + more for garnish, 4–5 sprigs thyme, leaves removed from stems, about 2 tsp, 1 large egg, 1 tsp kosher salt, ½ tsp black pepper, or to taste, 5 cups (16 oz) shredded low-moisture mozzarella, 1 ½ cups (5 oz) shredded cheddar cheese, ¼ cup grated parmesan (optional)

Instructions

Preheat the oven to 375°F.

Add the ricotta, chopped basil, thyme, egg, salt and pepper to a bowl, and mix until just combined.

Assemble the lasagna in a 9"x13" casserole dish that is at least 2.5"-3" deep. Start by adding 1 cup of the marinara to the bottom of the dish. Layer two sheets of matzah on the bottom, break as needed to fit them into a single layer. Top the matzah with 2 cups of the ricotta mixture (half of the mixture), and smooth it into an even layer with an offset spatula or the back of a spoon. Evenly top the ricotta with 2 cups of shredded

mozzarella and ½ a cup of shredded cheddar.

Repeat the process by dolloping 1 cup of sauce over the shredded cheese. Top the sauce with two sheets of matzah, the remaining 2 cups of the ricotta mixture, followed by 2 cups of shredded mozzarella, and ½ a cup of shredded cheddar.

For the last layer, top the cheese layer with two sheets of matzah, then finish it off with the remaining tomato sauce (if you enjoy a saucier lasagna, you can add an additional cup of tomato sauce over the top before you finish it off with the shredded cheeses). Add the remaining 1 cup of mozzarella and ½ cup of cheddar. Finally, sprinkle the parmesan over the top.

Cover the lasagna with foil, and bake for 30 minutes covered.

Uncover the lasagna and bake for an additional 15-20 minutes or until browned and bubbly on top. Allow to cool for 15 minutes before serving so that the lasagna can set and hold its shape.

Notes

This recipe requires one full jar of marinara, but if you like a saucier lasagna, add an additional cup (or a small 8 oz jar) of tomato sauce to the top of the lasagna.



Matzah Lasagna. Photo: Sonya Sanford

To make the lasagna ahead, bake for 30 minutes covered, remove from the oven and allow to fully cool. Refrigerate or freeze the lasagna. If refrigerated, reheat at 375°F for 15 minutes covered, and 15 uncovered; and if it's frozen, reheat for 20 minutes covered, and 20-25 minutes uncovered.

This story originally appeared on The Nosh.



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Jewish Senior Citizen’s Centre: Friendship, fun and fabulous programs

By Svetlana Pavlenko and Elaine Salkie

What do you know about our Jewish Senior Citizen’s Centre?

Have you heard about our delicious lunches and take-out food options or about our amazing fitness classes? Do you know about our amazing range of intellectually stimulating classes and lectures, friendly atmosphere and trips.

You are not too young to join. Our members range in age from 52 to 100 and it is time to break the stereotype that the Centre is only for old people because we offer fun, friendship and unique programs and activities for people of all ages to enjoy. Why not ask us for a copy of our bi-monthly newsletter or better still join us for lunch one day and see for yourself what we have to offer?

Our International Women’s Day celebration was a



CTeen *Cont. from page 10*

perspectives respectfully flying. Next, were Niggunim (soul stirring songs) and Kabbalah Shabbat service at 770: a truly moving experience.

Everyone then made their way to Shabbat dinner at the Ohelei Torah Ballroom. To accommodate over four thousand teens and their chaperones, five different spaces were organized within the venue to host dinner. Meanwhile, the young ladies attended the world’s largest girls’ Shabbat dinner. On both fronts dinner was scrumptious according to reports from the Edmonton group. With plentiful dessert offerings it was a slow walk back to their rooms that night. But, before returning to their beds, participants were joined by speaker Noam Buskila to hear about how to find light and joy no matter how trying the circumstances. While this took place, Spanish-speaking teens had the option to attend a Spanish-language Farbrenguen. For fans of 4X American Ninja Warrior, Jesse Orenshein was able to talk about his experience competing: kippah and all.

For a day of rest, Shabbat had a packed itinerary. There were both Ashkenazi and Sephardic Minyans held in the morning followed by a full line-up of activities. With multiple guest speakers and presentations, there was something for all interests.

great success! We would like to thank our amazing guest speaker Sarah Amato and the beautiful Royal Canadian Artillery Band that made this holiday very special. Our wonderful volunteers set the room and tables in a very festive way!

Purim at the Centre is always fun! This year Rabbi Mendy started our celebration by sharing insights about the holiday, followed by our funny and original Purimspiel, produced by long-time member Beryl Nahornick and then a delicious Purim lunch complete with Hamantaschen produced by our chef Daniella Drisdell.

Interested in travel? From time to time, you can join our experienced travellers who will share with you their experiences in and tips about countries they visited. You have a chance to join Lynnette and travel through Asia on Tuesdays, April 8 and May 13 at 1 p.m. Come early, at noon, because before these talks we will serve an Asian lunch (kosher of course) to complete the experience.

Perhaps, you know people who want to practice their Yiddish or Russian languages. Join our Zoom Mamaloshen Club every Wednesday at 1:30 p.m. or come and participate in Russian language programming every Wednesday at noon.

Our Not Boring Book Club facilitated by talented Edmonton writer Debby Waldman meets on Zoom every second Wednesday of the month. Debby often arranges for special guest writers to speak at these meetings. On April 9 at 10 a.m. Israeli writer Ayelet Tsaabari, author of “Song for the Brokenhearted” will join. Please note that in order to join our Book Club, you need to be a member of our Centre.

We have been collaborating with the Edmonton Indigenous community through the project From Survival to Thrival: Shared Historical Experiences since 2017. We hosted many interesting events such as “Growing Up in Edmonton” – historical panels, a

number of poetry presentations with talented Indigenous writers, special gathering at the kihcihkaw aski – Sacred Land – the place of “Spirit of Peace, Friendship, and Respect.” We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of Canadian Heritage the Government of Canada, which made it possible for us to develop, organize, and implement experiences that foster learning, sharing and mutual understanding of each other.

On April 28 and 29 we will welcome to the Centre a very special guest, Professor Dessa Sadovnick from the University of British Columbia to deliver two lectures focusing on Multiple Sclerosis and Alzheimer’s Disease. Please sign up and join us for lunch at 12 p.m. followed by the lectures at 1 p.m.

Are you a big movie fan? We will host a new five-week course “Hitchcock’s Masterpieces” with George Melnyk, Professor Emeritus of the University of Calgary, this May. You will have a chance to see the Hitchcock movies, enjoy lunch and join a Zoom lecture-discussion afterwards. Also, you can join us and enjoy Afternoon Movies (with popcorn) at the Centre, then participate in discussions facilitated by our President Sam Koplowicz.

On Sunday, April 27 at 10 a.m. we will be screening “Origin” (2 hours 21 minutes), a 2023 biographical drama film based on the life of Isabel Wilkerson. The film, written and directed by Ava DuVernay (Oscar Nominee) looks at the caste system in the USA, Germany and India. The President of Congress of Black Women of Canada: Edmonton Chapter Shirley Allder will facilitate a discussion after.

Our membership is only \$35 per year (September 1 till August 31) but it can change your life! Bring your children, friends or foes to the Centre – every person will find something special!

Just try our programs and lunches and meet caring and loving people at the Centre who will boost your energy and lighten your day! We are very grateful for our amazing volunteers who make your time at the Centre very enjoyable and memorable!

For more information, please call us 780-488-4241 or email programmer@jdciseniors.ca. See you at the Centre!

Sunday was the grand finale as the teens gathered for the great “Shine on” event for one more healthy dose of Jewish pride before returning to their respective cities. Of course, there was more eating and some social time to bid farewell to new friends. Each of the attendees received a sweatshirt as a keepsake of their Shabbat spent in Crown Heights with four thousand other Jewish youth. Almost like getting a yearbook signed, the teenagers ran around armed with Sharpies autographing one another’s hoodies. Our teenager proudly wears his garment which is covered with signatures from friends: new and old. I have been given very precise laundering instructions after being told: “I got every rabbi I met to sign it!”

The Edmonton group began their journey home late on Sunday, arriving very early Monday morning. Rebbetzin Drelich kept parents informed about flight delays, and there was certainly no traffic as the teens were being collected just shy of 2 am. But the young people arrived home somehow changed and were absolutely glowing with happiness and enthusiasm. Their ties to their shared Jewish identities fortified, they had returned home with more pride, strength, and a deeper sense of their connection to community. All those who traveled with Rabbi Drelich are no doubt already talking to their parents about next year!

Is it safe? *Cont. from page 13*

about 50 rockets had fallen, killing a young Arab Muslim man who was helping his brothers and sisters get into the bomb shelter.

“He was struck directly by a rocket, and they couldn’t find any parts to bury, it was that bad.”

Silver has curtailed some of her practice, because it involved driving to treat patients in Karmiel, and running the gauntlet of Hezbollah rockets and shelling hitting her car.

“I’m 72 years old. Getting out of my car during a missile attack and lying on the ground is scary and not comfortable. So I stopped working in Karmiel. So it profoundly affected our work.”

Soon, she will be bidding farewell to the family of evacuees from Even Menachem, who were renting her lower floor after Oct. 7. The husband lost his job managing a store in Nahariya because of the constant rocket barrages which prevented him from making the commute. But the couple is determined to return home shortly, with their three children.

Financial problems are also motivating some returnees, Silver believes.

“A lot of the evacuees had problems renting apartments. Some not good people were jacking up the prices,” Silver said, adding she’s spoken to a lot of people who will go back. “I have many patients who have been evacuated... and what they tell me is they can’t afford to live anywhere else.”

During their absence, the Israeli government paid for the evacuees’ shelter costs, either with free hotel accommodation, or provided funds to rent apartments and living costs.

Kfar Vradim’s community became prominently featured after Oct. 7 because it was the hometown of one of the Israeli hostages captured into Gaza: Romi Gonen. The 24-year-old woman was taken by Hamas terrorists from the Nova music festival, and released only in January 2025, during the second ceasefire. Gonen’s cousin, Maureen Leshem, lives in Toronto, and has been tirelessly campaigning for the release of her relative and all the hostages.

Yarden Gonen told Israeli media she and her sister would not likely come back to live in Kfar Vradim, a town of over 5,000 people, except for a visit, because the community was “crushed” by the IDF’s Iron Dome unit there.

Back in Kfar Vradim, Esther Silver is more optimistic, and feels it is safe for evacuees to come back, as long as the IDF is ensuring peace.

Although she does have patients who, having been uprooted for nearly two years, will choose their new lives.

“Yesterday, just going to the beach, the place that we usually go to, [I saw] huge construction to repair

all the damage that was done during the war, and I think that’s going on everywhere, in Shlomi, all of the villages in the north, and hopefully the investments and the donations from abroad are going to speed that up, and obviously in the south which was totally devastated. But also up here we had a lot of damage, and I think that help is going to do a lot to encourage people to stay up here and to work. We need people to live here.”

Silver had an invitation for Jews still living in her native country, dealing with spiking antisemitism.

“Of course, any Canadians who are thinking of escaping Canada to a safer place, as ironic as it sounds, our village is building new houses, and they have a high quality of life, and I totally recommend it.”

Michal and Nir Zamir received their last government evacuation support payment in February.

Michal has just arrived in Edmonton to spend the Passover holidays with her husband, their son’s and their daughter’s families, and five of their nine grandchildren.

Their two other daughters remain in Israel. One, who is single, does not want to return to Metula for now. She is staying in Binyamina.

“She said maybe in a few years, maybe,” her mother said. “When she feels safe and she sees there’s no Hezbollah behind the border, then she might come back.”

Nir has forbidden their other daughter to bring her four children to Metula.

“Don’t come to sleep in *Savta’s* house, for now. We will tell you when to come, and it will be when we feel safer,” he said.

Nir may not return to Metula in person for quite some time. He is planning to remain in Edmonton, in a condo the couple bought. Michal, who will work remotely while in Canada, will go back to Metula in June.

“I hope you will come later,” she told her husband.

Michal is optimistic that Hezbollah has been weakened to the extent it is no longer able to wage war on northern Israel – after the IDF’s targeted assassinations last fall of Hassan Nasrallah and other terrorist leaders, as well as the exploding pagers operation injuring 3,000 Hezbollah members. A two-month long IDF ground and air incursion into southern Lebanon ended in November, 2024 with a U.S. brokered ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah.

“Maybe time will change. Maybe. I don’t know. I spoke to the Lebanese, and they said, they are against Hezbollah also, so maybe there’s a little light in the end,” she said, explaining that she hopes the future looks “pink.”



Dr. Esther Silver’s home in Kfar Vradim overlooks the border with Lebanon. (Supplied photo)

“Michal, you were always naive, and you’re still naive,” Nir replied.

“Nobody cannot even promise you 100 percent that from now to the future, it will be safe. We are Jewish people. We know that we’ll have to fight all our lives for our safety and religion, and whatever. We know that our great-grandchildren will have to serve the army and protect the country forever.

“There is no easy way.”

The couple’s roots in Metula go back two generations. Michal’s grandparents were among the pioneers who founded the community. Her mother was born there. Nir and Michal originally lived in Tel Aviv after they married, but nearly forty years ago, they pulled up stakes and moved to Metula.

“We were Zionists. We wanted to come to live in the northern border of Israel,” Nir said.


After Oct. 7, the couple didn’t flee Metula right away. Nir put on his army uniform, and, despite being decades older than the soldiers he was serving with, volunteered in a reserve unit to defend the town. But after a couple of weeks, the IDF ordered all the civilians to leave. Michal wouldn’t go without Nir.

“So they told me, ‘Okay, you’re too old for us. You have to leave.’ Nir recalled. “I wasn’t insulted, but I understood the idea. They didn’t want any citizens to live in the town during the war when nobody knew what’s really going to happen.”

While signs of life are returning to the border towns, including Metula, Nir thinks most young people will not come back, leaving his community devoid of a future.

“I think that Metula will become a very old town, with all the old people that are not so afraid of staying in the north, next to the border,” he predicted.

This article was originally published in The Canadian Jewish News (thecjn.ca).




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*Happy Passover,
Festival of Spring,
from the
Slawsky family*

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HAPPY PASSOVER



Wishing family & friends
a happy, healthy Passover
from Dr. Bernie Adler




Chag Sameach. Am Yisrael Chai,
from Darlene and Gordon Bushewsky
And Family




*Happy Pesach
to the entire community
from
The Belostotsky Family*

Wishing family & friends
a happy, healthy Passover from
Colin, Jen, Asher and Nooni Muscat




Wishing family & friends
a happy, healthy Passover
from Miriam Devins


*Wishing family & friends
a happy, healthy Passover
from Melanie, Robin, Lara
and Lisa Fainsinger*



Chag Sameach.
Am Yisrael Chai.
Nikki, Naomi, Stephanie,
Jared & Michla



*Happy Passover
from Mindy Jacobs
& Eoin Kenny*



*Happy Pesach
to the entire community
from
Lesley Jacobson*


Chag Sameach. Wishing all a happy
healthy Passover! Am Yisrael Chai!
Stephen Zepp, Karen Leibovici,
Adam and Anika Zepp and family




Wishing family & friends
a happy, healthy Passover
from The Morin Family

Wishing family & friends
a happy, healthy Passover
from Jackson, Joshua, Jennifer,
Slapshot, Thor and Dan


*Happy Pesach to the entire
community from Yuliya, Alexey,
Zach and Liza Massarsky*




Happy Pesach
to the entire community
from Tamara Aronov



*Happy Passover
from
Marcia Bercov and Family*




Chag Sameach. Am Yisrael Chai,
from Lauren Baram
and Lawrence Rodnunsky




Chag Sameach.
Am Yisrael Chai,
from Shulamit Gil
and Keith Dannacker

חנה חוה חן
*Leor, Ohad, Noa, Shai
and Daniella Eliyahu*


**Wishing family & friends
a happy, healthy Passover
from Karen & Abe Hering
and family**







Happy Pesach
to the entire community
from Jerome Yager
and Cintia Kezerle

Chag Sameach.
Am Yisrael Chai,
from Jacqui Katzeff,
David Bookhalter and Family





Wishing everyone
a Passover filled with
love, joy, & thoughts
of freedom
from Edward Lazar,
Kim Murch,
and Family




Wishing family & friends
a happy, healthy Passover
from The Lerner Families


*Wishing family & friends
a joyful Passover
from Regan, Dmitriy, Benji,
Jacob and Tamara Lipes*

Wishing family & friends a happy,
healthy Passover from the
Besney Family, the Markson Family
and the Tischler Family


Wishing family & friends
a happy, healthy Passover
from
Jesse, Eva, Lola and Ella



Chag Sameach. Am Yisrael
Chai, from Sharon Bookhalter
& Jerry Glasser





Wishing family & friends
a happy, healthy Passover
from
Judi Card




Chag Pesach Sameach.
We stand with Israel,
from Lev, Shayna,
& David Cairns

*Best wishes
for a happy, healthy Passover
from the family
of
Arlein Hoffman Chetner ז"ל*






Happy Passover to all our
friends and family from
Gabe & Sonia Goldberg
and family




*Best wishes
for a healthy, happy
Passover.
Am Yisrael Chai,
from
The Goldsand Family*

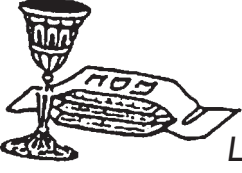


Happy Passover to the
entire community from
Jake Kondor
& Julia Rivait

Wishing family & friends
a happy, healthy Passover
from Michele
and
Josh Miller



*Best wishes
for a healthy, happy Passover.
Am Yisrael Chai,
from
Lena and Victor
Linetsky and Family*



חג פסח שמח

from Aliya Spigelman,
Andrew Gergely, and Family

חג שמח

from Megan, Gabe,
Dani, Elie,
and Nes Mandel

Wishing family & friends
a happy, healthy Passover
from Barbara Mandel

חג שמח

Chag Sameach.
Am Yisrael Chai,
from
Beryl Nahornick and Family

Wishing family & friends
a happy, healthy Passover
from Adam Paull
and Kathleen Coutts

חג שמח

Wishing family & friends
a happy, healthy Passover
from
Greg, Nomi and Maya

Wishing family & friends a happy,
healthy Passover from Josh, Sarah,
Jonah, and Samuel Raizman

חג שמח

Wishing family & friends a happy,
healthy Passover from Joel and
Christina Reboh & Family

Wishing family & friends a happy,
healthy Passover from
Dan & Mona Rosenberg and family

חג שמח

Chag Sameach.
Am Yisrael Chai, from
Carol and Ron Ritch

חג שמח

Happy Pesach
to the entire community
from Aubrey and Draytin
Rogerville

חג שמח

Wishing family & friends a
happy, healthy Passover
from Ron Sorokin
& Lisa Redmond and Family

The Edmonton Chapter
of Na'amat Canada thanks
the Edmonton Jewish Community
and the Alberta Jewish News
for participating in this
Holiday Greeting Fundraiser.
We wish everyone a safe
and happy Passover celebration.
Am Yisrael Chai.

חג שמח

Happy Pesach to the entire
community from Gaylene Soifer,
Jeff Rubin and family

חג פסח שמח

from
Howie & Debbie Sniderman

חג פסח שמח

from Faren, Ari, Noam,
and Maya Sniderman

Happy Passover
from Jane & Randy Soifer

עם ישראל חי

Happy Pesach to the entire
community from Michael, Olga,
Aaron and Joshua Muradov

Happy Pesach
to the entire community
from Gary & Marina
Marcus and family

Wishing family & friends a happy,
healthy Passover from Robin and
David Marcus and Family

חג שמח

Wishing family & friends
a happy, healthy Passover
from
Gail and Kevin Milner

חג שמח

Happy Passover from
Léah, Dylan, Carter, Ayla,
Arielle & Oscar Muscat

חג שמח

Chag Sameach.
Am Yisrael Chai,
from
Francie & Jon Nobleman

חג שמח

Wishing family & friends
a happy, healthy Passover
from Beverly and Stephen Shafran

חג שמח

Happy Passover
from
Natalie and Ken Soroka
and family



ПОРЯДОК СЕЙДЕРА

קידוש קאדדעש

Произносит Книдуш над бокалом вина.

ירחץ ירחץ

Омывают руки, но не произносит при этом обычного при омовении рук благословения.

כרפס קארпас

Обмакивают «карпас» в соленую воду, произносит благословение над овощами и кушают.

יהץ יחץ

Среднюю мацу, из трех находящихся на «кевре», делят на две части; большую часть прячут для «Афикоман».

מגיד מגיד

Начинается чтение Агады. До того, как младший в семье задаст вопросы «Ма ништа-на» наполняют второй бокал.

רחצה רחצה

Омывают руки для еды, но на этот раз с обычным благословением.

מוציא מצה מוציא

Произносит благословения «Хамощи» и «Ал ахилас мацо», и кушают кусок мацы, величиной с «казант».

מרור מרור

Произносит благословение «Ал ахилас морор» и съедают горькую зелень, величиной с «казант», предварительно обмакнув в «хазросет».

בורר בורר

Делают своеобразный сэндвич из двух кусков мацы, прокладывая между ними «хазерет»

שלחן עורר

Праздничная трапеза.

ברך ברך

Наполняют третий бокал вина и произносят застольную молитву.

צפון צפון

Съедают «Афикоман», величиной с «казант».

הלל הלל

Наполняют четвертый бокал вина и произносят специальную хвалебную молитву «Халле́л».

נרצה נרצה

После окончания правильного проведенного Сейдера можно быть уверенным, что он был любим Всевышним

HAPPY★PASSOVER



Happy Passover
from
Hersh and Jane Sobel



Happy Passover
from
the Sukalsky Family



Chag Sameach.
Am Yisrael Chai, from
Cheryl and Wayne Shur



Chag Sameach.
Am Yisrael Chai,
from
Murray and Reisa Sheckter

חג פסח שמח

from
Riva and Howard Shein
and family



*Best wishes for a healthy, happy
Passover. Am Yisrael Chai,*



*from
Sue and Alvin
Winestock*



Chag Sameach.
Am Yisrael Chai,
from Jonathan Tankel

*Happy Passover
from Keith and Lauren Tankel
and family*

Wishing family & friends
a happy, healthy Passover
from
Jason, Dani and Iyla Uretsky



Happy Pesach to the
entire community
from Joel G. Weisz

*Wishing everyone
a Passover filled with
love, joy, & thoughts
of freedom from
Allan, Syma
and Steven Uram*

חג פסח שמח
Rick & Nikki Vogel and Zachary,
Jordan, Kayla and Amanda



Happy Pesach
to the entire community
from
Eva and Sam Weisz



Wishing everyone
a Passover filled with love,
joy, & thoughts of freedom
from
Dalia, Allan, Tammy
and Mark Wolinsky



Chag Sameach.
Am Yisrael Chai,
from Pauline Uretsky



Wishing everyone
a Passover filled
with love, joy, &
thoughts of freedom

from
Connie and Danny Zalmanowitz



חג פסח שמח
from
Forrest, Anna,
Adina,
and Naomi



Chag Sameach.
Am Yisrael Chai,
from Jodi and Michael
Zabludowski

לשנה הבאה בירושלים



Wishing everyone in the community
a happy and healthy Passover.

Thank you for welcoming
Alberta Jewish News into your homes
each month and for participating
in these holiday greetings.
We are proud to be part of the
Edmonton Jewish Community.

From Deborah Shatz, Daniel Moser,
Maxine Fischbein
and Sandra Edwards

from the

Sources

by Eliezer Segal

One Passover in Vancouver

Like so many historical milestones, differences have arisen regarding the precise details of this encounter. Everyone remembers that it occurred on Passover, but they disagree about the date. She places it in 1922, when Passover began on Wednesday evening, and the meal in question occurred on Friday evening. He, on the other hand, recalled it as happening in 1921 when the first day of Passover fell on Shabbat.

Both versions concur that Esther and David Marks (originally: Marcowitz) of Vancouver were observing their normal custom of inviting visiting entertainers for a splendid Friday night meal.

The Marks were a wealthy and socially prominent couple, active in the general and Jewish communities. They had a special affection for theatrical performers. Those were the days of vaudeville, entertainers who would travel through circuits of theatres throughout North America. In Vancouver the most active venue for these shows was the old Orpheum, and many rising stars passed through it during that period.

That year one of the acts that was appearing at the Orpheum was the Marx Brothers. The Marks (not related to the Marxes) extended an invitation to the comedians, but in the end the only brother to show up for that Passover meal was not one of the notorious zany characters, but their straight man, Herbert Manfred Marx, known in their stage act as "Zeppo."

Zeppo arrived at the Marks house in the company of another performer, a frequent roomie of his, a comedian named Benjamin Kubelsky from Waukegan, Illinois. Zeppo persuaded the shy Benjamin to attend, assuring him that "he knew some fascinating Vancouver girls and it would be wild, with Canadian ale, Canadian rye, Canadian women and Canadian whoopee." Benjamin protested that the prospect held no attraction for him, but he consented to be dragged along nonetheless—only to discover that this was no rowdy fling, but a wholesome Jewish Shabbat meal (or seder, depending on which version we accept).

The nearest thing they encountered there to the wild Canadian women promised by Zeppo were the Marks' two teenage daughters, Ethel ("Babe") and Sadie, about nineteen and seventeen respectively. (The precise ages vary in the telling). Sadie tried to impress

the guests by dressing above her age and playing violin, but her efforts were not well received.

Kubelski was clearly bored, and he whispered audibly to Zeppo, "What did you bring me to meet these kids for? Let's get out of here!" This did not help ingratiate him in Sadie's estimation. Afterwards, she and some classmates attended some of Benjamin's performances in order to heckle.

A few years later the Marks family had moved to Los Angeles where Sadie was employed at the May Company department store. Kubelsky, now known by his stage name of Jack Benny, was performing in that city and befriended Sadie's older sister. Their acquaintance was renewed and went through many ups and downs, until they were married in a small Jewish wedding ceremony in Waukegan, attended only by immediate family, on Friday afternoon, January 14, 1927. He was unaware that this was the same silly teenage girl whom he had ignored at that Passover meal in Vancouver.

Neither Jack nor Sadie—who adopted the professional name Mary Livingstone—was particularly outspoken about their Judaism. Both of them identified their parents as "strictly Orthodox," whereas their adopted daughter Joan recalled that her grandparents "weren't particularly religious," though they lit Shabbat candles and were at home in Yiddish culture. I suspect that the discrepancy reflects differing expectations and stereotypes of what Orthodox Jews should be like.

Although it has been suggested that Jack Benny was uncomfortable with his Jewish identity, the reasons underlying this perception are not quite convincing.

His proverbial miserliness has been criticized as the exploitation of an antisemitic trope, but it blends with a bundle of other personality flaws, especially his vanity, that somehow make him come across as endearing.

The fact that he and Mary relinquished their original Jewish names apparently stemmed (at least initially) from other motives. While still rising in the showbiz ranks Jack was pressured by performers with similar names (Jan Kubelik and Ben Bernie) to maintain a clear differentiation from them. Sadie took

the name of "Mary Livingstone" when she was hired to replace an actress who was already playing a character of that name. In any case, there was no shame in having a Jewish name in a profession that was dominated by borscht-belt stars like Jolsen, Jessel and Cantor. Even gentiles like Bing Crosby were constantly throwing in Yiddish expressions. In a scratchy recording of a rehearsal of his radio show it is possible to hear Jack sharing crude Yiddish insults with his producer Hilliard Marks (Mary's brother) about one of the crew members.

Jack's ensemble often included a parody of a thickly accented Yiddish immigrant, a carryover from an old vaudeville convention now known as "Jewface," which had undeniable antisemitic overtones. And yet Benny's exemplifications of this stereotype—the pushy Shlepperman and the whimsical Mr. Kitzel—were both depicted affectionately.

I don't think any Jewish religious traditions were ever mentioned on the show except in the occasional Mr. Kitzel sketch. Jack did devote shows every year to Christmas and Easter, but without any religious content. The Christmas shows were about shopping for gifts, with Jack driving the store clerk crazy with his indecisiveness; and Easter was limited to the parade or egg-hunt.

His well-known generosity (the real Jack Benny was the opposite of his tightfisted stage persona) extended to Jewish and Zionist causes.

If the crucial Passover meal in Vancouver was actually a seder, then it presumably included the recitation of "Next year in Jerusalem!" Jack would fulfil that prayer, including a visit to the Western Wall, in September 1943 as part of an entertainment tour for the United States armed forces. He again performed in the Jewish state in 1972, two years before his death.

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

Pesach: A time for gratitude

By Rabbit Nisan Andrews



Rabbi Nisan Andrews

On Seder night, we read in the Haggadah: "It is related of Rabbi Eleazer, Rabbi Joshua, Rabbi Elazer son of Azariah, Rabbi Akiva, and Rabbi Tarfon, that they once assembled (on the night of Passover) in Bnei Brak. They continued discoursing the Exodus all that night until their disciples came, and said: Our teachers! It is time to read the morning Shema."

While it is understandable that Rabbi Akiva celebrated Pesach in Bnei Brak since he lived there,

the others lived in Lod, Yavneh, and Pek'in. What were they doing in Bnei Brak instead of observing the Seder with their families and fulfilling the mitzvah of teaching their children on this important night?

The early commentaries explain that the Jewish people were grieving the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash (the Temple) and the loss of control of Israel to the Romans. While everyone was distraught over the ruin of Jerusalem, Rabbi Akiva was determined to inspire hope. He summoned a gathering on Pesach night with the generation's leaders to explore how they could save Eretz Yisrael. They converged in the caves during the Bar Kochba rebellion, hidden from sunlight, glorifying God for all He had done for them in the past, thanking Him for the present, and expressing hope for the future.

Rabbi Akiva believed that by expressing gratitude to God, the Jewish people could invoke Hashem's mercy and secure the land of Israel for themselves. For many years, it seemed that this plan was unsuccessful; Israel was not returned to the Jews, and the Temple remained in ruins. Additionally, some of those who gathered that night were later executed by the Romans for sedition.

It is possible that they were ultimately successful.

Perhaps, due to this clandestine assemblage, events gradually unfolded, leading to our return to Israel today. Maybe it was that Seder that elicited Heaven and contributed to the establishment of the modern State of Israel.

The Kabbalists explain that God acts in concert with the inner emotional reality of man; thus, the more we appreciate Eretz Yisrael and express our gratitude to God, the more secure Israel becomes. As such, a Seder can become an opportunity to achieve something profound.

At the Seder, we can reflect on the miraculous achievement of the Jewish people in reclaiming our ancient homeland. We can express our appreciation for the remarkable revival of Judaism in Israel and around the world. Additionally, we can consider the many miracles in our lives and convey our gratitude to God for guiding us through our challenges.

Pesach is a time to feel genuine gratitude for God, Israel, our survival, our relationship with the Master of the Universe, and each other.

Rabbi Nisan Andrews is the Rabbi at House of Jacob Mikveh Israel in Calgary.

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