

Renowned Jewish activist Jonny Daniels was in Calgary on October 20 as a special guest speaker in support of the Calgary UJA Campaign. He also spent an incredible inspirational and moving afternoon visiting and sharing stories with several of Calgary's Holocaust Survivors. Thank you to Marnie Bondar for facilitating the visit. Photo by Marnie Jazwicki.

On Nov. 15, *The Road Between Us: The Ultimate Rescue* is a must see!

By Ari Sniderman, LJI Reporter

Editor's note: The Road Between Us: The Ultimate Rescue is being screened on November 15 at the Beth Tzedec Calgary Jewish Film Festival. Don't miss this opportunity to see this award winning film. For a full festival schedule visit bethtzedec.ca.

On Friday, October 13, 2023, there were 15 students at Talmud Torah. My son and one other student were alone in kindergarten. The Hamas-inspired “Day of Rage” had all but shuttered our home for Jewish learning in Edmonton. Explaining this to some non-Jewish friends, they were unaware of the impact that events in Israel were having on Jewish life in Edmonton. Bringing in beer-league hockey players as part of my support system became a powerful way to deflect the feeling of hatred that seemed to suffocate our community for the following weeks and years.

The Anti-Defamation League also cites the promotion of allies as a top strategy in combatting antisemitism. Like my son and his classmate, my friend and I were alone in the theatre on October 12, 2025, as the first hostages were being transferred to the Red Cross. We were alone in the theatre to see *The Road Between Us: The Ultimate Rescue*. So, the Friends of JNF promotion to give free tickets to the documentary to non-Jewish allies in some communities made perfect sense.

The film intends to bring in allies, and I hope that the theatre at the Beth Tzedec Calgary Jewish Film Festival will be filled with them. And it should be easy to find allies of mothers and fathers. Allies of sons and

daughters, of grandparents and large dogs. Because the fact they are Zionist and Jewish, proud members of Kibbutz Nahal Oz, is not the reason that retired General Noam Tibon and his wife, Dr. Gali Tibon, set off to save their son Amir, his wife Miri, and their two daughters on October 7th, 2023. Noam and Gali needed to save their family. Allies of families can certainly relate.

The Road Between Us portrays the indomitable actions of Noam and Gali between the tranquil morning beach in Tel Aviv and the nightmare at Kibbutz Nahal Oz as described by the couple themselves. Interviews of Amir and Miri as well as Nahal Oz members, security forces, and other survivors and heroes are woven throughout. As Kibbutz members barricaded themselves, the pair fearlessly traversed the highways and dirt roads in the line of fire.

Noam and Gali save lives along the way, including actively fighting soldiers and ghostly escapees from the Nova festival. Ultimately the two take different paths to heroism, with Noam ending up fighting his way into Nahal Oz. There, he and two IDF squads reinforce the local security forces, who had been the only line of defence for 11 hours, taking actions which save hundreds of lives. When Noam and Amir are re-united, allies of Kleenex can be added to the list of those who should be inclined to join the audience.

The film’s award-winning, Toronto-based creator, Barry Avrich, famously remarked that *The Road Between Us* is “wrapped in the flag of a family, not a country.” It is also billed as “a thriller,” though it wins



"The Road Between Us" is screening on Nov. 15 as part of the Calgary Jewish Film Festival. For tickets: bethtzedec.ca.

awards as a documentary. This unique intertwining of thrilling personal narrative with gut-wrenching archival evidence sets the film apart. It is suited for allies of suspense and cinema, allies of community and love.

The Road Between Us reminds us that on October 7th there were heroes who died. There were communities destroyed and trust in the foundation of our only safe haven that was shaken. It urges us to extol heroes who lived. It implores us to promote Israel as a place where people love their communities and families. Calgarians, make sure you see this film! And bring your allies and some tissues.

‘Canada Strong’ budget 2025 criticized for being weak on community security

By Joel Ceausu, The Canadian Jewish News

The Liberal government’s “Canada Strong” budget appears to be weak in at least one regard, says the

Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA).

Budget 2025, announced on Nov. 4, failed to invest in community security, says a CIJA statement released minutes after the budget’s tabling. CEO Noah Shack stated that during the election, “Prime Minister Mark Carney committed to ‘significantly increase the annual budget of the Canada Community Security Program (CCSP),’ and told our community that ‘increased security costs amidst rising antisemitism should not be borne by the Jewish community alone.’ Today’s budget failed to deliver on these promises.”

Indeed, the sole mention of the CCSP in the 493-page document is a page 194 announcement that the

Minister of Public Safety will engage with impacted communities and reform the program, “to ensure Canadians are no longer afraid because of who they are, how they worship, or where they gather. More details to be announced in due course.”

Shack told The CJN there has not only been “an alarming rise in the targeting of the Jewish community, but also a significant rise in the costs associated with that, and it’s disappointing that there was no additional funding allocated in the budget.” He said his first look at the budget was to see how the Carney government would follow up on its commitment. “We were hopeful that that would be addressed with a funding commitment in the budget, instead, there’s a commitment to undertake a process to refine the program.”

The CCSP replaced the Security Infrastructure Program last year, and has been a crucial resource to enhance security, disbursing more than \$40 million to more than 940 projects helping all Canadian communities at risk of hate-motivated crimes to date. That’s a sum equal to the annual amount spent solely by Canada’s Jewish community, which comprises less than 1 per cent of the country’s population.

The CJN asked the office of Public Safety Minister Gary Anandasangaree, who in September visited a targeted Montreal-area synagogue, why the program was excluded, and if an announcement is coming parallel to the budget process. The query was directed to the Department of Finance, an official simply responding with the same text found in the budget document.

Continued on page 11

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Randy Soifer z”l

would like to acknowledge and thank the many relatives, friends and community members for their overwhelming kindness and support that embraced us in memory of our beloved husband, father, brother, uncle and zaida.

We truly appreciate all of the kind expressions of condolence that we received through visits, phone calls, emails, text messages, memorial donations and contributions to the shiva.

The outpouring of love, compassion and generosity has been a source of great comfort and strength.

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Calgary Jewish Academy appoints new CEO, Jordan Balaban

The Calgary Jewish Academy Board of Directors has announced the appointment of Jordan Balaban as the school's new Chief Executive Officer. This appointment follows a review of the school's leadership structure, leading to the adoption of a shared leadership model that pairs a CEO and Principal to ensure continued growth, operational strength, and academic excellence.

During this period of transition, Nicole Weber provided crucial leadership as Interim Executive Director, helping to stabilize operations ahead of Principal Shelly Gelfand's arrival in August 2025, and supporting the school's progress through this year. The CJA community is deeply grateful for Nicole's dedication and partnership, and is pleased that she will continue to contribute in a consultative capacity as needed.

Jordan Balaban is a respected entrepreneur and community leader, serving as co-founder and President of Greengate Power, one of Alberta's foremost renewable energy companies. Under his

leadership, Greengate delivered nearly 1,500 MW of wind and solar projects, representing over \$2 billion in investment.

A proud CJA alumnus, Jordan has remained deeply connected to the school – including leading the Senior Boys Basketball Team to a championship in 2023–2024 – and is a dedicated advocate for Jewish community life in Calgary. He has served as Co-Chair of the Calgary Jewish Federation and as a Board Member of the Calgary Public Library Foundation, and was named one of *Avenue Magazine's Top 40 Under 40* in 2021.

Jordan believes strongly in the role of Jewish education to build community, identity, and future leaders. His passion for the Calgary Jewish Academy is rooted not only in his personal experience as a student, but in his hope to one day see his young son attend the school that helped shape his own Jewish identity.

The CJA community extends a warm welcome to



Jordan Balaban was recently appointed CEO of Calgary Jewish Academy.

Jordan Balaban as he begins this exciting new chapter of leadership.

For information about Calgary Jewish Academy visit cja.ab.ca. To connect with the Calgary Jewish Academy's leadership team, contact: Shelly Gelfand, Principal, gelfands@cja.ab.ca or Jordan Balaban, CEO, balabanj@cja.ab.ca

Book your Chanukah greeting today

Chanukah is approaching and AJNews is once again celebrating with two special editions – one for Calgary and one for Edmonton. It is more important than ever that we have a community newspaper to connect us and you can show your appreciation by purchasing holiday greetings in the newspaper three times a year – Rosh Hashana, Chanukah, and Passover. There are three sizes available – small for \$36, medium for \$72 and large for \$180 – something to suit any budget. If you enjoy receiving the newspaper each month, this is a great way to let the whole community know it.

Your participation helps us pay for printing and mailing. It also allows us to give generous discounts to our Jewish organizations to help them advertise and promote their events. We also provide further discounts to community members for personal notices of appreciation, milestones and obituaries.

Each month we send bundles of newspapers to the schools, shuls and other gathering places. In Calgary, newspapers can be picked up at the Paperny Family JCC, Beth Tzedec, Temple B'nai Tikvah, House of Jacob Mikveh Israel, Jewish Family Services Calgary, Calgary Jewish Academy, Halpern Akiva Academy and Chabad of Alberta. They are also available in our Blue Box in front of Glenmore Landing Safeway and at Grumans Delicatessen.

In Edmonton, newspapers can be picked up at Talmud Torah, Bliss Baked Goods, Beth Shalom, Beth Israel, Temple Beth Ora, Jewish Federation of Edmonton office, OPH, Jewish Senior Citizens Centre, Chabad of Edmonton and Jewish Family Services. Also at our Blue Box in front of Callingwood Safeway, at the



European Market in Callingwood Shopping Centre and at our Blue Box in front of BMO in Wolf Willow.

If you've already pre-booked your greetings with us – thank you! Otherwise in the coming weeks, you will be approached to purchase a greeting in AJNews – by Sandy Fayerman in Calgary or by a Talmud Torah student in Edmonton. Please say yes and book the greeting through them, or by calling 780.421.7966 or sending an email to albertajewishnews@gmail.com.

You can also book your greeting online at albertajewishnews.com/greetings. Our booking system allows you to book one holiday at a time or several at once – and the site allows you to specify the size of greeting that you'd like as well as your choice of holiday message. You can also now pay for greetings when you book them – on a secure site – or pay later with a cheque or eft.

The holidays are a time to connect with family and friends, and this is our way of connecting with each of you. See you soon, on the greeting pages of AJNews!

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A new roof, a renewed future

By Natalie Soroka

There’s something deeply meaningful, even Jewish, about putting a new roof on a building. It’s more than construction; it’s about *shmirat haBayit*, the mitzvah of safeguarding our communal home. A roof offers shelter, security, and stability. It’s what allows everything underneath it, learning, community, tradition, to flourish.

Since 1912, Edmonton Talmud Torah has been a cornerstone of Jewish life in this city. A place where education, Jewish values, and community come together. Our current building, which opened in 1997, has carried this mission forward, welcoming generations of students into classrooms filled with curiosity, connection, and Jewish identity.

But just as our tradition teaches *chadesh yameinu k’kedem*, to renew our days as of old, we also recognize that sacred spaces need care. Earlier this year, the Edmonton Talmud Torah Society made the essential decision to replace the aging roof of our school. After

decades of service, it began to show its wear, leaking in places and no longer providing the protection our students and community deserve. These decisions are costly, but necessary. A reflection of *achrayut*, our shared responsibility for one another and for the future.

Construction began in June, right after the school year ended. By October, the work was completed, achieved thanks to thoughtful planning and the dedicated efforts of those committed to our school’s well-being.

But the new roof is more than just a structural upgrade. It’s an investment in *dor l’dor*, from generation to generation. It ensures that our students can continue to learn, celebrate, and build community in a space that is safe, warm, and welcoming.

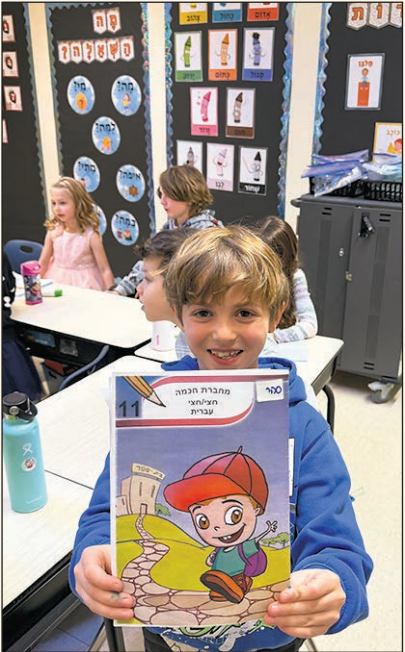


Special thank you to Board Member Barry Slawsky (left) and Building Chairman James Friedman (right), pictured above, for their hard work, time, dedication, skill and successful effort with the Talmud Torah roof replacement. Yasher Koach!

This project reflects the strength of our *kehillah*, the vision of our leadership, the generosity of supporters, and the deep-rooted value we place on education, continuity, and care. It’s a physical improvement, but also a symbolic one: a statement that our commitment to Jewish life in Edmonton is strong and enduring.



Talmud Torah students were eager to return to the classroom after the teachers’ strike, excited to resume their learning, reconnect with friends, and re-establish their daily routines.



THANK YOU

We are deeply grateful to the **Jewish Federation of Edmonton** and its annual **UJA campaign** for supporting Edmonton Talmud Torah Society (TTS) families through the Integrated Bursary Program (IBP). For the 2025–2026 school year, 40 of our K–6 families received bursary support, helping make Jewish education more accessible.

Federation and TTS share a vital mission: no child should be turned away due to financial need. Your donations to UJA make this possible. Please consider donating to the 2025 UJA campaign. Your support truly makes a difference.

2025–2026
Board of Directors

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A MESSAGE FROM CEO STACEY LEAVITT-WRIGHT

As we navigate a time of rising antisemitism and global uncertainty, our strength lies in our unity, resilience, and unwavering commitment to one another. This is a decisive moment for our community—a period to reaffirm who we are, what we stand for, and how we help each other.

The Jewish Federation continues to be a vital force in ensuring our community remains strong, safe, and connected. At the heart of this work is the United Jewish Appeal (UJA) campaign, which fuels everything we do—from supporting vulnerable populations and advocating for Jewish interests, to fostering Jewish education and identity. Your support of UJA

is not just appreciated—it is essential. It is the backbone of our collective efforts and the engine that drives meaningful change.

Our connection to Israel continues to be a pillar of our identity and purpose. We are proud to share that our partnership with Partnership2Gether (P2G) is being reinvigorated, bringing new opportunities for engagement, collaboration, and mutual support between our community and our partners in Israel. These ties are more than symbolic—they are a living bridge that strengthens Jewish peoplehood across borders.

Looking ahead, we are excited to be moving

forward with the Jewish Community Centre (JCC) project, a vision that will create a vibrant hub for Jewish life, learning, and community. This initiative represents our commitment to building for the future—a space where generations can gather, grow, and thrive together. We expect to share more about this project at our upcoming annual general meeting on Wednesday, December 3.

Now more than ever, we must stand together. Let us continue to show up for each other, to invest in our shared future, and to lead with courage and compassion. Thank you for being a part of this journey.

Register for our upcoming events at jewishedmonton.org.



As One
We strengthen
community.

You are invited to:

Annual general meeting
Wednesday, December 3
7 p.m.
Beth Israel Synagogue

Read the official notice at jewishedmonton.org.

MARCH
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April 11– 26, 2026
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Bursaries available

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If you are a high school student in Edmonton, you can join this program to:

- Combat antisemitism through fostering respect and understanding between Jewish and non-Jewish students.
- Develop your leadership skills.

Be part of kickstarting the Student to Student program in Edmonton.

Now accepting applications for the 2025-26 school year.

For more information on becoming involved as an ambassador:
Contact Chloe at chloes@edjfed.org

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Two Sundays each month
9:30-11:30 a.m.
Talmud Torah School Gymnasium
Register at jewishedmonton.org
\$70 for the whole season or \$40 for November to January or February to April

- Sunday, November 9 – PJ Library
- Sunday, November 23 – Shalom Playtime
- Sunday, December 14 – PJ Library Chanukah Program
- Sunday, January 11 – Shalom Playtime
- Sunday, January 25 – PJ Library Tu B'Shevat Program
- Sunday, February 8 – Shalom Playtime
- Sunday, February 22 – PJ Library Purim Program
- Sunday, March 8 – Shalom Playtime
- Sunday, March 29 – PJ Library Passover Program
- Sunday, April 12 – Shalom Playtime
- Sunday, April 26 – PJ Library

Give today at:
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Jewish Federation
OF EDMONTON
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Jonny Daniels *Cont. from page 1*

participated in its restoration.

Later that evening, the Survivor Torah ended up at Beth Israel in time for Daniels' presentation. Before an audience of about 150, he discussed an array of current events in Israel and the Jewish world before taking questions. He began his lecture saying "What an amazing time it is to be Jewish. What an unbelievable gift it is to be part of this nation."

When asked "what can I do to prepare my kids for antisemitism they might encounter in junior high and beyond?" Daniels replied: "The most important thing you can do for your kids today is teach them to be proud that they are Jewish. To be very, very proud." When asked what to do to gain support, he said we should share Judaism with our coworkers and neighbours, invite them to light candles, bring them into our community, and be willing to discuss what they are seeing about Israel on Instagram and how it affects us.

After his Israel affairs lecture, Daniels unveiled the Survivor Torah and gave attendees the opportunity to inscribe letters. In front of the community, survivors and their descendants explained why the project was meaningful to them. As they contributed their letters, the impact of the act was poignant and obvious. Tears and hugs from participants and witnesses were abundant throughout the sanctuary.

In a more intimate setting, Daniels ended his visit to Edmonton at the Seniors Centre the following morning. Anna Linetsky was the first to put ink to parchment. Anna was six years old when the Nazis invaded her home of Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine. She had one word to describe her experience inscribing the Torah: "emotional." After a pause, she continued to pour out her thoughts.

"I was in tears," she said, "when I was talking to him. I didn't know that I would be writing in a real Torah with a real feather and ink." It transported Anna back to Ukraine and the 1940s. It was like being in shul before the war. It was returning something taken from her. To those with the opportunity to write

their own letter, Anna says:

"I put my arm on Jonny's and it was a very special moment in my life. I never thought in my life I would write in the Torah. I traveled six months from Dnipro to Turkmenistan to escape the Nazis. My cousins and my grandfather were murdered by Nazis and Ukrainians. I wrote a letter in the Torah and dedicated it to my mother, Yocheved. My children are proud of me." My interview with Anna was then interrupted as she got news of the birth of her second great-grandchild!

Arkady Karpilovsky was one of the last to print a letter at the Senior's Centre. Arkady relayed the harrowing stories of his parents and grandparents, and explained that as he grew he became an accomplished violinist. Arkady had even brought his violin to the Centre for the occasion. After writing in the Torah, Arkady retrieved his violin and put on an impromptu concert. As the Survivor Torah was rolled up and placed in its case, Arkady played "A Song for the Mothers."

The last words of Ki Tetzei are "You must not forget." I will not forget the looks of sorrow on the faces of community members inscribing the Survivor Torah, and I will not forget their looks of relief once their letters were forged. I hope the scroll is fully restored soon, and that every living survivor has the transformational opportunity to inscribe a letter in the Torah dedicated to their legacy.

Jewish Family Services is committed to the well-being of survivors in Calgary and Edmonton and ensures they can access the services available to



Jonny Daniels and the Survivor Torah, with Edmonton Holocaust Survivor Ann Davis Sexter and her three daughters. Photo by Tammy Vineberg.

them through funding from the Claims Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany.

For more information in Edmonton, please contact JFSE at (780) 454-1194. For information on the Claims Conference program in Calgary, please contact JFSC at 403-287-3510.

Ari Sniderman is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.



Activist and Holocaust Educator Jonny Daniels brought the Survivor Torah to Edmonton and members of the survivor community had a special opportunity to scribe a letter in the Torah in memory of their loved ones. Photos by Tammy Vineberg.



✓

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Chanukah is coming....



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Noa Tishby will be in Calgary December 7

On December 7, B’nai Brith Calgary will welcome one of the leading voices of Israel activism: Noa Tishby. She is an acclaimed Israeli actor, producer and a best-selling author and has been a leader in pro-Israel activism for over a decade. She will be the guest speaker and honoured guest in Calgary – in conversation with Amanda Eskenasi, former National Director for the B’nai Brith League for Human Rights and current Director of Education for Honest Reporting Canada.

Tishby has become one of the most prominent and compelling voices advocating for Israel and fighting antisemitism worldwide. Her ability to speak truth with clarity and passion is both rare and urgently needed. She speaks directly to the challenges that North American Jewish communities face today, offering not only the facts but also empathy, historical context, and a message of resilience.

“We are really fortunate to have a speaker of Noa’s calibre to our event in Calgary,” said Howard Silver, one of the event organizers. “This is more than just a speaking event – it’s a moment to educate, inspire, and strengthen our voice against hate.”

Tishby was recently interviewed by *National Post*, just ahead of the second anniversary of the horrific attacks on Israel by Hamas and before the return of all the living hostages. When asked about Trump’s 20 point plan for peace, she replied, “I pray to God that Qatar will convince Hamas to say yes to this plan. What’s extraordinary about it is that for the first time, Hamas is isolated by the Arab world. For the first time, they’re kind of acknowledging – some fully, some kind of half – an acknowledgement, from Saudi Arabia to the UAE to Turkey to Indonesia, that the war has to end, and they have isolated Qatar and Hamas.

“To bring all these Arab countries together to stand as a united front against Hamas and to kind of acknowledge, to some extent, that Hamas simply took it too far and they cannot continue to rule Gaza, is absolutely extraordinary. Yes, Hamas needs to come to the table. If Hamas doesn’t agree, then I don’t even know how much more hell can break loose for the Palestinian people, but it is an absolutely extraordinary plan.

“Israel defended itself. Israel didn’t start this war. Didn’t want this war, but has to win this war. And nobody wins in wars. Everybody loses. But what Israel wanted the entire time was return the hostages and get Hamas to not rule Gaza anymore. And effectively, this is the plan.

“So look, Hamas is a Jihadi terrorist organization that is committed to destroying Israel, killing the Jews, and dying as martyrs for their 72 virgins. That’s who they are. They don’t hide it. So who knows what’s going to happen? But this was an extraordinary step.”

To read the full October 5 interview by Reporter Dave Gordon visit nationalpost.com.

Tishby will be joined on the bimah by Amanda Eskenasi, an educator, researcher, and analyst with over a decade of experience in Jewish advocacy and public education. She has led national and international initiatives combating antisemitism, developed curriculum and training programs for schools and community organizations, and played a key role in shaping public discourse on Jewish identity, human rights, and misinformation. With a background that bridges academia, grassroots activism, and policy engagement, Amanda brings both intellectual rigor and practical expertise to her work. Her research has been cited by NGOs, academic institutions, and government bodies around the world, and she has been a frequent guest in international media, offering expert insight on antisemitism and contemporary Jewish issues.

Amanda is a PhD candidate at York University, where her scholarship focuses on cultural narratives, systems of authority, and the politics of representation and identity.

In the lead-up to the event, B’nai Brith is once again reaching out to its members and Jewish Calgary to help them continue their generous support of charitable organizations and causes with emphasis on those most in need. As with all B’nai Brith Calgary initiatives, this is a fundraising event with all net proceeds donated to local Calgary charities.

According to the Calgary B’nai Brith website, proceeds from BB events have, over the years, added up to four million dollars allocated to a wide range of charitable organizations including support for Jewish schools, synagogues, youth programs including student groups and Camp BB Riback, seniors’ programs and heritage projects.

B’nai Brith also has a proud history of support for a range of causes beyond the Jewish community, including local health initiatives. They have previously given to the Libin Cardiovascular Institute, Prostate Cancer, and Kids Cancer Care and contributed toward the building of accessible playgrounds.

The 2025 B’nai Brith event takes place December 7 at Beth Tzedec Synagogue. Doors open at 1 pm.



Noa Tishby in Jaffa in 2021. (Wikipedia photo by Alon Shafransky.)

Tickets at \$72 per adult and \$36 per student can be purchased and donations can be made at <https://bnaibrithcalgary.org/buy-a-ticket/> or by calling the B’nai Brith Calgary office at (403) 255-6554.



B'NAI BRITH

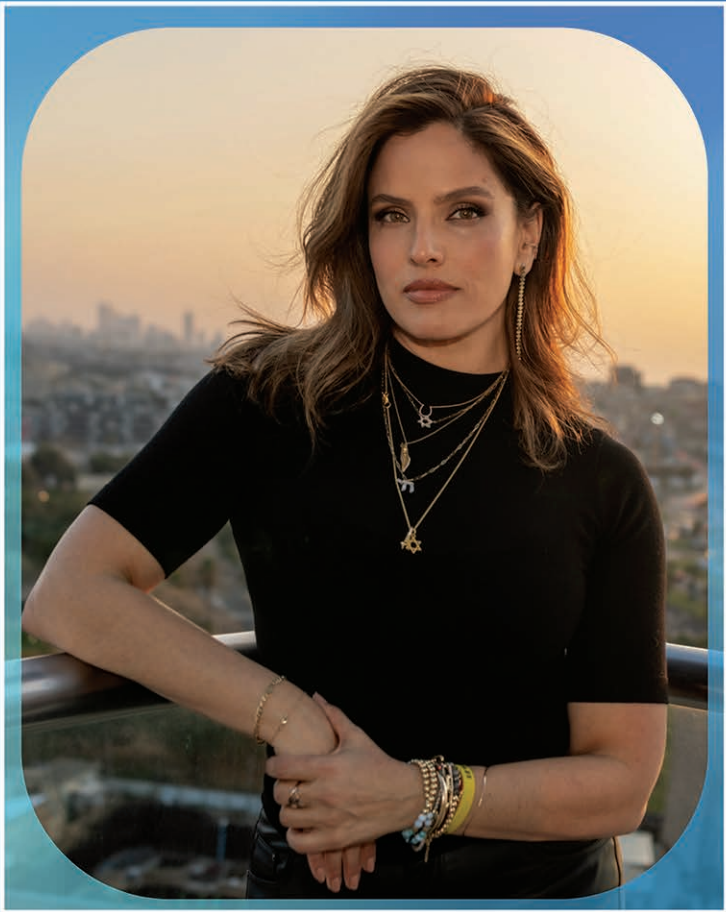
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IN CONVERSATION WITH

NOA TISHBY

New York Times bestselling author and Israel's former Special Envoy for Combating Antisemitism





Special Guest Moderator

Amanda Eskenasi

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1:30pm Program Begins

Sponsorship Information: 403.255.6554

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Calgary Jewish Federation
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The power of community.

jewishcalgary.org



A MESSAGE FROM ROB NAGUS

Dear Jewish Calgary,

The High Holidays have passed, the municipal elections are behind us, and we congratulate our new Mayor, **Jeromy Farkas**, wishing him every success in his new role. The Blue Jays made our country proud but ultimately left many of us heartbroken. And while life continues here at home, we all remain deeply aware of events unfolding overseas.

These are truly historic times for the people of Israel. The living hostages have finally returned home as we collectively mourn and await closure for those who did not survive. Through it all, Israelis continue to embody the resilience, determination, and spirit that have defined their story since the nation's founding.

Having recently returned from Israel as part of our **Coast-to-Coast Partnership** with Federation leaders from across Canada, I was reminded again of the strength and hope that define our partner communities. Together with local Calgarians **Cathy and Marty Cole**, **Joyce Kerr**, and **Rachel Simantov**, I visited the Galilee Panhandle (Etzba HaGalil) to

witness firsthand both the challenges and the inspiring progress being made.

While the region is calmer than during my last visit in March, it is clear that much remains to be done—not just to rebuild what was lost, but to create a better future by investing in youth, education, and community capacity. We received numerous thoughtful proposals for meaningful initiatives that will strengthen and uplift the people of the north.

It was also an honour to represent **Calgary Jewish Federation** at the **Cornerstone Ceremony for the new Senate Building at Tel Hai College** (soon to be Tel Hai University). This institution will serve as a powerful driver of growth, opportunity, and development for the entire region.

Back home, our **annual UJA Campaign** is off to a strong start, thanks in large part to a highly successful event featuring **Jonny Daniels**, chaired by **Melissa Mendelman and Tamar Zenith**. Under their leadership, we reached a broad audience—including many non-Jewish allies—to share the challenges our community faces and the vital role that Federation

plays in addressing them.

This year, our priorities remain clear:

- Ensuring the **security** of our community,
- **Combating antisemitism** and advocating on behalf of our shared interests, and
- Growing our **Integrated Bursary Program** so that every child has access to Jewish education, camp, and community life.

As I approach my first anniversary in this role, I am filled with pride and gratitude. My wife, Katie, and I have been embraced by this incredible community, and we are deeply thankful for the opportunity to work alongside all of you—to ensure a vibrant, proud, and enduring Jewish future in Calgary, across Canada, and around the world.

B'Shalom,

Rob Nagus
CEO, Calgary Jewish Federation

Building an inclusive community is a priority. Contact us and we will make every effort to meet your needs.

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The Jewish Story of Rome

FROM ANCIENT ROOTS TO TODAY

Sunday, November 23
12:00-1:30PM • Virtual

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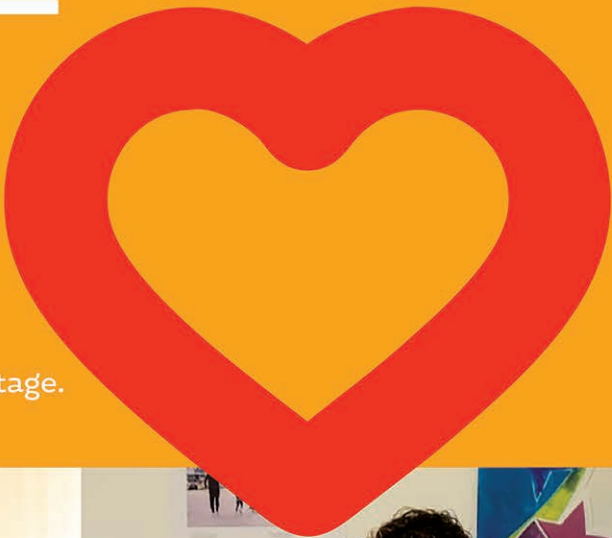
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October 20 was a truly inspiring evening as Calgary Jewish Federation hosted a memorable community event in support of our annual UJA Campaign, featuring renowned Jewish activist and speaker Jonny Daniels, and honouring ally W. Brett Wilson.

Kol hakavod to event co-chairs Tamar Zenith and Melissa Mendelman for their outstanding leadership and success in raising vital funds for the annual campaign.

We are also grateful to Marnie Bondar for coordinating a heartfelt afternoon gathering between Jonny Daniels and Calgary’s Holocaust survivors.

Scan the QR codes to view more images captured by photographers: Marnie Jazwicki and Eden Schell.



A Deep Dive with Jonny Daniels



Jonny Daniels with Survivors



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From the Promised Land to the Prairies: How one Israeli family hopes to keep Calgary their home

By Jana Zalmanowitz, LJI Reporter

It's been over two years since the horrors of October 7, 2023 shattered the lives of many Israelis. Since that time, some have made the choice to leave Israel, while rebuilding and finding an identity here in Alberta. This series examines the reasons they left and what being in Alberta has meant to their Jewish identity.

New play will reimagine the core themes of Merchant of Venice

By Regan Lipes

On October 26, even the rainy gloom of an Edmonton autumn did not deter an enthusiastic crowd of local creative talent, theatre folk, and enthusiastic civilians of the arts from congregating at the ArtsHub Ortona for an exciting and intellectually stimulating staged-reading of a new, and provocative play: *Merchant(s) of Venice* created by playwright Jessie Ardern, Ariel Levine and Amanda Goldberg. Yes, that is correct – not the Shakespearean classic, but a re-envisioning of core topics that for centuries have been considered controversial in the work.

“I don’t know that I’ve ever seen a version of the play that I recall as particularly problematic, but I’ve definitely seen it not handled well,” commented director and dramaturg Amanda Goldberg in a recent virtual interview with the *Alberta Jewish News*. “I think that a major problem with how the play is often staged is that Shylock and Jessica aren’t actually played by Jewish actors.”

But, re-imagining a work like *The Merchant of Venice* in a new and respectful way was a challenge. Navigating the landmines of antisemitic innuendoes, and outright prejudice became the ammunition to drive the *Merchant(s) of Venice’s* critical examination. “We were sitting in a sandwich shop talking about the project, and the ideas kept flowing,” explained Goldberg with passion. “We decided to explore how the play was approached in different time periods in different places,” elaborated Ardern. “The productions that we reference all happened; they were real stagings that we looked to. The scene at the Habima Theatre in Tel Aviv was an actual mock trial that was staged because of outrage over the play.”

The space-time-continuum was definitely thrown to the wind in an innovative and artistically elegant decision to shift between historical times and geographical spaces: Shakespearean London, Kristallnacht in Berlin, the historic Drury Lane Theatre in London, the Habima Theatre in Tel Aviv, New York, and Stratford Ontario. With each move through time and space a theatre company struggled to put on a performance of *The Merchant of Venice*, and in each instance different obstacles were facing the

cast. Without spoilers, some of the hurdles faced by the casts were the debate over whether Shylock is a comical or tragic character, the core themes of antisemitism being indicative of critical social examination or pure hatred of Jews, and a surprisingly thorough continuous discussion over gender roles in various manifestations.

Ardern and Goldberg began this journey together in 2023, and seeing the work come to life as a staged-reading was a meaningful realization. “This is an important stage in the workshoping process,” said Ardern, “and we take the feedback we receive very seriously.” She admits that she is waiting to decompress after a week of whirlwind of rehearsals and preparations, but she and Goldberg are eager to put some of the constructive criticism they have been given into action.

Goldberg elaborated that when speaking with other Jewish artists, she received great support for the undertaking. “My Jewish colleagues felt that this was an important project. There was this feeling about works being staged about us, but not by us.” She and Ardern were both adamant that their re-envisioning of Shylock must be played by a Jewish actor, and that the ongoing discussion they hoped the play would inspire, address Jewish audiences absent of an orientalist gaze.

The play’s pivotal role of Richard, the fictional actor tasked with playing Shylock, was brought to life charismatically by the wildly talented and utterly captivating Canadian actor, Dov Mickelson. Mickelson’s performance was electric, and even as a staged-reading, the powerful boom of his voice reverberated stirring within the core of each audience member. Everyone in attendance was no doubt thinking the same thing: that they would love to see Mickelson play Shylock for real in Shakespeare’s controversial masterpiece.



Play-reading performers: Dov Mickelson, Ryan Parker, Kijo Gatama, David Sklar, Shaina Silver-Baird, Ruth Alexander, Dayna Lea Hoffman and Dean Stockdale. Rehearsal photo.

Another memorable cast member was David Sklar, an astonishingly dynamic and versatile actor who delivers fast-paced dialog like no other. Sklar’s chemistry onstage with his fellow castmates brought a sense of tangible reality to what unfolded in each of the time periods. He brought both sincerity and hilarity to the performance.

Edmontonians from the Jewish community were able to recognize another familiar face: that of Shaina Silver-Baird. Silver-Baird’s vocal performance of Jewish music at the annual United Jewish Appeal campaign launch in 2024 was well-attended, and a thoroughly enjoyable evening. This time, the Toronto-based Jewish actor and musical artist joined the staged-reading cast illustrating her versatility and skill as a multidisciplinary performer.

“*The Merchant of Venice* has been treated differently at different times,” Goldberg commented. “Yes, Stratford vowed never to stage it again because there were actually incidents of coins being thrown at Jewish students in the audience,” interjected Ardern. “But then, five years later, they did stage it again,” concluded Goldberg with bemusement. For hundreds of years theatre companies have struggled with myriad complications in approaching the work responsibly and respectfully. At times, as captured in the Berlin scene, antisemitism was a positive highlight of the work, while the Habima staging demonstrated everything dangerous about how the work could be perceived.

The conclusion that *The Merchant(s) of Venice* comes

Continued on page 14

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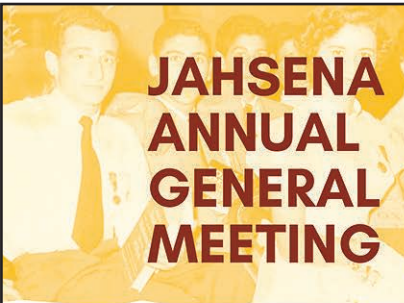
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TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

- Financial year end
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AWARD NIGHT, 1968; JACOB AND ODETTIE MASLIYAH COLLECTION, JAHSENA. (TOP)



MR & MRS HYMAN SIGLER 10TH ANNIVERSARY, 1908; SIGLER FAMILY COLLECTION, JAHSENA. (MIDDLE)



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Jewish News

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Edmonton's Challah Bake 2025 was a warm and wonderful experience for everyone who participated. It was held at BI and co-sponsored by many of the Jewish groups in the city. Photo by Tammy Vineberg.

Challah Bake brings women together to connect with their roots

By Regan Lipes

The organizers of the annual Edmonton Jewish community Shabbat Project Challah Bake can put this year's event in the 'win' column. It was, if possible, even more well attended than last year, and with so much to thank Hashem for, the crowd was in tremendous spirits. NCSY volunteers helped guests collect their supplies and find seats, as children immediately took off running with their friends from Talmud Torah. Although Beth Israel Synagogue was the venue, and host for the evening, people from all Edmonton shuls were represented, and some unaffiliated new friends as well.

The evening's proceedings were once again facilitated by veteran Challah Bake emcee, Karen Sadoznick, who welcomed Christina Tsippora Reboh to the mic to offer words of welcome on behalf of BI. "Tonight's about more than making challah," explained Reboh. "We're joining thousands of women, in over 1,500 cities, who've chosen to be a light. While the Shabbos Project has been around since 2013, it carries a much deeper meaning after October 7th. Across the world, we've seen Jews reconnecting with their roots, bringing traditions back into their homes, and redefining what Jewish identity means for them. And one of the most powerful ways that's happened [is by] women coming together to make challah and countless more quietly committing to this mitzvah every single week."

Reboh continued by elaborating on the symbolism of the components that make up challah: "Flour represents nourishment, feeding our bodies and our souls. Water symbolizes Torah and wisdom. Yeast reminds us to rise, to grow, to reach new heights. Eggs represent the gift of life. Sugar is sweetness! – the kind we hope to bring into our homes and communities. Salt enhances flavor and, like the Jewish people, it never spoils. And oil reminds us of holiness and majesty, like the oil used in the Temple."

As generations of women gathered shoulder-to-shoulder preparing to make challah, Reboh noted soulfully that it is a blessing to share these moments

with daughters, and then proudly look on as they take over on their own in the kitchen. "There's something magical about the whole process. The therapy of kneading dough. The heavenly smell that fills your home. That first warm bite of homemade challah. It's joy. You feel it in your soul. Through this mitzvah, you're bringing light and blessing into your home. You're deepening your connection to Judaism and to Hashem. You're taking something physical and turning it into something divine."

This magnificent description was an inspiring way to begin the evening, and imbued the process of creating the dough with the warmth of spiritual connection.

Jodi Zabłudowski, the President of the Edmonton section of the National Council of Jewish Women of Canada then spoke to emphasize the 128-year-old organization's commitment to initiatives like the Shabbat Project that uplift communities in the purest tradition of Tikkun Olam. Rebecca Asbell delivered well wishes on behalf of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, and prayers recited for the sick and injured, the State of Israel and all those working to keep it safe, and for those still not able to return home.

The gooey task of mixing ingredients for the dough could not have brought more delight to the group. Mothers donned rubber gloves and guided little hands as gobs of dough quickly adhered to all surfaces bringing instant smiles. Those 'in the know' brought their own aprons, while others fast abandoned any notion of staying clean: little flour hand prints all over black sweaters and skirts was the fashion of the occasion. Some dough rose seemingly instantly, while other batches took their time, yet, amidst all the chatter, nobody seemed to notice. Guests continued to nosh on delicious goodies lovingly prepared and provided by organizers, while little girls chased each other to the playroom.

My daughter Tamara (Tamar) and I had a wonderful time. She enjoyed seeing her school mates, comparing the doughiness of their hands, squishing ingredients, and laughing. She loves challah, and I thought that this would be simply a charming mother-daughter evening, but to my amazement, as her dough expanded, so did her sense of Tikkun Olam. On each table there were paper ribbons to write prayers on. I asked Tamara, what she wanted to pray for so I could write it down for her. She paused with an almost comically serious 'thinking face.' "I pray that everyone in the world who wants challah can have some," she said. I wrote this down for her, pleased beyond all measure at the wisdom and humanity of my three-year-old, who with that one statement illustrated to me that she understands the vision of the Shabbat Project.

Every year, our favourite part of the Challah Bake is taking our dough home and braiding it. This year, Tamara's brother Jacob was told it was a girls' evening. Despite protests, he stayed home, but was so happy to have his sister share her dough with him so that he could make his own challah. All of this sticky, oily, chaos was facilitated by their big brother Benji, and soon all siblings were joyfully covered in dough.

The kids were off to bed, I took the challah out of the oven, covered it, and turned in. Then, getting up to get everyone ready for work and school I peaked to see how the challahs looked, only to discover that half a loaf had 'mysteriously' disappeared overnight. There was challah for breakfast, requests for challah in lunches, and I would be surprised to find any remaining to accompany dinner.

The greater Edmonton Jewish community is grateful to the Challah Bake organizers for all their hard work and dedication in bringing the Shabbat Project to Edmonton. This is a tradition that does so much to strengthen the local Jewish community's unity.

Regan Lipes is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.



Challah Bake was wonderful for young, old and everyone in between.



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The halls of Calgary Jewish Academy were filled with laughter, smiles and meaningful interactions across the generations during their annual Grandparents & Grandpals Day held last month. Photos courtesy CJA.

Generations come together for CJA’s Grandparents & Grandpals Day

By Krista Wilson

It was a beautiful morning at the Calgary Jewish Academy as students, grandparents, and grandpals came together to celebrate one of the school’s most cherished traditions, Grandparents & Grandpals Day. The event, which coincided with a special Shabbat celebration, highlighted the importance of l’dor v’dor,

the passing of traditions, values, and wisdom from generation to generation. Throughout the morning, guests and students participated in a variety of engaging stations designed to spark connection and reflection. Students interviewed their grandparents and grandpals about their childhoods, family traditions, and Jewish memories. Together, they took part in mitzvah

activities, explored the Scholastic Book Fair, enjoyed quiet reading moments in the PJ Library nook, and created keepsake crafts to take home. The halls of CJA were filled with laughter, smiles, and meaningful conversations, a true reflection of the strong bonds that unite generations within the Jewish community. As the morning came to a close, there was a shared feeling of warmth and gratitude. The Calgary Jewish Academy extends heartfelt thanks to all grandparents and grandpals who joined in making this day so memorable.

New play *Cont. from page 12*

to is that there is no one answer to this persisting quandary. *The Merchant of Venice* can be staged with antisemitism at its core, or a critical presentation that responsibly examines the play within the context it was written. In “Jews and Devils: Anti-Semitic Stereotypes of Late Medieval and Renaissance England” Frank Felsenstein helps to better contextualize the attitudes that would have dominated Shakespeare’s time. “At the root of the Christian stereotype of the Jew was the accusation that it was he who was responsible, as much as his forefathers, for the betrayal and crucifixion of Christ. The crucifixion is to be carried by every generation of Jews. Instead of being God’s chosen people, the Jews have become, through the

death of Christ, eternally accused” (Felsenstein 18). In this way, *The Merchant of Venice* can be read not as an antisemitic play saturated in ancient hatred, but as a representation of a historical period with insights into the misconceptions of Jews. “The typical occupation of such a figure, the lending of money at interest, is also to be seen as the work of the Devil, and in contradiction to the Scriptures” (21). Horrific though this is, examining such depictions is critical to better understanding the evolution of antisemitism to what it is today. “All these aspects of the stereotype combined to portray a pariah to be both hated and feared, who, with the mark of Cain upon him was to be seen as a perpetual outsider, an analogue to the figure of the Wandering Jew” (23). European history is no stranger to depictions of Jews by Gentiles that rely on prejudiced caricatures:

Ivan Turgenev, Aleksandr Pushkin, Anton Chekhov, and Shakespeare’s contemporary Christopher Marlowe. To simply denounce these works would be to turn a blind eye to the suffering endured by Jews through the centuries who faced these societal barrages of slings and arrows. What *The Merchant(s) of Venice* accomplishes through its witty fast-paced dialog is a subtly brilliant provocation to discuss, debate, and examine critically – hallmarks of what it is to be a Jew. Special thanks are extended to historical dramaturg Ariel Levine, the Edmonton Arts Council, Freewill Shakespeare, and the Citadel Theatre for their contributions and support of this project. *Regan Lipes is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.*

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from the

Sources

by Eliezer Segal

The one that didn't get away

The Talmud tells a story about a Jew known as “Joseph the Sabbath-honourer.” Joseph had a wealthy non-Jewish neighbour who had been advised by a “Chaldean” (that is, an astrologer) that Joseph would eventually possess his entire fortune. Hoping to avert this fate, the neighbour sold all his belongings to purchase a single precious gem that he stowed securely under his hat.

That was a bad plan.

One day, while crossing a river, the hat was blown into the water – where the jewel was gobbled up by a fish. The succulent fish was caught late Friday afternoon as the markets were closing, and the merchants realized that they were unlikely to find a purchaser. The only likely prospect would be Joseph, who would not forgo this opportunity to honour the Sabbath. This indeed is what happened, and Joseph was surprised to discover the jewel, which he was able to sell for an immense fortune.

The point of this story is not entirely obvious. The Talmud provides its own moral teaching in the guise of a mysterious old man who shows up at the end and declares “He who borrows from the Sabbath, the Sabbath repays him.” This seems to suggest that Joseph was a poor man who went into debt to cover his Sabbath expenses. It thus provides encouragement to other Jews who struggle to finance their religious duties.

More problematic is the position of the gentile neighbour whose perspective dominates the narrative. There is no indication that he was guilty of any misdeeds that would make him deserving of financial collapse.

It is particularly awkward that a Jewish religious tale should be founded on the accuracy of Chaldean astrological projections; though it must be noted that many ancient Jews shared the widespread belief in the influence of the stars (if only on non-Jews).

Midrashic works from the Land of Israel tell about a poor tailor in Rome who was so enamoured of Sabbath fish, and willing to buy one for an excessive price, that he found himself in a bidding war with a

high-ranking Roman official. When called upon to defend his effrontery – and the suspicion that he possessed undeclared sources of income that allowed him to make such expensive purchases – he used the opportunity to explain the Jewish hope for divine forgiveness that results from their devoted observance of the holy days. This impressed the prefect, and the Jew was exonerated. In the end, he too was rewarded with the discovery of a precious jewel in the fish – no Chaldeans, no mysterious old men, no arbitrary bankruptcies.

A notable counterpart to the Joseph story is related by the historian Herodotus in the fifth century B.C.E.

Herodotus tells of the tyrant Polycrates who rose to power to become lord of the Aegean island Samos. His military, political and economic successes seemed unstoppable. However, his ally Amasis, king of Egypt, was disturbed by this winning streak. He wrote Polycrates a letter in which he voiced fears that such consummate success is likely to provoke the envy of the gods. It is preferable to enjoy a life in which prosperity and misfortune are mingled.

To counteract that danger, Amasis advised Polycrates to choose the possession that he valued most dearly and dispose of it irretrievably. Persuaded of the wisdom of that suggestion, Polycrates selected a precious emerald-and-gold ring, and ostentatiously cast it far out at sea in a public ceremony – where it was eventually gobbled up by a delectable fish, which was caught by a fisherman who decided that it was fit for a king and presented it as such to Polycrates. When the fish was cut open and its treasure revealed, Polycrates was initially delighted; but when he reported it to Amasis, the Egyptian recognized that this was really a disastrous omen, indicating that Polycrates’ doom was sealed. Amasis thereupon renounced their friendship, and Polycrates did eventually come to a violent and disgraceful ruin.

Though the Talmud’s story casts Joseph as the nominal hero, his role is an entirely passive one in which he never really learns the details of how or why the jewel ended up in his fish, other than as a reward

or compensation for his diligence in sabbath observance – as repayment for “borrowing from the Sabbath.” Like Herodotus’ story, the main thrust of the talmudic plot is on how the jewel came to be cast into the sea and swallowed by the fish. The Greek religious mentality interpreted Polycrates’ situation in terms of beliefs like inexorable fate or divine envy, ideas that have no real equivalents in Jewish theology. These fundamental differences resulted in a narrative inconsistency when explaining Joseph’s neighbour’s unfortunate fate.

Although it is unlikely (albeit not completely impossible) that a rabbinic teacher in Babylonia would have been reading Herodotus, there is nonetheless some probability to the suggestion that the tale of the gem in Polycrates’ fish was in broad circulation in the Hellenistic regions in oral versions. We may imagine that creative Jewish preachers might have been tempted to use it for teaching about the importance of Torah values.

We have no sure way of reconstructing with confidence the exact process that guided our anonymous adaptor in this process. He may have commenced from the simple premise that a costly jewel inside a fish would be a fitting reward for a devoted Jew who made personal sacrifices to procure a worthy Sabbath fish. This could in turn have led him to ponder what was the best narrative trajectory for getting the jewel into the fish’s belly. The diverse elements taken from Herodotus and the world of Jewish religious values could be brought into a remarkably effective convergence.

In any case, we would all be well advised to exercise caution before swallowing a morsel of a delectable entrée.

And diversify your portfolio! Don’t keep it under your hat.

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

Sukkot at the Paperny Family Calgary JCC



The Sukkah at the Paperny Family Calgary JCC was open for the community to enjoy with thanks to Homes by Avi, Calgary for their continued support in building it each year, and to the wonderful JCC volunteers who decorated it. Pictured above: A lively Shabbat celebration in the Sukkah. Thank you to Rabbi Leonard Cohen for leading such a warm and uplifting celebration. Facebook photos.

